

DEAR FRIENDS OF COEXISTENCES, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS,

AS THE SUMMER GENTLY ENDS, WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE WITH YOU NEWS OF THE STAY IN SWITZERLAND OF THE THREE 2011 GROUPS. THEY ARRIVED ONE AFTER ANOTHER DURING THE COURSE OF JULY AND WERE ALL VERY SUCCESSFUL.



PIECE OF PEACE

FIRST ARRIVED THE YMCA 2011 YOUTH GROUP (A MIXED GROUP OF 14 TEENAGERS – 6 JEWS AND 8 PALESTINIANS, 8 BOYS AND 6 GIRLS – WHO HAD STARTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR WEEKLY 2 HOURS DIALOG SESSIONS AT THE YMCA). THEY STAYED WITH US BETWEEN THE JULY 1 AND 10.

There was something quite remarkable about this group, a fluidity which we believe stemmed from a carefully managed dialog process whereby as soon as a tension emerged it was dealt with so as to preserve the friendship ties. This warm and earnest group, unified and curious of everything, was hosted in pairs, among others by 4 new families. They chose to call themselves “Piece of Peace”, mixing in the typo some letters from the YMCA. For those who didn’t meet Ranin, Amiel, Tarek, Eyal, Emilie, Maya, Sala’h, Omer, Raphael, Tamar, Ibrahim, Hadass, Amir and Karem, check out the « Portraits » section of our website.

The host families were able to get to know them for 2 days before the group left for the Marécottes where they discovered the Alps, canoe-kayaking and practiced intensely coexistence for 4 days.

Upon their return, they discovered Lausanne during a walking tour that was supposed to take them from Sauvabelin to Ouchy. However the walk had to be ended at the Cathedral and the Riponne weekly open air market so curious and

enthusiast were they of everything. On the Geneva day they visited the Mosque, the United Nations and then had to find their way from the lake shore to the Cathedral. The day ended in Evelyne Benzakein’s garden where they met the rabbi Guedj (Foundation Racines et Sources), Hafid Ouardiri (former spokesman of the Geneva Mosque and founder of the Fondation de l’Entre-Connaissance) and the abbot Arbez (involved in the relations between Judaism and Christianity). They also visited Lutry municipality’s water cleaning and the garbage sorting facilities to witness how environment protection and ecology is practiced in Switzerland. On the morning of the last day, Michal organized for the interested members of the association a demonstration of the kind of dialog the group takes part to. Those who attended were impressed positively by the high professional quality of the facilitation work and took stock of the depth of the dialog work undergone: « Michal left nothing unaddressed and was very thorough ». The farewell evening was very joyous and certainly unforgettable as young Finnish gymnasts joined the party and shared music and dance.

We would like to salute the accompanying team: the two wonderful facilitators Shira and Asma. Shira has founded an association to improve the visibility and awareness of the Sefarad culture in Israel and Asma is a remarkable sum of gifts, on one side mathematics and statistics which she studied and practiced as a professional, and on the other hand theater and song (she is a truly wonderful singer), Raed who translated for those not fully fluent in English, and exercised a calm yet respected authority, while Michal managed with passion the pedagogical and educational aspect of the stay.

This year's stay was successful thanks to the combined efforts of the Travel and Family work groups. Our warm gratitude also to Evelyne Benzakein who opened her house to us, to the Protection Civile Vaudoise which lend us

minibuses and their drivers ; and to the 10 host families of this summer, the Poffet, Abravanel, Musard, Cereghetti, Lazega-Kuelling, Bloch, Elkaim, Annaheim, Conne and Halina Sandri, for their generous and warm welcome.

We are also very encouraged by the fact that one of the new families got into the enterprise through their teenage son who had heard of the program from a school friend. We fancy seeing in that event the first signs of a new generation ready to engage itself in this beautiful project.

The stay in Switzerland has been a very important element in the « Piece of Peace »'s dialog process. They have decided to continue their dialog work another year and will also work on a joint project on ecology and sustainable development.

TALI-JCJCR

THE SECOND GROUP, TALI-JCJCR, WAS A GROUP OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ENROLLED IN THE "IDENTITY AND DIALOG".

This program organizes annual exchanges programs between Jewish schools and the Mena network's Christian Arab schools in Galilea and was created 5 years ago by the foundation TALI and the JCJCR (the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian relations). The arrival of these teachers happening on the Geneva day of the YMCA, the two groups met on the occasion of the encounter with the three religious figures.

The TALI group then continued on to a chalet in Anzère/Valais where the 14 participants (Tami, Rita, Nesrine, Nitsa,

Zhour, Ilana, Dafi, Yael, Ronit, Jumana, Rita, Zvia, Hannan and Limor) and their 3 facilitators Eva, Ruth and Hosam experimented coexistence, around dialog sessions and discovery of the region. This stay has enabled them to deepen their mutual knowledge through day to day shores', friendly talks until very late at night and religious celebrations: a Shabbat meal and a Sunday ceremony in the Anzère village. Throughout the stay the Coexistences project leader Daniela Hersch and her husband David accompanied them.

They were then hosted in families in Lausanne and conti-



nued their working sessions on:

- Political structure of Switzerland and cultural, linguistic and religious diversity: how to live together! (Edgar Bloch, journalist; Martin Hoegger, minister).
- Immigration, integration and multicultural dialog at school (A.-M. Reymond, S. Modiano, D. Pellet, M.-C. Golaz, pedagogical counsels and teachers)
- Stereotypes, how they function in the development of the child and how to deconstruct them? (Dr. J.-C. Métraux, pedopsychiatrist).

Tuesday July 12, Hosam Elias, sociolog in Nazareth and coresponsible of the "Identity and Dialog" program, held a public conference on "The Arab-Christian minority in Israël". A large and focused public discovered the many aspects of this minority which is a minority among the minorities of Israel. The last day was dedicated to a visit of the Synagog and of the Cathedral of Lausanne... as well as some shopping time. The stay has strengthened and deepened the ties between the participants. They were moved by the generous

investment and the availability of all. The participants felt that their work in the schools, reaching hundreds of Arab and Jewish schoolchildren, was acknowledged and valued.

This stay in Switzerland was rendered possible thanks to the financial contributions of the Anne Frank Foundation, the Protestant church thanks to minister Reymond, to the Foundation Entre-connaissance and the Swiss arm of the association of the friends of Dr. Janusz Korczak.

The stay was successful thanks to a number of professional speakers who made themselves available during the holidays, to L'Arzillier « House of Dialog » which aims at constructing bridges of conviviality between the religions, which supported this project thanks to minister Martin Hoegger and all the members of this project as well as the host families, Bonstein, Didisheim, Hersch, Honegger, Lavanchy et Capelli, Lob, Ongen, Starkier and Raddatz-Benmuvhar which we thank warmly.

MONT BLANC TOUR

FINALLY THE GOUP MONT BLANC TOUR COMPLETED ITS TOUR, ALBEIT IN DIFFICULT WEATHER CONDITIONS AS AT LEAST HALF OF THEIR TREK WAS DONE UNDER THE RAIN !

« The trek tour around the Mont Blanc has now become a reality. The group of participants (Lilah, Yarah, Yehuda, Ilan, Walaa, Shadi, Rayan Manar, Rami, Yuval and Thaer) had been prepared like last year by Olfat Haider and this year by an Israeli facilitator, Maayan Fux. A student having had to pull out at the last minute, it was 6 male and 3 female students from the Haifa University – 4 Arabs and 5 Israelis – who arrived at Cointrin on July 14. Driven to la Fouly, they spent the first 2 nights there to get ready for the departure, which took place on July 16 heading to Italy via the Grand col Ferret. Besides Olfat and Maayan, Denis Ducroz, a guide from Chamonix (already part of the successful climb of the Mont Blanc last year, and who has often collaborated with Olfat on similar projects), Nicolas Lutz, pediatrician surgeon from the CHUV, here as doctor at hand, and myself as the Coexistences project organizer.

As you may know, the weather was really not good. It created difficulties for camping but the group functioned very well and overcame the challenge. A few highlights will be remembered : the crossing of a torrent swelled by the rains, requiring rope and all the resources of our guide, an evening under pouring rain and strong winds on a mountain pasture

where cheese makers offered us the shelter of a barn, the crossing of the col du Four (2700m) in 10cm of fresh snow... The group not only overcame all these unpredictable events heroically, but also pursued throughout these days, rain or shine, an intense and efficient dialog activity structured by Olfat and Maayan. Jean Troillet joined the group on the 20th, and stayed through to the 23d.

That day, we had reached the Chamonix valley and given the horrible weather, established camp in a camping area in the village of Bossons. It was the end of the trek. Sunday 24 was dedicated to visiting Chamonix, and on Monday 25 everyone was driven back to La Fouly. The municipal authorities had organized a cocktail at the end of the afternoon and then the closing diner brought together the group, Coexistences members and the sponsors. Tuesday 26, the group was hosted for a night at Danièle and Pierre Kohler, and departed for Israel the following day.

A first debriefing involving the organizers (Olfat, Maayan, Massimo, François) indicates that the trek was a great success. Overall the logistic worked out very well and above all, according to Olfat and Mayaan, the group has matured

very well in the desired direction, meaning a better understanding of the « other », and a will of every member to get involved in inter-community activities back home. The nature of this involvement was intensely discussed during the last days of the trek and is still being discussed. One idea with potential is to start by presenting the challenge within the community of students at the Haifa University. Olfat and Maayan will establish a detailed report on the group's dynamic during the trek as well as during the preparation phase in Israel. This report will be added to the report that will be established for the Confederation, our main sponsor.

Many crucial contributions made this success possible. First of all, our sponsors: the Confederation (federal office for territorial development), and Securitas. The foundation Jean Troillet covered his fees. Ahmad Abu Nijmeh, the Valentin catholic school's director, lent a bus which he on many occasions he drove himself. Moreover he offers a space in his school to store the rather important material now owned by Coexistences for this kind of project.

Danièle Kohler organised the stay in la Fouly, the welcome by the authorities and moreover has found part of the required funds. Christian Sinobas was behind the scene to solve the many details regarding the materiel and the transports. We benefited from Jacques Cloutier's, the La Fouly sport shop (Zanskar Sport), knowledge to supply us with the required material at the best price, and lend us anything we required at the last minute... Nicolas Lutz turned out not to be only the group's doctor, but was also immensely appreciated by all the participants thanks to his active and qualitative listening. Tatiana and Dominique have as always superbly organised a farewell dinner for the group at the Kohler's on the 26th. »

All their pictures are available at <http://imageevent.com/feihfamily/tourdumontblanc2011>

The group has also taken over keeping alive the Breaking the Ice blog with pictures and moving testimonies of their experiences, well worth the read ! <http://break-theice.blogspot.com/>



SIX YEARS AND AFTER CLOSE TO 15 PROJECTS ACHIEVED

GIVEN THE EXPERIENCE ACCUMULATED OVER 6 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL HOSTING AND HAVING ACHIEVED OVER 15 PROJECTS, WE ARE STEADILY MOVING TOWARDS BUILDING IN A MORE STRUCTURED AND SYSTEMATIC WAY OUR RELATIONS WITH OUR PARTNERS IN ISRAEL.

Amongst others we consider it necessary to hold closing projects meeting in Israel. Massimo and Francois will go to Haifa in October or November.

The Association's General Assembly scheduled in November, about which you will receive a separated and detailed invitation, will give us the opportunity we hope to see many of you and, amongst others, to show you the 2012 projects. Until then, we will hold a stand on October 6 and 7 at the CPO theater of Ouchy, at the occasion of the play "A BOTTLE IN THE SEE OF GAZA", from a novel from Valérie Zanetti, which will be played by the Compagnie Les Planches et les Nuages. Likewise you will receive separate detailed informations.

The last issue of BOOKS, a french monthly dedicated to the news through books, has dedicated part of its latest issue no. 25 to the question « A Palestinian state, what for ? ». Some interesting articles on the non-violent movement in Israel and the territories, and on Sari Nusseibeh. You will also see an article on Ali Abou Awwad, one of the main character of the movie « Encounter Point » which we saw at an Café Coexistences in 2009.

Nezha Drissi, one of our association's member, opened the doors of her house on the occasion of the Ramadan, to share and make the spirit of the fast better understood. A

few of us enjoyed her warm hospitality where nearly 70 people (Muslims, Christians, Jews, agnostics and others) came together. A little notice gave a larger context to the purpose and spirit of the fast during the month of Ramadan and a minute of silence was held in solidarity with the Horn of Africa devastated by hunger, before the fast was broken.

As we close this Newsletter, we would like to thank again warmly all those who took an active part in the realization of these 3 projects which followed one another very closely, requiring a lot of commitment and flexibility. Our thanks go too to all those who organized or contributed to the projects, by participating to the successful sponsoring diner held on May 28 and/or have lend their forces to the fundraising stands held at the open air market of Lausanne in May and June. May you all be thanked for contributing to the renewed success of this beautiful project of hosting in pacified land groups of great courage and commitment.

**With our forever warm regards,
Kind regards, in the name
of the Communication work group,
Fiuna**