

# Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace & Justice

SUMMER 2012 NEWSLETTER

Now more than ever, we ask you to consider making a donation to the Rachel Corrie Foundation. There are so many great ideas and so much important work to be done. Help us find resources to turn the ideas into realities! Thank you!

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*"This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything and devote our lives to making this stop. I don't think it's an extremist thing to do anymore. I still really want to dance around to Pat Benatar and have boyfriends and make comics for my coworkers. But I also want this to stop. Disbelief and horror is what I feel. Disappointment. I am disappointed that this is the base reality of our world and that we, in fact, participate in it."*

- Rachel Corrie, February 27, 2003, to her mother

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## Verdict in Corrie Civil Case August 28th! Act Now!

August 13, 2012

Friends,

**The verdict in the Corrie family's civil lawsuit in Israel in the case of Rachel Corrie will be announced in Haifa District Court, Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>** – nearly 7 1/2 years since the case was filed and nearly 2 1/2 years since the trial began. We at the Rachel Corrie Foundation are grateful for how you have remembered Rachel and followed the work of her family and others to pursue accountability and justice in her case. **We call on you now to show support for this lengthy effort and to seize this moment to challenge the home demolitions that Rachel opposed in Gaza nearly ten years ago.**

**The Israeli demolitions policy, sometimes extending to entire villages, is as urgent an issue now as it was when Rachel defended homes in Gaza.** Palestinians in Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and Hebron Hills live daily with the threat (or reality) of their homes being confiscated or turned into rubble. More than 1,000 houses were demolished in the Naqab alone in 2011, and the Prawer Plan, recently approved by the Israeli Government, will lead to displacement of 70,000 people.

**Please mark the week of the Corrie trial verdict with actions to end demolitions that deny Palestinians the right to be secure in their homes.** Reflect the spirit of Rachel Corrie. Reference her killing by the Israeli military with a Caterpillar Inc. militarized bulldozer, and the failure of the Israeli Government to properly respond to what occurred.

**For a detailed Call to Action, to download posters and resources, and to register your actions, visit our website: <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org>**

**In the U.S. join the We Divest campaign and deliver letters to the sixty TIAA-CREF offices nationwide** urging complete divestment from Caterpillar Inc. and other companies that profit from Israel's occupation and home demolition policies. Combine your delivery with an event or

END DEMOLITION OF PALESTINIAN HOMES



JUSTICE FOR INJURY AND KILLING OF  
OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

designate a few to deliver letters. While TIAA-CREF recently removed CAT in its Social Choice accounts, it still holds over a billion dollars of CAT stock.

**In other parts of the world, creatively take a stand against home demolitions now!**

**Send photos or videos of actions** to [info@rachelcorriefoundation.org](mailto:info@rachelcorriefoundation.org)

**Photograph yourself with an image of Rachel above (at our website) and post it on our Tumblr blog.** Send it to the nearest Israeli Consulate. Demand accountability and an end to home demolitions. We will gather images worldwide and send them to the U.S. Department of State, too.

**Sign the We Divest petition urging TIAA-CREF to divest: <http://wedivest.org/petition-full/>**

**Take part in a live conference call with the Corries, Wednesday, August 29th, 6:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time/ 9:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.** RSVP to [rochelle@rachelcorriefoundation.org](mailto:rochelle@rachelcorriefoundation.org) for details.

**Share reflections on Rachel's stand on twitter with the hashtag #RememberRachel.**

All of us hope the outcome of the Corrie's civil trial will provide some measure of justice for Rachel's killing; but regardless, the larger struggle for justice and equal rights continues. **Together, we can seize the moment. We can tell Rachel's story and echo her call for human rights and an end to home demolitions and the Israeli occupation!**

**Thanks for your support as together we build the global movement for Palestinian human rights!**

The Staff and Board of Directors  
Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice

## Interns and Staff

By Nicole Fallon – RCF Student Intern,  
The Evergreen State College

RCF grew by volumes this past spring, adding five interns and a student volunteer. Elizabeth Moore, Austin Nolen, Kaye Michalak, Nicole Fallon, Andrew Nepstad, and Maya Harris contributed hugely to RCF Gaza Projects, BDS and other outreach, events, and advocacy.

In June 2012, we welcomed two new staff. Jen Martinez, our Office Manager, has a



Master's degree in Social Work/Non Profit and Public Management from Rutgers, the State University of New

Jersey. She is a friendly addition, terrific with details, and stands ready to respond to your email and phone inquiries!

Amirah Ziada, our new Project Development Assistant, has been tapped for work on Olympia Arab Festival. Amirah



has been involved with RCF since 2008, so this is a delightful reunion! With a B.A. in International Relations with emphasis in Latin

America and the Middle East, Amirah has been politically active most of her life.

Together, this wonderful mix of interns and staff have accomplished a great deal. We hosted Amani Inshasi from Gaza, educated and networked in our region around the growing BDS movement, shared a Gaza Children's Art Gallery and films from the MAIA Mural Brigade, hosted a Nakba event with Huda Giddens and Bekah Wolf, and reached out to our broad community for support with Olympia Arab Festival. Interns sold Arab sweets during Olympia's Spring Arts Walk and organized a silent auction and even waited tables at our Middle Eastern dinner fund-raiser.

The entire staff at RCF works tirelessly to educate, to make connections, and to support our efforts for peace with justice in the Middle East and beyond. We are proud of them!

## Church Divestment Efforts Continue

Austin Nolen – RCF Student Intern, The Evergreen State College

Eyes were focused this spring and summer on efforts in mainline Protestant denominations to advocate divestment from companies profiting from the Israeli occupation. United Methodist and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) activists led long campaigns to educate their communities and to engage corporations implicated in the occupation. Both campaigns proposed to their national assemblies that the churches divest from three companies with long records of failure to respond to requests to stop profiting from the Israeli occupation: Caterpillar Inc., Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard. All three businesses supply products used by the Israeli military to maintain control of Palestinian lands and people.

In stirring national assembly meetings, Methodists and Presbyterians rejected divestment but strongly supported resolutions for boycott of all Israeli settlement products. The Methodist Church further called on the U.S. Government to end military aid to Israel, and on all countries to end aid to illegal settlements. Methodist Regional Conferences in New York, Northern Illinois, West Ohio, and California-Nevada have already divested funds from the Israeli occupation. Despite some disappointment, activists involved in the church divestment movement cited progress and their determination to bring their churches' finances into alignment with their long-term pronouncements against the occupation. Rachel Corrie Foundation staff and interns supported these national efforts, and Cindy and Craig Corrie were honored to join church and other activists at both national meetings.

## Amani Inshasi – From Gaza to the Pacific Northwest

Rochelle Gause – RCF Project Management

Even with the loosening of the Rafah border, Gazan teacher Amani Inshasi missed her first flight out of Egypt, stuck inside Gaza due to closure. Fortunately, because of her persistence and the support of the Gaza Cultural Exchange (GCE) in Corvallis, Oregon, Amani stepped foot in the U.S. in early July for a three-week visit. In 2011, GCE was in Gaza to build connections between Corvallis and Gaza youth, and Amani served as their translator and teaching assistant.

We were honored to host Amani in our community for part of her trip. Her enthusiasm and drive to share her culture and life experience in Gaza led to a power-packed week connecting with diverse segments of our community. Amani led a cooking workshop (through collaboration with the Olympia Food Co-op), an embroidery circle, a conversational Arabic class, a youth art workshop, and spoke at an evening event at Traditions Café. Amani captivated Olympia hosts and community members with her energy, warmth, and insights into life in Gaza.

Amani currently works with the Holy Family School in Gaza City as an English language tutor for elementary children and volunteers with the NGO Save Youth Future Society where she provides English language instruction for young adults. She is the Gaza coordinator for a Skype program between volunteers in Europe and the U.S. and students at Save Youth Future Society. Shortly after returning home, Amani posted on her Facebook page "*Back to the Gaza prison; it feels like a lifetime sentence :/*". Hopefully, with each connection made and cross-cultural exchange, more and more Americans will be moved to question our government's foreign policies and to join the movement demanding human rights for all.



## Victory - Olympia Food Co-op Lawsuit Dismissed, Fees Awarded to Defendants

Andrew Meyer – Olympia BDS

July 2012 marked the two-year anniversary of the Olympia Food Co-op's decision to boycott Israeli products, becoming the first grocery store in the nation to do so. The boycott came in response to a call made by Palestinian civil society in 2005, asking the international community to engage in widespread Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns as a way to pressure Israel to end its occupation and human rights abuses in Palestine.

In September 2011, five individuals filed a lawsuit against sixteen current and former members of the Olympia Food Co-op's Board of Directors, seeking to overturn the boycott. The lawsuit, which was filed in lieu of pursuing more democratic options for recourse that are available to co-op members, also sought to collect unspecified damages. The plaintiffs claimed that the board of directors did not adhere to their bylaws and mission statement when passing the boycott.

“ We are pleased the Court found this case to be what it is – an attempt to chill free speech on a matter of public concern. This sends a message to those trying to silence support of Palestinian human rights to think twice”

In February 2012, in a landmark decision, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Thomas McPhee dismissed the lawsuit, calling it a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) a suit that violates Washington State law. Bruce Johnson, one of the lead drafters of Washington's anti-SLAPP law, is one of the attorneys representing the current and former board members, a team that also includes attorneys from the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR). “We're thrilled that the court saw fit to protect the board's right to free speech,” Johnson said. “This decision affirms the right to engage in peaceful boycotts without fear of being dragged through expensive litigation.”



Speaking to the importance of this legal precedent, Maria LaHood, a senior staff attorney with CCR, said, “We are pleased the Court found this case to be what it is – an attempt to chill free speech on a matter of public concern. This sends a message to those trying to silence support of Palestinian human rights to think twice before they bring a lawsuit.”

Washington's anti-SLAPP legislation also allows for fines and legal fees to be leveled against those who are found to have filed a SLAPP. Judge McPhee ordered the five plaintiffs to pay \$160,000 in fines, \$10,000 for each of the current and former board members named in the lawsuit. Additional legal fees will be assessed and awarded at a later date. The Rachel Corrie Foundation has been proud to stand in support of the Olympia Food Co-op during these proceedings.

## Democratic Convention – An Organizer Reflects

Kay Ellison, Delegate to the 2012 Washington State Democratic Party Convention

What an exciting challenge to bring the issue of Israel/Palestine to the Washington State Democratic Party Convention. Encouraged by the Rachel Corrie Foundation, a number of us statewide carried platform resolutions on U.S. funding of Israel to our precinct caucuses. Through an arduous process one such resolution eventually reached the floor of the state convention for a vote. While it didn't pass, we had an impact and learned a great deal!

How might we use our time and energy more effectively next time?

- ⌘ First, let's get as many as possible to precinct caucuses statewide to bring resolutions and become delegates to county conventions. We CAN help shape our platform, educate more people and shape public sentiment by being part of the political process.
- ⌘ Second, if we can agree in advance upon one resolution, each delegate will have confidence in the one he or she brings.

- ⌘ Third, we must help delegates prepare for county conventions – to look at the platform, to see if the Israel/Palestine resolutions coming out of county committees state what we want, to stand to suggest platform changes, and to run to be state convention delegates. If resolutions at the county level are not satisfactory, time can be saved using subsequent county delegate meetings to secure signatures to bring an alternate resolution to the state platform committee.

At this year's Washington State Democratic Convention, two supporters rose before the platform committee, each for two minutes, speaking truth about Palestine. Another was able to speak for a minute before the entire convention. We distributed information about U.S. funding to Israel and Israel's human rights record to each delegate's chair. In the future, we might speak before the party's Progressive and Jewish caucuses, too.

Throughout this process, it was notable that no one said Israel was justified in its treatment of Palestine – only that our resolution was superfluous. We are on the side of truth, and it is worth speaking about – even in this political venue.

# SUMMER 2012 NEWSLETTER

## Olympia Arab Festival – October 6<sup>th</sup>

Amirah Ziada – Project Development

Shuruq (sunrise), Olympia's first Arab Festival is coming soon! Join us for this window into the Arab world October 6<sup>th</sup> at The Olympia Center in downtown Olympia. Daytime events are FREE to the public.

Together, we will celebrate the food, culture, traditions, lifestyles, and peoples of the Arab world in a joyous, authentic manner. With Arab-American partners and neighbors, we strive through this RCF annual Peace Works event for lasting appreciation and respect for our own and other cultures, and for ability to understand and accept our differences, while acknowledging our similarities and enriching each other's lives.

Bringing together Arab-Americans from our region, the festival will provide food, music, art, films, dance, poetry, children's activities, educational panels, and visual displays reflecting the diversity of the

world's 22 Arab countries. Among performers are the critically acclaimed Batiste Debke Dance Team and the House of Tarab Music Ensemble.

The outdoor Mural Café and Hookah Lounge (corner of State and Capital Way ) will offer games, Arab-style refreshments, and entertainment – guitarist Tarik Bentlemsani Friday evening and documentary film clips featuring local Arab-American neighbors.

Don't miss headliner Khaled the Comic in a ticketed event Saturday evening at The Olympia Center. Khaled tours nationwide



and throughout Canada and the Middle East. And October 7<sup>th</sup>, head to the movies when Arab films are screened at the Olympia Film Society.

There are exciting ways to plug in and help make Olympia Arab Festival a huge success! Love kids? Get involved with children's activities! Prefer coffee, playing games, and listening to music? Volunteer at the Mural Café and Hookah Lounge. Busy until October 6<sup>th</sup>? There are plenty "day of event" volunteer activities! Want to support Arab Festival but have no time? Become a cosponsor or send your donation today! Let us know how you can help.

Watch our website for updated information on performances and events. We can't wait to see you there!

To get involved, email us at [info@rachelcorriefoundation.org](mailto:info@rachelcorriefoundation.org)

For updates and information, visit [www.rachelcorriefoundation.org/peaceworks/arab-fest-2012](http://www.rachelcorriefoundation.org/peaceworks/arab-fest-2012)

[WWW.RACHELCORRIEFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.RACHELCORRIEFOUNDATION.ORG)

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**RCF Has Moved!**  
Please note our new address: 203 4th Ave. E., Suite 402, Olympia WA 98501  
We are in the same building, but in a new suite.  
**Thank You!**

**Rachel Corrie** Foundation for Peace & Justice  
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Address Service Requested