



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
**RAMALLAH**  
— PALESTINE —

# CULTURAL EXCHANGE

PROGRAM



# PRESERVING THE PAST. *Promoting the future.*

## ABOUT US

Established in 1958, The American Federation of Ramallah Palestine was created as a non-profit, charitable and educational organization. Members of AFRP descend from the Christian family of Rashid Haddadin and his sons, originally settled in the city of Ramallah in the mid-1500's. The purpose behind our organization is to perpetuate and promote the rich heritage of the Ramallah family and their descendents in the diaspora.

This program hopes to foster an educational bond between the United States and Palestine by providing opportunities to help propel cultural and social interaction.

## OUR PARTNER

### *The Welfare Association*

The Welfare Association is an organization built on a vision that the Palestinian people will live as an independent, free and democratic Arab Palestine, living in dignity, prosperity and self-fulfillment, with equitable access to opportunities to realize their full potential with distinction and creativity. Their mission is to strive to make a distinguished contribution toward furthering the progress of Palestinians



preserving their heritage and identity, supporting their living culture and building civil society. It aims to achieve these goals by methodically identifying the Palestinian people's needs and priorities and establishing the soundest mechanisms to maximize the benefits from the available funding resources.

They specialize in education, culture, youth programs, community development, revitalizing Jerusalem and orphan support. Their work aims to seeding the hope and creating a bridge for building a great Palestine. They are committed in making the dream of Palestine an achievable reality.

### *The mission:*

To build a solid relationship between leaders from the United States and the Palestinian people. We desire to create harmony and understanding between the people of America and Palestine.

## CULTURAL EXCHANGE

### *Experience Palestine. Educate others.*

There is no better way to understand and enjoy Palestine than in person. Our program exists to help promote the American/Palestinian relationship and build a solid relationship between leaders from the United States and the Palestinian people.

By providing a personal experience for participants, we create space for stories to be shared, leading to harmony and understanding between the two countries.

The city of Ramallah is one of the most affluent and culturally rich locations in Palestine, making it an ideal travel destination. There are a number of siteseeing opportunities including Jaffa, Haifa, Tabagha, Nazareth and Capernaum. You will have the chance to see beautiful and spiritual locations such as Bahá'í Gardens, Mount Carmel Promenade, Wedding Church in Cana and the Church of Transfiguration. One of the most memorable destinations on your trip includes a visit to Jerusalem and a scenic tour of the city's most famous sites: Temple Mount, Church of the Pater Noster and the Garden of Gethsemane.

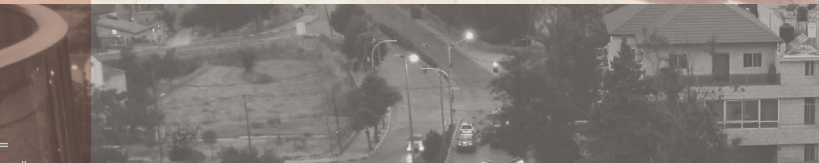
Other highlights include visits to refugee camps and surrounding villages, and also meeting with the Mayor of Ramallah and other city officials. Your trip will be as enjoyable as it is impactful, with a healthy balance of pleasure and purpose.



### *BUILD LASTING RELATIONSHIPS...*



### *...BASED ON COMMON GOALS & TRUTH.*







# ONE MISSION TRIP. *Seven days. A lifetime of stories.*

The program consists of a seven-day journey, plus travel time, catering to groups with various areas of focus, such as religion, journalism, education, politics, etc. Each group will have its own agenda, however many aspects of the mission will cross over between the groups, allowing all participants to see and experience the essentials of Palestine and its surrounding areas. For example, all participants will have the opportunity to visit

holy cities, including Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nazareth and Galilee, visit some cultural and civic centers, as well as refugee camps and border villages. Each group will engage with local dignitaries related to the group's field of interest with a focus on meeting impactful people and receiving direct feedback about life in Palestine under occupation. Some of these dignitaries include the Mayor, council and the Governor of the district of Ramallah.

## COSTS

### *Minimizing expenses. Maximizing experiences.*

AFRP has arranged to cover the vast majority of costs associated with the mission in an effort to alleviate financial responsibility for the participants. Costs that AFRP covers include:

- International travel (airfare, etc.)
- Hotels in Ramallah
- All meals
- Travel in Palestine (ground transportation, etc.)

#### ***Participant Responsibilities:***

*In exchange for covered expenses, participants understand the role they play upon completing the mission, agreeing to share their own personal experiences with their respective audiences and colleagues within their profession or at future Ramallah events.*

## AUDIENCES

### *Inviting people in impactful positions.*

Participants have a range of backgrounds, each with their own unique strengths and abilities to help convey our messages. Here are some of the groups we seek and why they're such a huge asset on this mission, and beyond:

#### ► ***Clergy***

Many people in the religious community have made an impact through their support of Israel. Recruiting religious leaders to travel to Palestine also helps reverse some of the religious rights impact in Congress.

#### ► ***Members of Congress, Congressional Staff & Local State Representatives***

It's essential for our country's leaders to tour Palestine, visiting refugee camps and meeting with political, religious and civic leaders, so they can witness firsthand the realities of Palestinian life. We often engage key congressional staff members to provide us the opportunity to counter the work done by the Israeli lobby. Part of our strategy is to target specific local public officials and invite them to meet with their peers in Palestine to open the lines of communication and begin long-term dialogues in the name of progress.

#### ► ***Journalists***

For the general public, TV and newspapers are the main source of information about Palestine. Unlike stories that come to journalists through wire services, the majority of reports on Palestine come from a bureau in Israel. Providing journalists the opportunity to travel and witness for themselves the situation on the ground will not only educate them, but also provide them with a balanced perspective.

#### ► ***Educators***

We seek teachers, school administrators and school superintendents (at college and high school levels) for their ability to reach and inform future generations of supporters. In order to impact policies in the Middle East, it is necessary to visit the schools in Palestine to build cooperative programs that benefit students in both the U.S. and Palestine.

***CHANGE POLICY  
& THE FUTURE...***



## TESTIMONIALS

### *Seeing the truth. Speaking the truth.*



#### ***Sister Cheryl Liske***

*Executive Director, Gamaliel of Michigan & Michigan Interfaith Voice / Detroit, MI*

At some point during our mission trip in Palestine, I emailed my prioress, Sister Attracta Kelly, thanking her for suggesting that I apply for membership in this mission. This is the “best Easter of my life,” I said, because in so many places and in so many ways, the meaning of resurrection was lived again and again.

The root of the word “resurrection” means to “stand up again.” Resurrection is made real when the people — young and old, Christian and Muslim alike — of a city under occupation turn out on a cold rainy day to “stand up” for who they are and are loud and proud in a parade of youth and spiritual heritage. Resurrection is real when a young man (still a boy really at 18) three months out of prison can ignore our questions about his personal

pain and eagerly perform a “rap” on the oppression of his people. Resurrection is a conservatory of music teaching young people to make beautiful music in a city (Jerusalem) where the occupying force is “systematically” (illustrated by the PowerPoint presentation) trying to destroy not only the Palestinian culture, but the very Palestinian presence in the city. Resurrection is a weekly demonstration to protest the land grab of settlements and the closing of roads. Resurrection is standing up again and again and again.

Thank you for the experience of resurrection in the people of Ramallah and Palestine. Like the patroness of my Dominican order, Mary of Magdala, I am committed to telling this story of resurrection.

#### ***Peg Hess***

*Spiritual Director / Knoxville, TN*

I left Palestine with a deep respect for its people—their resilience, perseverance, openness and commitment to peaceful resistance while under the relentless harassment and personal violations of Israeli occupation. My experiences were both joyful and deeply sobering. Surrounded by a thriving community of Christians and Muslims, together we celebrated in the Ramallah Easter parade to welcome the sacred light. In stark contrast, on hillsides, valleys and in refugee camps, I heard, described and saw the daily insults of life under occupation.

I left Palestine haunted by many faces and stories, including that of:

A farmer whose land bears the weight of a large settlement and whose words convey his despair. Access to his remaining land is violated by a blocked road and by curfews. With his neighbors, he protests these violations peacefully, protests that bring nightly visits and arrests of

young boys by the Israeli army.

A mother living in a refugee camp whose tears answer when asked what it has been like for her to endure the almost 20-year imprisonment of her husband as well as that of her sons. One son, still a teen, home from years in prison, describes his torture and solitary confinement; but he also shares his song for his father’s hope for return.

A female engineer, born 30 years ago in a refugee camp across the border, returning to Palestine for the first time in her life. She had been detained at the airport for five hours before being released to meet her cousins. She lives and works in Dubai, but is unable to secure a passport from any country. She states that she has no home, and never will.

I left Palestine with a heavy heart and a promise to be a witness to the truth of what I have seen and heard.

#### ***Rev. Taek Kim***

*Carleton United Methodist Church / Carleton, MI*

This mission trip allowed me to experience what would otherwise be impossible to. Seeing firsthand what is going on in Palestine, meeting with Palestinians and gaining a personal perspective of the suffering of occupation, and living in Palestine for even a brief time allowed for me to witness and experience the beauty of the people and land, as well as the horrifying treatment of Palestinians.

My heart was touched, my mind was transformed, and my faith and courage strengthened. It was a blessing to experience the life and wonderful Palestinian culture through the people we met and the places we visited. And after talking to community leaders, community members and those living in refugee camps, it was clear that the only way things will change is for people to understand and do

something about the injustices of occupation.

I know how important it is to build relationships when doing anything, from sharing the love of God to stopping injustices. This trip that was made possible by the American Federation of Ramallah Palestine was another very powerful way to begin building those relationships for change in the name of justice and peace. The seeds planted will not only grow, but produce more seeds of change and justice.

I thank the AFRP, the leaders of our trip Basem Hishmeh and Johnny Rukab, and all who helped make this mission possible for us.





بنك فلسطين  
BANK OF PALESTINE



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## American Federation of Ramallah Palestine

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