

On Thursday evening, April 5, Paula Rayman and Richard Herman hosted an evening of learning about Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam...The Oasis of Peace, a village situated between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. Within the village are three schools...one for spirituality, one for peace and one, a primary school, to which children from many towns are drawn. This Oasis has been in existence for about forty years, and is also the home to both Jewish and Palestinian families, all citizens of Israel. Hebrew, Arabic and English are learned and spoken, as well as histories from both Jewish and Palestinian perspectives, are taught at the primary school.

The first of two speakers was **Samah Salame**, who moved to Oasis some eighteen years ago with her young family, and is now part of the school's outreach and communication team. As an active social worker, Samla also is the founder of AWC, Arab Women in the Center, which seeks to promote the status of women in the cities of Ramla, Lod and Jaffa, and to combat gender-based violence against women.

**Noam Shuster** spoke to us next, being one of the people raised in Wahat Al-Salem. Her mother came from a family of Iranian Jews and her father from Romanian Jews, so she has both middle-eastern and eastern European roots. Her parents were happy to settle in a place where two cultures met, and the three Abrahamic languages were spoken. With a BA from Brandeis in International Relations, Noam developed a peacebuilding program for HIV positive youth in Rwanda; she is also a coordinator with the UN at Interpeace-Israel, working with populations excluded from the peace process.

During these troubled times especially, it is important to visualize how better days will look, and to see how people overcome adversity. Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam, as exemplified by these two women, is a prototype for us, a real, existing place where people who have reasons to be at war, instead are living and learning together, sharing their histories and their lives and creating a generation for whom compassion, peace and understanding are the given...Ah, what we might learn from this Oasis!.....may it multiply and flourish.

Submitted by Lois G. Rosenfeld, for Tikkun Olam of B'nai Or