

PRESS RELEASE

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Conference Highlights Successful Grassroots Peace Efforts in Middle East

International Conference on 'Practical Models For Peace' – October 27-30 in Wahat Al Salaam/Neve Shalom, Israel

- In the midst of frustration and impasse at the government level in Israel and Palestine, the message of a Michigan based organization is that there *is* another story by launching an initiative at a unique village in Israel where Jews and Palestinians have lived in harmony together for nearly 40 years to promote support for many existing, **successful** peace programs the general public rarely hears about. (On Oct 27-30) In October **Common Bond Institute (CBI), Wahat Al Salaam/Neve Shalom (WASNS), People's Peace Fund, and International Humanistic Psychology Association** hold the **International Conference on Practical Models For Peace** to bring together exemplary best practices for ending the conflict in the Middle East, from programs in each society, to compelling joint efforts by partners from all sides.

Over 4 days organizations based in Palestine and Israel will share their programs and successful methods of engaged dialogue, healing, and building peace in the Middle East, as well as challenges faced and lessons learned. It will include focusing on intergenerational trauma, victim identities, possibilities for mutual support and strategic collaboration, action planning, and raising global public awareness for support of important, beneficial work being done every day.

"At a time when the Middle East is experiencing unprecedented transformation, the spot light is on power for change at the grassroots level - maybe the only true influence for change," said Steve Olweean, conference coordinator and Director of Common Bond Institute (CBI), a **Michigan based nongovernmental organization** holding international conflict resolution conferences and trainings around the world. "This is a time that calls for highlighting and gaining support for these efforts, and providing a safe, respectful meeting place for parties from all sides to meet and engage in genuine dialogue"

CBI held a similar landmark conference in Amman, Jordan in July, attended by some of the Israeli and Palestinian presenters and participants who will be part of this new conference in Israel. Links between the two programs are being created to promote learning and networking that builds from one action oriented event to the other. Both conferences are being established as annual events, and in June 2012 the two conferences will be scheduled back to back as cross-border companion events to further capitalize on each other's energy, outcomes, and grassroots cooperation in seeking a mutually beneficial end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and sustainable peace.

In fall of 2012 CBI plans to organize another professional conference in the Middle East addressing the effects of **Transgenerational Trauma and Victim Identities** in fueling present day conflicts and war throughout the world, involving a global multi-disciplinary network of groups studying this issue to better understand and develop practical methods for resolving it.

Conference participation is open to all. Complete information about program and registration are available online at www.cbiworld.org, by Email at SOlweean@aol.com, or by telephone at **269-665-9393**

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