Dear Friends,

At the end of another amazing year of programming, we pause to thank you all for your support and commitment to improving Jewish-Muslim and Israeli-Palestinian relations; relations often marred by distrust, hate, and violence. Your support helps us bring together the young people who will lead their communities on a new path. To ensure the continuation and success of our transformative programs, please make a donation to Abraham’s Vision.

While 2009 comes to a close, we are preparing a very exciting start to the new year! On Sunday evening, January 17, 2010, for the first time ever, Abraham’s Vision will be co-sponsoring UnityJam, a benefit concert at Spangenberg Theater in Palo Alto, CA, featuring word famous rock musician Salman Ahmad! This incredible evening will support conflict transformation programming and humanitarian relief in Pakistan. Also in January, through the Center for Transformative Education we will offer our second annual Facilitation Training course in San Francisco, January 11th to the 22nd.

Of course, our year-round programming, including the Unity Programs and the Unity Program II, are continuing on course, and our Vision Program fellows are back on campus after an incredible fall conference.

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UnityJam Benefit Concert - Buy Your Tickets Today!
UnityJam is an incredible musical event featuring world famous music stars Salman Ahmad, Elizabeth Schwartz, Muhammad Saleem, and Yale Strom. For the first time ever Abraham's Vision will be teaming up with the Salman & Samina Global Wellness Initiative (SSGWI), an organization working to help Pakistan’s 3 million impoverished IDPs (internally-displaced persons). All proceeds from this benefit concert will support Abraham's Vision and SSGWI.

Learn more about UnityJam.

Purchase UnityJam tickets.

CTE Facilitation Course Offered for Second Year!

After the successful launch of our pilot facilitation training course in January 2009, the Center for Transformative Education (an affiliate of Abraham’s Vision) is happy to announce the return of this course to the University of San
Francisco.

Offered at the University of San Francisco from January 11 to the 22 (M-F), our facilitation training course prepares students to become practitioners in working with groups in conflict. To learn more click here.

2010-11 Vision Program and Beyond Bridges: Israel-Palestine Accepting Applications

The Vision Program is a ten month fellowship for Jewish American, Palestinian American, Israeli, and Palestinian university students. Fellows travel to the former Yugoslavia to explore the Israeli-Palestinian and the Balkan conflicts academically utilizing comparative conflict and social justice analysis and personally through individual and group processes. Learn more and apply!

Beyond Bridges: Israel-Palestine is a summer program that takes university students to the Middle East on a journey of comparative conflict analysis and conflict transformation. The program combines rigorous academics and practical hands-on training, allowing students to explore questions at the core of all conflicts. Learn more and apply!

Unity Programs Bay Area

The Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California in Oakland and Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco, both welcomed in our Unity Program students.

This month the Unity Programs have been full of exciting classes, field-trips, and conversations. Classes in the East Bay focused on similarities and differences between Jewish and Muslim religious practices. Jewish students taught the
Muslim students about various components of Jewish prayer and shared interesting aspects of the siddur (Jewish prayer book). In order to learn about Muslim prayer, the group spent a Sunday morning inside the prayer room at the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California learning about how Muslims prayed and then compared certain aspects of Jewish and Muslim prayer.

Students in the South Bay began an exploration of communal conceptions of the other within both the Muslim and Jewish communities. The students discussed what their communal perceptions were of certain external identifiers and symbols with the following trigger question: if they were walking down the street and saw someone wearing either a kippah or hijab, what would they think? The discussion led to very insightful observations.

The San Francisco Unity Program group took two field trips this month - to Congregation Sherith Israel, SF's oldest synagogue, where they met with two rabbis inside the sanctuary - and to the Bayview Islamic Center (BIC), where the group had the opportunity to see the community where the Muslim students live and pray. The visit to BIC was highlighted by one of the Muslim students doing the call to prayer at prayer time, which enabled the Jewish students to experience a certain aspect of Muslim prayer.

All the Unity Program groups have been engaging in serious discussions, most interestingly about the representation of Muslims in the media and Hollywood films and about what makes a Jew a Jew. Both of these discussions have challenged the students to think in new and interesting ways and has enabled a unique interaction between the groups and highlights their excitement to seek to understand certain things about the identities and practices of the other group.
- Experiential Learning: We are committed to creative forms of education that both recognize the importance of content-based teaching and value individual and group participant experiences.
- Encounters: We approach inter-group encounters as a reflection of the political realities in which we live, utilizing them as a central element of our educational approach.
- Political Education: We focus on individual and collective relationships within current political realities, placing the relationship between individuals and groups at the center of the educational experience rather than analyzing political developments as something separate from students.