שחרית سحرية
Shaharit
יוצרים מחנה משותף

Shana Tovah Umetukah!

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A Message From Eilon

Dear   Friends,

It is truly hard to fathom that a full year has gone by and we are still deep within a pandemic that has changed the ways we live our lives and the ways we do our work. Like so many of us, it is hard for me to cope with this new normal. But the year goes by, and the Yamim Noraim offers us once again a moment for reflection on where   we   are   and   where   we   are   going.

One of the central lessons for me from the pandemic has been learning to free myself from the expectation that soon this will be over; that the vaccines will put Covid behind us, and we can return to our routines and our regular workplan. Instead, I am trying to let go of my need to control; to accept that these things are

not in my hands. Each day is born anew and what will be next week, next month, perhaps next year cannot be predicted. As the Yiddish saying goes: Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht. Man plans and God laughs. I have learned that letting go and understanding that we are indeed not in control is a religious practice that demands its attention.

It has been a rollercoaster of a year. Zoom meetings, small gatherings, slipping in a seminar, back to Zoom, and so it goes. Plan A, Plan B. Sometimes Plan C. And yet it moves forward. So much innovation, so much improvisation: An Arab Leadership Program inaugurated; Relationship-based community organizing ready with tools and a network of activists for exactly this moment; Virtual events on under-the-radar political trends – including on Arab politics, with a little known member of Knesset named Mansour Abbas, now a household name here in Israel; And a new Israeli government, with our 120 graduate superstar Idit Silman serving as its majority whip. Lots to be proud of.

So, without expectation as to what the future brings, but with increased confidence that we shall know how to meet the moment with the full measure that it demands, my warmest wishes for a year of inner peace, valuable work, and most importantly, good health to you and all you hold near and dear.

Shanna Tovah,

Eilon

A Major Victory in the North!

The culmination of a year of intense activities has led to our activists scoring a major victory for the Ethiopian Community in Kiryat Yam. After years of neglect by the City Hall, the local Community Center will finally be brought back as a central part of the city, thanks to our public campaign to reclaim it. For a year, our group in the city has been meeting with City Hall officials and other non-profits, discussing and drawing plans to translate their vision to reality.

In August 2021, the dream indeed turned into a tangible victory - City Hall has committed to staffing and a budget for cultural programming at the center, in partnership with the Association for the Education and Social Integration of Ethiopian Jews in Israel. This will allow the Ethiopian community to express their culture, organize workshops for the benefit of the city, and ultimately strengthen the sense of solidarity and togetherness of the residents of Kiryat Yam.

Arkan (Arab Leadership Program) - The First Cohort of Graduates

Arkan is our groundbreaking program for the next generation of Arab-Palestinian leadership in Israel. The program nurtures leaders who can "live at the borders" -- one foot planted in their communal identity, and one foot tentatively placed in our shared lives in Israel, with all its conflicts and contradictions. We invite them to debate the most pressing challenges in Israel, while engaging with all the different groups of Israeli society -- many of whom are in direct tension with Israeli Arabs and their political leadership.

After one and two-day seminars held every three weeks throughout the year -- several of which sadly took place on Zoom - the 15 person cohort had a concluding seminar in Jerusalem. The highlight was a meeting at the Knesset with the Majority Whip, MK Idit Silman (Yamina), graduate of our 120 Program, with each side challenging the other, listening and searching for common ground. Our seminar blended lectures and workshops on soft skills such as storytelling and building effective leadership strategies. Welcome to the Common Good network!

Shaharit goes to Lod

Two months after the haunting scenes in many cities in Israel, when the very idea of Jewish-Arab coexistence seemed to be unraveling, we decided to organize a meeting in Lod to meet with our partners and others, listening first-hand to the many versions of the violence that exploded there at such a frightening pace. Every year our staff and board spend the day deeply immersing themselves in a place and its complexities, often having as our local guides members of the Shaharit network. It seemed natural that this year we would go to Lod.

We met with a dizzying kaleidoscope of Jews and Arabs who expressed their anxieties and fears, describing acts of violence that left the city's social fabric in tatters. Yet, we also heard uplifting stories of activists from both sides of the divides, some of those most impacted by the violence, with a renewed commitment to step into the most seemingly intractable divides: A Russian city council member whose neighborhood was cut off from the rest of Jewish Lod, recognizing the need to address the social and economic frustration of particularly the young Arab residents of Lod; a member of the much-maligned by the liberal press Garinim Toranim - intentional religious communities, knocking on Arab doors in her mixed neighborhood to rebuild the bridges even as she knows that some were involved in the smashing of her car; supporters of the Islamic Movement who, like Mansour Abbas, reached out to the Jewish religious community, offering to help repair the damage done in the rioting to

synagogues. Those places that are seen as the source of the tension are the critical partners in creating a future for all.

"Neighbors: We Are Lod"