

1for3 News

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June 2021



CELEBRATING OUR WALK FOR WATER!

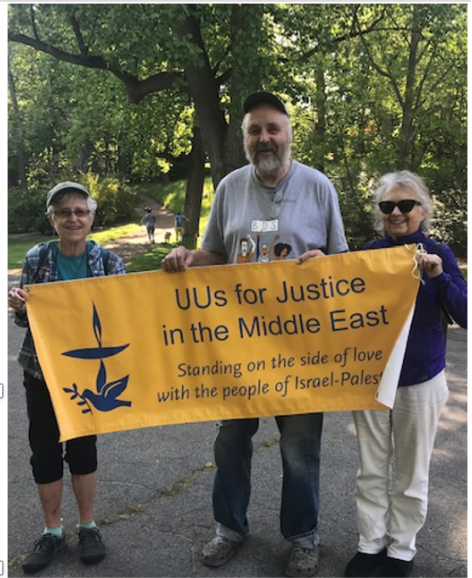
Despite the pandemic and needing to hold the walk virtually, this year supporters raised the most money ever for the Walk for Water 5K: Over \$150K from 791 donations, with 137 walkers registered and 16 incredible teams. Your efforts make such valuable work happen. We loved seeing the photographs of your walks: Your beautiful faces, your lovely bracelets, your powerful and eloquent signs, your generous spirits in action! We look forward to gathering in person next year!



We also wish to thank our amazing and generous sponsors for their support: Abudi Consulting Group; Back Bay Dental Design; Aceituna Grill; Jeff Boshar, Bay Financial Associates LLC; Jewish Voice for Peace Boston, the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, and Andala Café!



Thank you!



Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine
WALK FOR WATER 2021



INTRODUCING LAJEE CENTER'S NEW ACTING DIRECTOR, MOHAMMAD AL-AZZA

We are pleased to introduce to you Mohammad Al-Azza, the new acting director of Lajee Center, who has taken the reins of Lajee Center after the sudden passing of Salah Ajarma. If you have visited Lajee or if you were part of 1for3's early activities in Boston, you likely know Mohammad already—perhaps by his nickname Mousa. He is known for his brave photography and videography and his keen eye for the politics and patterns of everyday life; he is just as well known for his quick humor, a delight in good times and bad.

His family comes from the village of Beit Jibreen, a village less than 25 miles from Aida that had schools for both boys and girls. But his grandparents were dispossessed from their homes there in 1948. Mohammad has lived in Aida Refugee Camp his entire life. He was once one of the youth attending summer camps and activities through Lajee. All of this means he understands the importance of having a community center that serves a new generation of youth. "This is certainly a difficult role to take on, a great responsibility, but our team is carrying it together, to continue to realize our mission. Our work with the upcoming generation is to teach them about their rights and give them the chance to develop their hobbies and talents, because the schools and universities do not provide such opportunities. We work to help people to continue their lives inside the camp, to strengthen the steadfastness of the refugees until they can return to their homes or realize their rights at least." He also commented on what it meant for him, as a young person who grew up with Lajee, to become a leader in this way. "Becoming acting director after Salah's passing is not easy. I never imagined taking on this role in the absence of Salah. I had wanted to do this while he was alive so he can see how all of his work with youth has had an effect."



Since 2012, Mohammad has been the director of Lajee Center's Media Unit, and he produced the documentary about water shortages, [Everyday Nakba](#), that initiated 1for3's work in Palestine (you can read that whole [story here](#)). As Media Unit director, Mohammad has taught youth about photography and video production, documented Lajee's work, and represented many of the [struggles](#) and joys of his community in film and photography. His work has been exhibited widely, including in Scotland, Ireland, England, Belgium, Spain, the United States, Italy, and France. In April 2013, an Israeli soldier [shot](#) him in the face as he was taking photographs of a routine army patrol in the camp. Later that year, soldiers [beat and arrested](#) him to attempt to prevent him from trying to hold the soldier who shot him accountable. Nevertheless, he persisted in his photography and his determination to confront Israeli injustices.

Working closely with Mohammad during this time of transition is a team of experienced Lajee staffers, including Environment Unit director Shatha Al-Azzeh, accountant Israa Abusrour, and librarian Kifah Al-Ajarma, all refugees living in Aida Camp. Among the four of them, they have over three dozen years of experience with Lajee. Israa commented, "The crisis of Salah's passing made me realize how much he had worked with me over many years to help me rely upon myself so that I can now take the necessary decisions for us to move forwards as an organization." They are also working very closely with Nidal Al-Azraq, Executive Director of 1for3. As Nidal commented, "Our deep grief at the loss of our dear friend Salah Ajarma continues. Nevertheless, this moment of transition to a talented new generation of leadership makes me feel like all of the hard work of building and supporting Lajee bears bountiful fruit."

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS PARTICIPATE IN VACCINATION EFFORTS!

The UN refugee services organization UNRWA has moved its clinic to Aida and reached out to us to gain support for the drive to get people vaccinated against COVID-19. Working with UNRWA, H4P's trusted Community Health Workers today help their community members feel ready to take the vaccine. This is just one example of the community-wide impact of our programs. We are proud that we will soon be expanding this community health program to Balata Refugee Camp, the largest camp in the West Bank.

NEW RESEARCH BEGINS TO EVALUATE HYDROPONICS POTENTIAL IN PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS



1for3 has received a grant for a research project to investigate the possibilities for scaling up hydroponics in a way that will support Palestinian refugees' nutritional and social needs for fresh produce. In today's refugee camps, which were never built for more than seventy years of population growth, overcrowding is the norm. 4,400 people live in a population density of 77,464 people per square kilometer in Aida Camp, and 1,337 people live in a population density of 108,000 people per square kilometer in Azza Camp. A proposed expansion location for hydroponic growing we have considered is Balata Camp, also a UN-run Palestinian refugee camp, in the West Bank. Over 30,000 people live there in a population density of 108,000 people per square kilometer, which is almost four times as dense as Manhattan.

Hydroponics not only provides healthy food, it can also help develop community knowledge about agriculture and nutrition and can raise awareness about related issues such as water quality and community-based healthcare. Moreover, a hydroponics program may lead to an income-generating project for 1for3 and its partners as they can help others establish such projects. The current research involves Shatha Al-Azzeh of Lajee Center and John Durant of Tufts University and will be advised by Kadouri University in Jenin. Research will document the current hydroponics system at Lajee Center, evaluate possibilities for expansion for a larger garden impact, create a market map of fresh food consumption in UN-run camps, and evaluate possibilities for commercializing elements of hydroponics systems in Palestine. The research, to be presented in English and Arabic, should occur during the summer of 2021 – so stay tuned for the results of this work. Pictured here: The team meets in the shaded room atop Lajee Center, courtesy of Lajee Center.

THE NEWS FROM AIDA REFUGEE CAMP: ARRESTS, INJURIES, PERSEVERANCE

Living under Israel's violent and despotic rule for over half a century, Palestinians in Aida have learned all too well: After times of protest predictably come times of arrest. Early in the morning of June 3, Israeli special forces stormed Aida Refugee Camp, damaging homes and waking up residents with the [sounds](#) of live ammunition. Israeli soldiers injured three young men, two in their thighs and one in his chest. They arrested three others, who are currently being held at Ofer prison, and who have not been charged. Those arrested join many others of their generation who are in prison, many of whom are now incarcerated under Israel's policy of [administrative detention](#), in which people can be held indefinitely with no charges.



On Saturday, June 12, Israeli violence again came to Lajee Center. The Israeli occupying army detained three children by force from the football (soccer) field of Lajee. Soldiers stormed into the garden with their guns drawn and kidnapped three children, Abdallah Muhammad Abu Srur, 14, 'Amran Mahmood Baraqa'a, 14, and Ahmad Mahmood Baraqa'a, 15. They were in the middle of their practice with the Lajee Football Academy at the time. Everyone on the field and in the playground, youth and families alike, was alarmed and scared by this

intrusion into a cherished space for play. The soldiers tied the children's hands and forced them to walk to the Rachel's Tomb military base. When an adult insisted upon knowing why they had been detained, the army showed him pictures of the children standing next to the wall and said they showed the children throwing stones, but the photographs only showed the children standing in their community. The army then pushed this adult to leave the military base. When, a few minutes later, the parents of the detained children came to Rachel's Tomb to ask about them, the army did not let them come in or speak to them at all. The soldiers later took the children to 300 Checkpoint, up the road from the Rachel's Tomb military base, and held them until two in the morning. When they were finally released, at least one of them had been hit. Said Mohammad Al-Azza, "The army's clear goal was to terrify the children. This is a glaring violation of the rights of the child, of the most basic right to security. It was not only the three children who were harmed, but also everyone who was in the garden at the time. This shows again that there is no security in Palestine, that at any time something can happen, even when children are just playing."

In more positive news, Lajee Center was finally able to carry out its traditional kite flying festival in collaboration with the refugee rights organization Badil. This event is usually a part of Nakba Day commemorations, but it had to be delayed due to the security situation. Children from all of the refugee camps in Bethlehem participated in the activities. This year's [celebration](#) was carried out in honor of the struggle of those in Gaza and Sheikh Jarrah, sending a message of unity to Palestinians in struggle everywhere. As one child wrote on a banner, "To our family in Sheikh Jarrah, our hearts are with you! From Aida Camp #WeWillNotLeave #Steadfast."



In other good news, many residents are finally able to get vaccinations – about six months after Israel provided vaccinations for its citizens. This deadly delay is another illustration of Israel's apartheid rule over Palestinians. Pictured here: A video still of the children's arrest from [video](#) by Mohammad Al-Azza; a kite flier on the hill overlooking Aida Camp, courtesy of Lajee Center.

1FOR3'S HEALTH FOR PALESTINE PRESENTS WEBINAR IN SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Community Health Interventions
A Perspective from Palestine

In the next installment of the *Committed to Communities* webinar series, we unpack how a globally proven and locally generated community-led model can both shift power dynamics and address the most significant health barriers we face today.

This session explores a novel community health worker program in the Palestinian context.

Dr. Zahirah McNatt
Godley St. Goar Chair, Department of Community Health & Social Medicine UCHS

Dr. Bram Wispelwey
Chief Strategist & Co-Founder Health for Palestine | Instructor in Medicine Harvard Medical School

Sarah Al Azzah
Community Health Worker, Aida & Azza Camps | Health for Palestine

Sara Al-Azzeh, a community health worker with Health for Palestine and Dr. Bram Wispelwey, Co-founder and Chief Strategist of Health for Palestine and an Associate Physician in the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital, presented in a panel moderated by Zahirah McNatt, Assistant Professor and Godley-St. Goar chair of the Department of Community Health and Social Medicine at the University of Global Health Equity. As always, they placed their work in the context of history and justice. They spoke powerfully about settler colonialism and the Nakba (catastrophe) of Palestinian dispossession as an ongoing process, connected to ethnic cleansing in Sheikh Jarrah. As Dr. Wispelwey said of Aida and Azza Camps, "It's a context where it's very difficult to be healthy," due to food insecurity, tear gas, constant threats of arrest, and more—and refugees are aware of these social determinants of health. You can watch the webinar [here!](#)