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Transforming the Present, Shaping the Future

In this
Issue

UP students
Prepare for
Group
Process

VP Conf. @
USF

November 2011 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and the Muslim New Year, and Winter begins to unfold, we hope you are taking time to reflect about your contribution to improving the world for every human being worldwide. Working with individuals and communities to transform conflicts through education creates lasting effects. It also requires years of hard work and commitment.

Supporting Abraham's Vision allows you to contribute to the transformation of personal and collective relationships between and among Jews, Muslims, Israelis, and Palestinians. This winter help support the most powerful tool in the fight against inequity, ignorance, and discrimination—Education. Please make a [donation](#) to Abraham's Vision.

Salam, Shalom, Peace,

Huda Abu Arqoub and Aaron Hahn Tapper
Co-Executive Directors

Here are this month's updates:

- Seventh Consecutive Unity Programs Preparing for Year's First Group Process
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Seventh Consecutive Unity Programs Preparing for Year's First Group Process



UP Students learning with and from each other through group process sessions last year.

This month Unity Program students from all three Bay Area chapters are meeting together for their first group process session. This is our seventh consecutive year of the UP. With an incredibly strong group of Co-Educators, the 2011-12 Unity Program promises to be another excellent and transformative experience.

The UP teaches Jewish and Muslim 15 to 18 year-olds about issues relevant to North American Jewish and Muslim communities, the historical relationship between Muslims and Jews, and the relationship between Judaism and Islam. Since 2005 we have graduated 210 students from this intensive ten-month program while partnering with more than sixteen Muslim and Jewish institutions.

With three regional groups—East Bay, Peninsula/South Bay, and San Francisco—the UP is designed to work with up to 72 students this year. Click [here](#) or email UP Director Rangineh Azimzadeh (rangineh@abrahamsvision.org) to learn more about the course curriculum, staff bios, and other program details.

A Few Spots Still Open for Bay Area Unity Programs



We still have a few spots open in our three Bay Area Unity Programs: East Bay, Peninsula/South Bay, and city of San Francisco. [Apply now!](#)

2011-12 Vision Program Fall Conference Reunites Fellows at USF

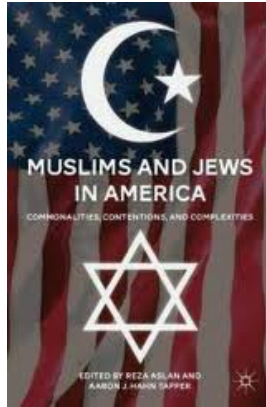


2011-12 VP Fellows in San Francisco for their Fall Conference, one of two conferences following the summer experience in the Balkans.

[Vision Program](#) fellows traveled into the San Francisco Bay Area from Israel, Palestine, and all over the US to attend the Fall Conference. Held from November 17-20, this was the first time all 12 fellows had the opportunity to see one another since their intensive trip to the Balkans, which took place in June and July.

The Fall Conference kicked-off with a panel of BBIP (Beyond Bridges: Israel-Palestine) Summer 2011 students and current VP fellows open to the USF campus, where panelists discussed the role "Identity Politics" plays in conflicts. Approximately 60 USF students and faculty were present at this exciting event, which was followed by a workshop on arts and social justice activism with Professor Amie Espen-Dowling from USF's Department of Performing Arts and Social Justice.

Fellows who traveled in for the conference from Israel and Palestine stayed on for an additional week in order to give a number of presentations at communities throughout the Bay Area.



Released in April 2011, *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities* is a compilation of essays co-edited by internationally acclaimed author, writer, and AV Board member Reza Aslan and AV Co- Executive Director Aaron Hahn Tapper.

This one-of-a-kind book explores contemporary Jewish-Muslim relations in the United States and the distinct and often creative ways in which these two communities interact with one another in the American context. Each of the book's sixteen essays discusses a different episode from the recent twentieth and current twenty-first century American milieu that links these two groups together.

Individuals who contributed to this important volume are as follows (in order of appearance in book): Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN), Dr. Reza Aslan, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, Dr. Omid Safi, Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Debbie Almontaser, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, Dr. Aaron J. Hahn Tapper, Dr. Taymiya R. Zaman, Hannah Ellenson, Rabbi David Ellenson, Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, Dr. Ingrid Mattson, Dr. Saba Soomekh, Salam Al-Marayati, Dr. Aysa Hidayatullah, Dr. Judith Plaskow, Dr. Eboo Patel, Rabbi Reuven Firestone, Hebah H. Farrag, Rabbi Michael Lerner, and Peter A. Geffen.

Proceeds from this groundbreaking project are going to Abraham's Vision! Click [here](#) for the book's exciting Table of Contents. And click [here](#) to order it on-line.

Recent Events



Steps Leading up to USF's Lone Mountain Campus

November 8-9 (USF): Huda Abu Arquob spoke with J Street National Board Member Molly Freeman for 40 students in Professor Rose Levinson's class, "Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish

Identities." Students learned about how to play a more active role in transforming international conflicts in general and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. Per norm, our students raised many good points and were ultimately left with more questions than answers.



University of California, Berkeley

November 21 (Berkeley): In addition to running a program at USF, Vision Program fellows also spoke to a group of Berkeley students about the importance of narratives when facilitating groups in conflict. The talk received outstanding feedback from attendees and raised a great deal of interest in the AV model of facilitation. Interestingly, many of the students present identified with the campus's chapters of Hillel and Students for Justice in Palestine.

November 21 (San Francisco): Aaron Hahn Tapper organized and presided over a panel at the annual American Academy of Religion conference. Titled, "Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities", the panel included a number of esteemed scholars and leaders, including Reza Aslan, Aysha Hidayatullah, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Eboo Patel, and Judith Plaskow. Click [here](#) for more information.

Upcoming Events

December 5, 2011: Huda Abu Arquob will be a guest at Columbia University's Teachers' College, where she will share AV's vision of using education as a tool to transform conflicts and empower people to fight injustice.



December 9, 2011: Huda Abu Arquob will be a guest speaker at Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Peace and Justice, where she will speak about her experiences as the Co-Executive Director of Abraham's Vision. As Huda graduated with a Master's Degree from EMU in 2006, where she studied as a Fulbright Scholar, this is especially exciting as she will now be returning to share her thoughts with her former teachers!

In the News



THIS JUST IN...

Huda Abu Arqoub has a piece in the recent edition of *Shm'a: A Jewish Journal of Responsibility Magazine*. Along with a number of Jewish notables—Menachem Creditor, Naomi Graetz, Shai Held, Naomi Less, Shaul Magid, Peter Pitzele, and Chana Rothman, among others—Abu Arqoub presents a Muslim perspective on the (almost) binding of Abraham's son. Click [here](#) to read the piece.

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