

DEAR FRIENDS OF COEXISTENCES, THIS NEWSLETTER WILL COVER THREE ITEMS: THE 2011 BAL JAUNE, NEWS FROM THE YOUTH OF HAIFA AND A PRESENTATION OF THE 3 PROJECTS WE WILL BE RUNNING THIS YEAR.



THE 2011 BAL JAUNE

First comes first, some news of the Bal Jaune which took place on January 14. As always we are tempted to add, all went extremely well on a slightly different tempo, as the evening was rythmed by two big sessions of music instead of three shorter ones, and a fantastic grand finale, so good the music was!

We are also very happy to inform you that the funds collected for the association have reached nearly 5'000 francs this year, thanks to a very attractive desserts offer and the bar. Three musicians have offered their monies to Coexistences.

Thank you everyone for having spread the word around you about our fetish event of the year, for your participation, culinary contributions and your help to set up, run and clear the place, the most courageous and committed ones having worked hard until 4.30 am!

FOLLOW UP OF MONT BLANC 2010

The group of Haifa students who climbed the Mont Blanc last summer has presented the *Breaking the Ice* experience in two schools, of which that of Ein Ha'horesh. The other schools they have approached for a presentation to a classroom have refused for the moment. The students are not loosing spirit and are recruiting youth elsewhere to share their experience.

Here follows Golan's testimony of this experience presenting to the students at Ein Ha'horesh: « Last Thursday (February 7), I shared the PowerPoint presentation we had prepared to students from the Ein Ha'horesh school. It was very interesting, the group of kids was not easy, but many important issues were tackled. Their teacher called me today to tell me that they continued debating lengthily the presentation.

The *Breaking the Ice* 2010 group has also participated with the « Forum for an inter-religious cooperation » and more than one hundred teenagers of all religions, to a day of prayers and plantation of olive trees in the « Neighborhood Grove » at the foot of Mont Carmel (which as you know was devastated by terrible fires this autumn). This special day was organized by the city of Haifa and the Beit Hagefen foundation, to underline the necessity to improve the relations between all the religions and ethnical groups in Israel. Click on this link <http://picasaweb.google.com/ketterke/BreakingTheIceAndPlantingTheTrees?authkey=Gv1sRgCMH3wpjqpfuU6AE&feat=embedwebsite> to view pictures of this moving day which has clearly delighted all the kids.

François Feihl and Christian Sinobas from the Mont Blanc 2010 group will run the Jerusalem Marathon in March (21 km), alongside the youth from *Breaking the Ice* and Olfat. The preparations are well under way and the mails exchanged express the great prospective joy to meet again.

2011 PROJECTS

THE YOUTH SUMMER TRIP

dialog with new groups of parents and professionals. He wishes to continue and intensify our collaboration, and considers Coexistences as a key partner in this expansion of the program.

Five groups have started dialog work: 2 mixed youth groups (girls and boys), one group of parents, a group that comprises of only young Palestinian boys, and the *Peace bomb* group of last summer which pursues its work another year. This year, there were much more Palestinian (100) than Israeli candidates (40), and a greater number of Jewish boys (compared to the girls) wishing to work on dialog, which has allowed to create these two mixed groups.

We will host in July one of these groups for ten days, three days in the mountain and a week in host families as the proven formulae.

It is also worthwhile noting that the members of the *Peace bomb* group participate in educational or social volunteering activities, either at the YMCA, or in their own communities. This is part of new conditions set by the YMCA to all participants to their coexistence and dialog program.

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THE MONT BLANC TREKKING PROJECT

As a continuation of the ascent of the Mont Blanc last summer, the Mont Blanc 2011 project aims to embark a group of young Israelis et Palestinians in an excursion at mid altitude for about ten days around the Mont Blanc. The excursion will start in Champex in Switzerland, will go through France and then Italy to end again in Switzerland in la Fouly. The group will sleep under tents. The ultimate goal of the project remains to create between the participants strong friendship ties that will result in a solidar relationship shaped by the necessity to face together a hostile environment. We hope that, by training the participants in building and animating mixed groups of youth and develop strong relationships via challenging open air activities, these participants will contribute to promote peaceful coexistence upon returning to their country, just as the youth from the Mont Blanc expedition of last summer do.

The recruitment of young adults between 20 and 30 years old, men and women, is taking place to build a mixed group of twelve people, half Jewish, half Arabs. The physical and sport training as well as the activities destined to build a good group dynamic, will be led by Olfat Haider (who led the group which climbed the Mont Blanc) during evenings, camping and excursion week-ends in the Mont Carmel, Golan and Mont Hermon areas.

The project is again very actively supported by the Haifa University, Beit Hagefen (which now employs Olfat as a dialog facilitator) and the Haifa municipality. All three fund all

the activities in Israel this year. We are very happy to inform you that, as of now, the funding of these activities by our partners in Israel is nearly complete.

The precise dates of the trekking in Switzerland have yet to be finalized.

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THE TALI PROJECT

The *Keren Tali* foundation created 5 years ago an « Identity and Dialog » program (<http://www.tali.org.il/english/french/principes2.asp>) to promote a tolerant cultural identity by deepening one's own identity and open up to the other via an annual school exchange program between Jewish and Arab schools in Galilea involving 2 classes of primary 5th grade kids. During the year, 4 visits (and a final festival) take place alternately in the concerned schools which are at a distance of 20-30 km from each other. The encounters involve the schools principals (to define the framework, the resources needed for the visits, the classes chosen for the exchange program), the teachers (to prepare the program of the visits, the content and the on-going common training of the 4 teachers involved) and the students (around 70 students by classes). The parents, via their assistance in helping their kids prepare the presentations, their participation to the events and volunteering, are also integrated into the process.

The schools principals and the teachers participate too to an encounter and discussion group to better understand the dialog dynamic the children will experience, and ultimately be role models for them.

The class encounters are prepared and animated by the teachers themselves. They prepare with their students the encounters around themes such as hospitality, the religious celebrations, the daily rituals, etc. The teachers receive a general training and are coached (around 56 hours per year are devoted to this training) to this end.

At the moment, this « Identity and Dialog » program involves 6 Arab and 6 Jewish schools. The meetings are held in Arabic and in Hebrew, thanks to translators. In doing so, beyond the 420 children who are directly concerned by the exchange program (2 classes of 70 multiplied by 6 exchange programs involving in total 12 schools), one can consider that the whole of the children being scholarised in these schools will be impacted about this program.

Keren Tali is a foundation active in 90 Jewish public primary schools. The foundation seeks to strengthen the Jewish identity as a culture. The Arab schools which participate in the « Identity and Dialog » program belong to the network of private catholic schools (40 schools, from kinder garden through to college), are recognized and supported by the State. 50% of the students are Christian and 50% Muslim. The ministry of Educations acknowledges the « Identity and Dialog » program and has approved the hours dedicated to it.

The objective of the Tali 2011 project, that is the visit of about 20 teachers in Switzerland, is to give them the opportunity to deepen their acquaintance with each other through a lengthy stay, to meet with Swiss professionals working on the themes of integration, multi-culturality and bi-linguism, as well as interreligious dialog. Conferences and seminars on themes such as the development of stereotypes in children and how to deconstruct them, relations between majority and minority, the federal school system etc, will be offered.

Any interest in participating in or suggestions for one of these projects are most welcomed. As always, the most challenging aspect of each project is to obtain funds. As such, any suggestion of suitable contacts or participating to the « Fund raising » group is most appreciated. Do please contact the main contact of each of the projects.

To conclude this Newsletter, we are very pleased to inform you that the project « Twinned Peace Sports School Program » created by the Al-Quds Association for Democracy



The participants will stay in a chalet and will spend a week-end in host families, at the beginning of July.

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and Dialogue (AFDD), from Ramallah and the Perez Center for Peace, and in which Suleiman Khatib takes part (Suleiman being one of the pillar of the *Wounded Xssing Borders* group hosted in march 2009), has been nominated as one of the challenger to the Global Sports Forum Barcelona (GSFB) Trophies.

The « Twinned Peace Sports School Program » allows every year about 1500 Jewish and Palestinian children to take part in joint sport and social activities. For more, see: (<http://www.globalsportsforum.org/nominees/twinned-peace-sports-school-program.html>)

**With the warmest regards of the Communication group
Fiuna Seylan-Ongen**