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Transforming the Present, Shaping the Future

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September 2011 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

A belated Eir Fitr Mubarak and (on-time) Shanah Tovah to all! We hope this past block of time has allowed you to reflect on your place in the world and the roles social justice plays in your life. The new political developments in the Middle East are shaping a new future for the region and the whole world, as a young generation of open minded and well educated young men and women are doing their best to bring about a better future for ALL. We at Abraham's Vision see every day through our innovative programs the difference that each individual can make in the struggle for empathy, equality, and justice between and within the Muslim, Jewish, Palestinian, and Israeli communities.

We at AV focus our works on younger people, our future leaders, in order to guide them in developing an understanding of the complexities of conflicts rooted in social identities in order to empower them to toward sustainable, and eventually transformative, responses to conflict. The study abroad programs, workshops, and courses that we run are only made possible through generous donations.

Please show your support with a tax-deductible [donation](#) to Abraham's Vision in order to help us continue the work of transforming individuals and collectives toward new social realities. Click here to make a donation.

Salam, Shalom, In Peace,

Huda Abu Arqoub and Aaron Hahn Tapper

Here are this month's activities and updates:

- Beyond Bridges: Israel-Palestine Summer Program a Great Success - Second Group
- 2011-12 Vision Program Students Return From The Balkans - Sixth VP Group!!!
- 2011-12 Bay Area Unity Programs Launch this Month - Seventh Consecutive Year!!!

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Beyond Bridges: Israel-Palestine Summer Program **A Great Success -** **Second Group**



Participants pose in front of the Dome of the Rock, a renowned sacred site and landmark in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The students of the 2011 Beyond Bridges: Israel - Palestine program have completed the program and returned to their campuses eager to share their experiences with their communities. This year, the BBIP program included 16 graduate and undergraduate students representing the University of San Francisco, University of California: Riverside, and Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Based in Jerusalem, BBIP students traveled to Bethlehem, the 'Gush,' Jaffa, Haifa, Hevron, Jenin, the Negev/Nagab, Ramallah, Tel Aviv, and more. Over the course of three weeks, student participants learn about narratives often absent or underrepresented in mainstream discourse, while exploring and reexamining the dominant narratives of both the Palestinian and Jewish Israeli communities. From meeting with Jewish Israeli West Bank settlers to Palestinian refugees, IDF soldiers to Palestinian militants, Shoah survivors to homeless Palestinians, "religious" human rights activists to "secular" politicians this extraordinary program allows students to develop their own ideas about this complex situation.

Thank you to our skilled staffers - Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Mai Abdo, Dina Dajani, Jack Saba, Zoe Rudow, and AV Co-Executive Director Aaron Hahn Tapper!

We will begin accepting applications for the summer 2012 BBIP program in October. Stay tuned!

2011-12 Vision Program Students Return From The Balkans - Sixth VP Group!!!



2011 Vision Program students at the War Tunnel in Sarajevo.

The sixth consecutive group of [Vision Program](#) fellows have returned from their three-week intensive experience in the Balkans, and now face the challenge of re-examining their summer while engaging with their communities regarding new ways of looking at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This year, the Vision Program fellows represent Earlham College, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, San Francisco State University, University of California, Berkeley, University of North Carolina, University of Vermont, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Led by AV Co-Executive Director Huda Abu Arqoub and Adina Friedman, the summer portion of the 10-month Vision Program fellowship included visits to Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and meetings with academics, political activists, and members of civil society. Most importantly, Vision Program fellows engaged with one another, exchanging ideas through academic workshops and group process sessions. Thank you to our wonderful staff, which included Miriam Abed El-Dayyem, Tal Kligman, and Local Coordinator Zorica Razic (and Huda and Adina).

Vision Program fellows will now continue the program through two post-summer trip conferences, scheduled to take place this November and in March 2012, as well as student-led presentations. Stay tuned for more information on the Vision Program Fellows' publications, speaking dates, and other happenings! And visit the [Vision Program](#) section of the Abraham's Vision website to learn more.

2011-12 Bay Area Unity Programs Launch this Month - Seventh Consecutive Year



Unity Program students engage in a group discussion session.

This month we are launching our seventh consecutive Unity Program. With yet another incredibly strong group of Co-Educators and Co-Facilitators, the 2011-12 UP promises to be another powerful year. This course teaches Muslim and Jewish 15-18 year-olds about issues relevant to North American Muslim and Jewish communities and the historical relationship between these groups, while examining the richness of both Islam and Judaism.

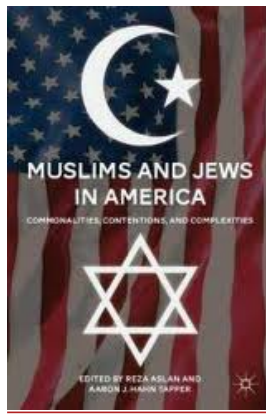
For 2011-12 we have three regional groups—East Bay, South Bay, and the city of San Francisco. We aim to work with up to 72 students this year. Click [here](#) to learn more about the extraordinary course curriculum, staff, and overall program details.



Unity Program Spots Going Fast

There are a few openings left for the 2011-12 Unity Programs. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact our Unity Program Director, Rangineh Azimzadeh, for more information at rangineh@abrahamsvision.org.

AV Book – Muslims and Jews in America



Released this April, *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. Aysha 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.

Upcoming Events

This week, during Rosh Hashanah [the Jewish New Year] services, [Congregation Netivot Shalom](#) has invited AV Co-Executive Director Huda Abu Aroub to share her vision of Muslim-Jewish and Palestinian-Israeli relations with the entire community. Abu Arqoub will be giving her talk at the East Bay synagogue on Friday, September 30.



In the News



THIS JUST IN...

AV Co-Executive Director 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—Sharon Brous, 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.

Recent media coverage of the new AV book published by Palgrave Macmillan, *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities*...

- J. Weekly's recent article, "New Book with Local Ties Examines Muslims, Jews—and Their Common Ground."
- Rabbi Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer's piece from the Multifaith World site. Click here to read the full article.

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