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Subject: [rapprochement] To the people of Gaza - From the Family of Rachel Corrie

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April 23, 2003

To the people of Gaza

From the Family of Rachel Corrie

Greetings to all of our friends in the Occupied Territories. We, the parents, sister and brother of Rachel Corrie, want to thank you for all you did for Rachel while she was working in Rafah and for all you

have done to honor her memory since she died on March 16. We understand that you will be remembering her especially on the fortieth day anniversary of her death. Know that we will be thinking of all of you

We are grateful to those of you who became Rachel's friends and who welcomed her into your homes and shared your tea and food with her. She wrote to us about you and about your wonderful families. She admired how you supported one another even as you struggled against the cruelties of the occupation. Writing about you, Rachel told us,

I am nevertheless amazed at their strength in being able to defend such a large degree of their humanity—laughter, generosity, family-time—against the incredible horror occurring in their lives and against the constant presence of death.....I am also discovering a degree of strength and of basic ability for humans to remain human i

the direst of circumstances.... I think the word is dignity."

We are grateful to those of you who cared for Rachel as she died and after. We will always remember the respect and love with which she was treated in life and in death by the people of Gaza.

We are grateful to all of you who have honored Rachel's memory durir

these past weeks. It lifts our spirits to hear of the Rachel Corrie Children and Youth Cultural Center in Rafah and the Rachel Corrie Center for Women's Empowerment. We know there are now newborn babies named Rachel and streets that bear her name, too. We cannot find adequate words to tell you how much these things mean to us. Thank you for the many ways in which you have honored our daughter and sister.

Rachel wrote to us that coming to Rafah was one of the best things she had ever done in her life. She told us that she would stay in Rafah longer than she had originally planned. She had watched another

ISM volunteer say goodbye to the families she had grown close to, and

Rachel said she saw then how hard it would be to one day leave all of

you. She had dreams of making connections between Rafah and her hometown in the United States—Olympia, Washington. She had started planning to make Rafah and Olympia sister cities. She had gone to her

old elementary school in Olympia and had encouraged the children there to write letters to the children in Rafah. She was hoping to help the women in Rafah who make handcrafted items to sell those items at a fair trade store in Olympia. Rachel wanted your voices to be heard in the United States. Had she lived, Rachel would have worked to make all these things happen. Now, we want you to know that

many people in the United States are working very hard to make these dreams of Rachel's come true. The dreams are not forgotten. Rachel is

not forgotten. And your suffering is not forgotten.

Our family wants very much to come to Rafah. We plan to do so as soon

as we are able. When we come, we hope to meet the children who taught

Rachel Arabic words, the grandmother who watched out for her health, and the families with whom she shared meals and tea. We hope to visit

the Rachel Corrie Children and Youth Cultural Center and the Rachel Corrie Center for Women's Empowerment and maybe to meet a newborn baby named Rachel. We are eager to look into your eyes and to have you look into ours as we remember Rachel together.

We want you to know that each day here in the United States we are doing all that we can to make Americans aware of your suffering. We will continue to work here for a just and peaceful resolution to this

conflict that has caused so much loss for each of you and now for us

as well. We know that Rachel will forever be linked to the Palestinian people. She brought your story to us so that now, you will always be in our hearts.

Sincerely,

Cindy, Craig, Chris, and Sarah Corrie

Rachel's Family