

## 2017 Dorpat Lecture: Sulha Peace Project

We want to thank all of you who attended the Dorpat Lecture on 3/4. We had over 100 people come out, many familiar faces from our therapy community and also many unfamiliar faces from the greater community of concerned citizens. This is the mission of the Dorpat Lecture: to bring the principles of psychoanalytic thought and practice to the greater community of those concerned with peace and social justice. If you support this mission, I hope that you will be in touch with our committee with ideas, hopes and comments, and I hope that you might also send a contribution to the NW Alliance earmarked for Dorpat in the near future. So far we have been able to offer this as a free event through generous donations.

Here is a summary of this year's lecture for those of you who were not able to attend:

### **How to Engage with the Other: A Discussion of an Approach to the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict** **Yoav Peck and Fulla Jubeh**

Yoav Peck is the co-Executive Director of the Sulha Peace Project. The Board is made up of Israeli's and Palestinians. Fulla Jubeh works as a medical clown and is a passionate and active participant with the Sulha Project.

Yoav Peck began by saying that *sulha* means "reconciliation" in Arabic; in Hebrew it means "let's make up and stop fighting." Showing, rather than telling, Yoav invited us in an exploration with flute music. He emphasized that he did not want to alienate Trump supporters or right-wing Israelis. "We need to stop thinking in terms of us/them." He noted that, "We are deeply anxious of the people leading our country. We blame our leaders. We have lost touch with a large portion of the population. If you don't want to feel helpless, you have to do something."

They showed a 12 minute video demonstrating the softening of hearts through the project (<https://youtu.be/LOn6pS5SddQ>). They shared their "Beyond Persuasion" model which invites letting go of assumptions and opening up to the humanity and dignity of each other. Sulha events include ceremony, listening circles, a meal, prayer, music and dance. Listening circles follow the Native American tradition that the one holding the object speaks and others listen. These events draw from Jewish and Muslim traditions, with members inviting each other to participate in activities that are unfamiliar. They have found that this sharing bridges across prejudices and allows for experiences to replace ideological conceptions.

Clearly moved by what they recounted, Yoav and Fulla shared individual stories. Munir Shana's family moved to Gaza, then a refugee camp in Jordan. He grew up with an abiding hatred of Israelis, gave up his Jordanian citizenship and became a Palestinian. He now is a member of the Sulha Board after coming to a Sulha meeting and finding a new hope for peace.

Yair, a settler, and Yoav shared a hospital room. Yair asked to be invited to Sulha. Akmen, a Palestinian who had been beaten in jail, and Yair were paired at a Sulha event. In parting, Akmen hugged Yair saying, "In three months you will be a soldier at the checkpoint. I will be throwing rocks at you. Please be careful."

Fulla Jubeh, crying, talked about a 15-day blockade of their village by the Israelis. Her son got angry and didn't want to speak to Fulla when she spoke Hebrew. He went to his room and spoke to his animals about being in jail. Her son comes to Sulha with Fulla and has made friends with some of the Israeli boys his age, but he wants to throw rocks at the Israeli soldiers in his daily life because of the way he and his people are treated.

Through these stories, and the gentle and open presence of Yoav and Fulla, we came to be touched and inspired by the possibility of peace developing one connection at a time. If we truly approach each other looking for the dignity in the other, we can find a place to meet regardless of the worlds in which we each live.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact our committee:

Marcia Robbins, Rebecca DiNino, Janet Carter, Susan Jenkins, Ann Delancey, Kathleen Heppell, and Robin Westby.