

The Palestinian House of Friendship

The Palestinian House of Friendship (PHF), is a youth development program based in Nablus on the West Bank of Palestine. This area of historic Palestine has been occupied by Israel and young people are under stress on a daily basis. They cannot visit the ocean, which they can see from their windows. They cannot go into areas that were annexed by Israel that were formally their land, they are subject to arrest without charges, (called administrative detention). These conditions are often traumatizing. In this context, PHF is working to give children and teens a healthy environment using music, theater and sports, allowing them to play and be creative. With international support, PHF supporters have just finished building a skate board park and playground in Asira -- and these have quickly become a sorely needed community gathering place for families in the area.

The skate park was built by Skate Pal, an international organization that builds parks all over the world. Skate Pal also sent young people to teach skateboarding to Asira's kids. See the attachment for some beautiful pictures of and words about the park and the community spirit. PHF plans to host an international skateboarding, art, music and theater festival this fall, bringing people from around the world to Asira.

PHF continues to build the Smiling Faces Summer Camp, its internationally-honored Girl Scout troop and a recording studio and radio station. All of these activities provide much needed opportunities for young people to gain self-confidence and develop leadership abilities.

PHF sponsored a quilt making program and the women in the community created a 70 square foot quilt using traditional Palestinian embroidery telling their story. The quilt is now traveling in the United States.

There are currently two chapters, one in New York and one in Massachusetts of Friends of PHF in which CDS member, Esther Farmer, is active. We have succeeded in getting a music studio donated to PHF. This is important as it will be part of an oral history project in Palestine. Community members want to make sure that they preserve their history and culture. In addition the studio will provide a non violent outlet for young people to express themselves.

This is an exciting community development project that is giving people hope in a situation often perceived as hopeless.

Visit the FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1010699985681402/>

To learn more, go to the PHF website:
<http://thepalestinianhouseoffriendship.org>