



1for3 News

* Water * Health * Education *

* الماء * الصحة * التعليم *

August 2020



LEARNING ENVIRONMENTAL CARE: RECYCLING, WATER TESTING, AND AGRICULTURE

During a two-week camp in July, youth of the Environment Unit enjoyed participating in hands-on educational activities focusing on recycling, agriculture, water testing, and environmental care. The youth, ages 12 to 16, also went on hikes, visited a natural history museum, and shared a treasured Palestinian picnic in the mountains. They participated in a number of friendly competitions to build their knowledge and engagement on environmental issues. Environmental specialists led the activities. According to Environment Unit director Shatha AlAzzeh, "The main goal of the camp was to create an experience for children in which they could



meaningfully participate in community-building and encourage a healthy community life through learning about how to care for their environment in their own context." Participants in the camp included long-term members of the Environment Unit as well as newer members. Graduates of the program returned as assistant leaders. Camp organizers sought to impact the larger community of Aida Camp by encouraging youth to share their knowledge and skills with families and friends.

CELEBRATING THE GENEROSITY & INGENUITY OF OUR TEAM!

We continue to be in awe of the generosity and hard work of our team! We want to appreciate Leila Aruri, a longtime 1for3 volunteer who took time during the spring and summer to sew beautiful masks for people to receive in exchange for donations to 1for3.org. She generated \$2746.80 for our projects! We are proud to learn that she also donated fifty masks to the Navajo Nation for those battling COVID-19 and made dozens of masks and donations for Black Lives Matter protesters and causes.



SUMMER WORKSHOPS FOR HYPERTENSIVE AND DIABETIC PATIENTS

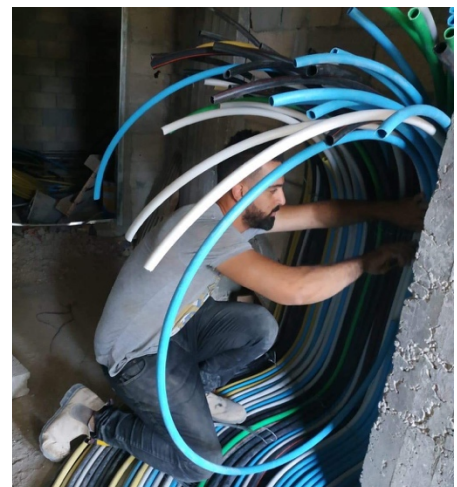
Lajee held a six-day series of workshops for participants in the Health for Palestine program. Participants learned about hypertension and diabetes and gained practical training about using blood pressure and blood sugar devices. Participants also learned about COVID-19 from a doctor who had been on the front lines of the first wave of COVID-19 in Bethlehem. They grew comfortable wearing masks, a significant accomplishment. Participants also had



time to share their stories and their emotions. They enjoyed spending time in Lajee's rooftop garden and yard. For many, it was the first time they had spent time in these secluded and peaceful spaces. The workshops strengthened the relationships between the Community Health Workers and the patients and among the patients.

THE PRESCHOOL IS UNDERWAY!

Thanks to our successful virtual Walk for Water and the generous support of the McMillan Stewart Foundation, the first phase of constructing the preschool is well underway! This phase will yield two classrooms that can serve 50 children. We are proud that many of the people building the preschool are from Aida and have had long relationships with 1for3 and Lajee. We hope they will send their children to the preschool sometime soon. 1for3 and Lajee are also in the final stages of hiring a director for the preschool, a process that has involved intercontinental, bilingual zoom meetings. We appreciate our team of educators, architects, builders, and volunteers (including our many walkers in the Walk for Water!) who have pushed this project forward, even in this difficult time.



VOICES OF 1FOR3: MOHAMMAD “MOUSA” AL-AZZA

Q: You've been involved with Lajee for most of your life, first as a youth participant, then as a young media maker, and in recent years as the director of the Media Unit and a leader of the Center. Lajee Center would not be Lajee without you. How has new programming regarding health and the environment transformed Lajee?

With these two initiatives, we have grown even closer to the local community. Before, we worked mainly with children and youth, and now we are in contact with more of the community. People in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond now see more of what we do. They feel that there is someone looking out for them.



The greenhouses have given people something fresh to do. And the health programming introduces a new dimension to people's lives. You should have seen our recent summer workshops on health. The participants felt like children again. They even sang together. It was something novel.

You do such a variety of work, teaching youth media production and documenting Lajee's activities and documenting military incursions into Aida. How do you look at your work with Lajee Center?

When I started learning documentary production and photography, Lajee's goal was to help us to reflect the daily life of the people, not to focus on the occupation. As refugees, so much of our lives and accomplishments are unknown even to other people in Palestine, so

it's very nice to work with people in my community to show how they think, how they work. I think it is very important to show this side of life through these reports, and I enjoy making them.

What are you most looking forward to in the new year at Lajee?

We're just hoping to make it through this year! But seriously, 2020 has changed how we work: I find myself doing tours of our community on zoom for international "visitors" – people who would otherwise have come here for a tour in person. We are learning how to work with children and community members from afar, in order to keep everyone safe. Our campaign, *Khaleek Fil Bayt* [Stay at Home, a quote from a famous Fairuz [song](#)] encouraged people to continue participating in Lajee's activities even when they could not come to the Center. Our Community Health Workers have been talking to patients more on the phone. In 2021, our main goal will be to finish the preschool. It will be a model preschool for children – different from other preschools in the camp and in the town. And it will be integrated with other parts of the Center and our existing strengths. We will be able to help shape a new generation from when it is very young – starting at age 3 – to be part of Lajee.

Your home was attacked yesterday [August 12] by Israeli army tear gas. Can you tell us what happened?

Since the 2nd Intifada, Aida has been one of the places most targeted by occupation attacks. After the building of the wall and military towers around the military base at Rachel's Tomb, there has always been tension. It is not safe. At any time, the army can come into the camp. The last few days, the Israeli army has been stopping cars, searching them, putting pressure on people. This is a systematic policy of the occupation. It's been calmer

in recent months in Aida, with less tear gas and fewer demonstrations because of the Coronavirus, but ultimately it makes no difference. The siege is still there.

What happened yesterday is that my mother, sister-in-law, and three of my nieces and nephews—aged 1, 2, and 3—were around the house. It had been a calm day. We were shocked suddenly to find tear gas inside the house. The kids were screaming. Every new generation has to pass through this experience, and many others. Maybe this is the first time that they smell gas, and it was strange for them, something new. But the worst part is that we can't do anything about it. This kind of an experience can have a huge effect. For a child who is two years old, now maybe he will hear fireworks and think it is gunshots. These children did not know the army, they did not know fear. What happened yesterday will affect them profoundly.

I'm sure you watched the Black Lives Matter protests in the U.S. this summer. How do you, as a Palestinian, see police violence against Black people in the United States? How did you see the protests in the U.S. this year?

When I saw the police dealing with Black people in the recent videos, the first thing that came to my head is how the army deals with us here – children, young people, or anyone – the same brutal way. And we know that U.S. police come to Israel for training. The way that they distinguish between people by appearance happens in Palestine too. When I am filming clashes with the army, if there is a white foreigner next to me, they are calmer. If I am alone, they look at me and they know I'm Palestinian from my appearance, and they deal with me with more harshly. At the same time, if a foreigner looks Arab or is not white, they may stop them and treat them badly. It was great to see so many different kinds of people protesting together in the U.S. this summer.

