



## Newsletter

### June 2019

#### B8 of Hope updates!

The year 2019 is off to a great start for B8 of Hope!

Here is an update of all the actions that the B8 of Hope team undertook in the first half of the year.

#### The Gala was a success!

The B8 of Hope team is pleased to announce that the Gala was a huge success!

The Intercontinental Hotel helped us host 450 participants in Geneva on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 for a wonderful evening. The audience was marvelously diverse, bringing together Jews and Arabs from the diasporas, international expats and Swiss locals, all united around the fundamental message of peace and non-violence that B8 of Hope promotes.

The evening was a real emotional rollercoaster. The Iranian American stand-up comedian, Maz Jobrani, made us laugh to tears, whilst the activists Raz Kones (Israeli), Yara Amayra (Palestinian) and Huda Abuarquob (regional director of Alliance for Middle East Peace) moved us to tears. These thrills and emotions really made us feel as if we were at a family gathering... The family of B8 of Hope.

Thanks to all the businesses and private individuals who contributed to our tombola and auction items, we were able to raise funds that were used to support our ongoing projects – Roots, Taghyeer, Women Wage Peace, Combatants for Peace, Karama Center, A Land for All, Saving the Children Program (Peres Center for Peace), as well as broaden our pool to a few newcomers: [Jerusalem Youth Chorus](#), [The Road to Recovery](#), and [Tech2Peace](#).

We would like to thank our numerous amazing volunteers, and Gala Committee members: Leila Hawa, Amanda Seilern, Moni and Luc Fayon, Karim Anabtawi, and Mehra Rimer, without whom this night would not have been possible.

Here is a [short clip](#) of the Gala



*Our guests at the Gala, raising stars of hope that were crafted by Israeli and Palestinian children*

## Spreading Awareness at Columbia University

In April, Mehra Rimer was invited by Professor Zachary Metz at Columbia University's SIPA graduate school, to give a presentation on B8 of Hope and its focus on 2019: **building synergies between grassroots initiatives**. Her daughter Shiraz was also asked to introduce her blog called [Humans of the Holy Land](#).



*Shiraz Rimer, and Mehra Rimer at Columbia University's SIPA in April*

## Screenings

In these past few months, B8 of Hope continued contributing to the production and screenings of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists' movies by sponsoring them.

B8 of Hope collaborated with the association [Giving Women](#) in April, on the occasion of their 10th anniversary, to organise a screening of the documentary "[Les Guerrières de la Paix](#)" by Hanna Assouline, in Geneva, in the presence of the Palestinian activist, and protagonist of the movie, Yara Amayra, who gave a speech to the audience at the house of Atalanti Moquette, founder of Giving Women.

In May, B8 of Hope sponsored the screening of "[The Field](#)" at the International Oriental Film festival, with the collaboration of Cercle Martin Buber and JCall. "[The Field](#)" recounts the story of the beginnings of Roots. The film director, Mordechai Vardi, replied to the questions



of the public after the screening.



*The Palestinian activist, Yara Amaya, speaking about the documentary "Les Guerrières de la Paix" in Geneva*

## Trip on the Ground

Mehra Rimer went on one of her regular Israel-Palestine trip in May to attend the **Alternative Memorial Ceremony** by Combatants for Peace and Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF), which B8 of Hope sponsored for the past two years.

In this highly moving ceremony, Israeli and Palestinian families united in Tel Aviv to pay tribute to members of their families who fell during the conflict. This ceremony was launched 14 years ago, with only 50 people. This year, they were 9,000.

Rav Hanan Schlesinger, co-founder of Roots, who accompanied Mehra to the ceremony, wrote a deeply touching [article](#) about it.

## The Jerusalem Youth Chorus in Geneva

On June 28th, a group of 26 young Israeli and Palestinian singers from the Jerusalem Youth Chorus arrived in Lausanne, in a partnership with the [association Coexistences](#). These singers are participating to one of Coexistences' bridge-building programs in Lausanne and will sing at the United Nations in Geneva on July 3rd.

Two of our interns, Parker and Ilona, were present in Lausanne to welcome the group in a park, where they sang and met their host families around a delicious picnic.

Follow us on our B8 of Hope Instagram account (@b8ofhope) to hear them sing!

# The Spring of Youth!

Two of our hand-picked speakers at the March Gala were young women.

Two of our newer members of the pool we support are led by youth.

Carrying on the same theme of youth, B8 of Hope is very excited to welcome its first three interns.

Brooks Fleet is from the Graduate Institute in Geneva helped us write our annual report and produce our March gala short clip.

Ilona Métais studies at McGill University and worked on this newsletter and the building of a B8 of Hope international Youth Group.

Parker Bryan attends Wesleyan University and is working on developing our website and social networks.

## News from the organisations we support

### Judur / Shorashim / Roots

Thank you Roots for this heartwarming letter that we received after our Gala. Here is an extract:

*To our incredible angels from abroad- B8 of Hope,*

*(...) Awe and gratitude are deep feelings- that leave us humbled by the work, sweat, tears that you have all poured into the Gala and beyond. As professional people with the tools and connections to create such an incredible event (...)*

*As the pictures and testimonies of the SUCCESS are now in- it leaves us with all the more inspired with gratitude and awe, in addition to the hope. The hope that comes from knowing that Roots' work on the ground is not going unnoticed. To know even more deeply that this work cannot be done alone and to feel the shared effort and sweat that bonds us across the physical difference. (...)*

*All this are words to try and put together our expression of deep appreciation and thanks to you, your families, your colleagues and your hearts that put so much into making the Gala take off like it did. (...)*

*Can't wait to continue our path together and discover how far we can reach when we dream and work so hard to make these dreams come true.*

*In closing, our blessings to B8 of Hope for all the hope, trust and partnership,*

*Raz, Shaul Judelman, Khaled Abu Awwad and Hanan Schlesinger*

## Taghyeer

A message from Taghyeer founder, Ali Abu Awwad, on the occasion of the end of the Ramadan:

When we create things we are proud of, then the occupation will end. When we treat each other with respect and dignity, then the occupation will end. When we start taking responsibility and stop blaming others, then the occupation will end. When we free ourselves from being victims, then the occupation will end. When we break our silence towards corruption, then the occupation will end. When we stand for ourselves without being against others, then the occupation will end. When we cultivate accountable leaders, then the occupation will end. When we stop the competition of suffering, then the occupation will end. When we recognize each other's identities and roots in this land, then the occupation will end. When we ask the world to be pro-solution instead of choosing sides, then the occupation will end. When we adopt non-violence as an identity in every aspect of our lives, then the occupation will end. When we practice our belonging to this land without ignoring each other's rights, then the occupation will end.

When we respect this land as the mother of us all, only then change will begin.

## Combatants for Peace

The main news is the huge success of the Alternative Memorial Day in May, co-organised with Parents Circle Families Forum. To watch the full ceremony, click [here](#).

## A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland

This movement's flagship event "A place for All" was launched for the first time this year. The gathering took place on the green line, uniting Palestinians and Israelis, with the vision of open borders and a shared homeland. The attendance was around 200 enthusiastic participants from both sides, discussing and imagining a shared future.

If you want to know more about A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland's, you can [watch this video](#), which was sponsored by B8 of Hope.

## Women Wage Peace

The Israeli women of Women wage Peace have multiple faces and identities. The Jewish activists of Women Wage Peace were invited by their Muslim fellow activists to different Iftar dinners in various places in the country.



## Karama Center

The Palestinian Non-Violence Center Karama built on a piece of land belonging to the Abu Awwad family is an oasis of peace, which will soon go under major changes and renovation work. We can't wait to see the results soon thanks to Lisa Schulz and the local volunteers who are going to put a lot of effort and sweat. The center was cleaned this winter and getting ready for phase 2 later on this summer. In the meantime, it hosted several Iftar dinner organized by Judur/Shorashim/Roots which is the main user of the venue for the time being and hopefully more initiatives in the future. The high-light of the Iftars for us was the visit of our Swiss Ambassador Jean-Daniel Ruch. Some members of Roots joined the dinner as well as the Danish Ambassador and other friends of the Abu Awwad family.

## INITIATIVES WE SUPPORT



Stay tuned for more news about our pool of organizations!