



2012 Annual Report

AMERICAN
FRIENDS OF
unrwa

WHO WE ARE

American Friends of UNRWA (AFU) is a US 501c3 nonprofit organization that supports the work of UNRWA in the United States. We educate the American public about the situation of Palestinian refugees and advocate for the protection and promotion of their human rights. Peace starts with human development, and we promote that development through:

FUNDRAISING

We raise funds for critical UNRWA projects, emergency appeals, and permanent programs.

ORGANIZING EVENTS

We hold events, including panelist discussions, film screenings, and 5K walk/runs to educate the public about the situation of Palestinian refugees.

ADVOCATING

We advocate for the protection and promotion of refugees' human rights through online petitions and campaigns.



Letter from the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Board

Dear Friend,

2012 was a year of growth and new initiatives for AFU. We expanded our outreach into local communities, making it possible to contribute to critical UNRWA services for refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

In the West Bank, the occupation continues to impose economic hardship as rates of unemployment hover around 22%. Through AFU's Olive Tree Initiative and Canaan Fair Trade olive oil sales, we contributed to the local economy and created critical jobs for Palestine refugees. The Shelter Rehabilitation Project entered its second year, making it possible for three families in Bethlehem's Dheishe Camp to repair their crumbling shelters, addressing severe social and health problems that had arisen from near unlivable conditions.

In Gaza, we continue to strive towards the healthy development of Palestine refugee children through our signature event, the Gaza Solidarity 5K walk/run and our petition campaign through Change.org. The first annual Gaza 5K was held on June 9, raising over \$52,000 for UNRWA's Community Mental Health Program. Unfortunately, these funds became even more desperately needed after the November 2012 assaults on the Gaza Strip.

As violence in Syria escalated, UNRWA continued to provide emergency services to Palestine refugees displaced within the country as well as those fleeing to Lebanon and Jordan. We were able to raise over a \$100,000 to contribute to the Syria Emergency Appeal fund, assisting Palestine refugees in and from Syria with their basic needs, and to cope with the hardships of displacement.

2012 was a difficult year for Palestine refugees, and one that reaffirmed how crucial AFU's support is to UNRWA programs. The generous support of our donors makes our work to better the lives of Palestine refugees possible, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks for all you do to empower and protect Palestine refugees,



Amb. (Ret.) Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.
Board Chair



Abby Smardon
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Ambassador Philip Wilcox
Chair

Mian Qadrud-Din
Secretary

Elias Aburdene

Karen AbuZayd
former UNRWA Commissioner-General

Randa Fahmy Hudome

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Daniel Levy

Ambassador Richard Murphy

James Richard

Ghassan Salameh

Maggie Mitchell Salem

George Salem

Andrew Whitley

Jean-Claude Aime

Staff

Abby Smardon
Executive Director

Sarah Lisenbe
Program Officer

Our Programs

WEST BANK



OLIVE TREE INITIATIVE

Created by AFU in 2011, the Olive Tree Initiative was formed as a way to bring employment and greater self-sufficiency to UNRWA refugees in the West Bank.

A single \$500 donation helps UNRWA provide one refugee with valuable employment for three through its Job Creation Program.

Refugees help farmers affected by settler violence to rehabilitate their land and replant and repair damaged olive trees. To thank donors for their gift, an olive tree is planted in their honor or in honor of a loved one.

In 2012, 40 jobs have been created through the Olive Tree Initiative.

FAIR TRADE OLIVE OIL

AFU teamed up with Canaan Fair Trade to empower Palestinian refugees through employment initiatives.

Working with over 1,700 Palestinian farming families and over 200 women entrepreneurs, Canaan Fair Trade works to expand the market for Palestinian goods such as olive oil, spices, and embroidery. Through the help of dedicated volunteers, AFU began sales of olive oil in 2012 with great results. The profits from the sales are recycled back into the Job Creation program to train and hire out-of-work refugees, many of whom lost their land and olive trees to settlements.

Through the Job Creation program, the refugees are able to regain their livelihood, giving them hope for a better future.

40 jobs created through the Olive Tree Initiative only in 2012.





On June 9, AFU held its first annual Gaza Solidarity Walk/Run at Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC to raise funds for UNRWA's Community Mental Health Program in Gaza.

Due to the continued blockade, as well as the ongoing violence and poverty in Gaza, the need for psycho-social support (especially for children) is great.

On race day, over 300 men, women, children, and pets came out to show their support for the children of Gaza.

Through the support of both sponsors and participants, AFU raised over \$52,000 to provide psycho-social counseling and support to over 1,700 Gazan children in need.

GAZA SOLIDARITY 5K WALK/RUN

GAZA STRIP

FLYING PAPER

1700+

children helped thanks to the funds raised through our Gaza 5K

In September, AFU teamed up with filmmakers for a screening of Flying Paper at a local Washington, DC event space.

Flying Paper tells the story of the children of Gaza's attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the most kites flown simultaneously.

Over 80 individuals came out to watch the kids, so full of hope and dreams, make their attempt, and a lively discussion with the filmmakers and UNRWA staff followed.



GAZA IN CRISIS

In Gaza, years of occupation, violence, and isolation created by the ongoing Israeli blockade have led to the extreme mental and physical deprivation of its people and the destruction and decay of its infrastructure.

In November 2012, Gaza witnessed an 8-day escalation of violence that left another trail of destruction, including around 158 deaths and more than 1,000 injuries.

AFU raised funds for emergency relief through our year-end direct mail and email campaign, as well as a fundraising event held at a donor's home in Vienna, Virginia. In total, \$150,000 was sent to UNRWA for Gaza relief.



CHANGE.ORG CAMPAIGN

In 2012, AFU partnered with Change.org to create the petition, “Support Refugee Children Living Under the Blockade in Gaza.”

We asked individuals to sign this petition if they believed that the blockade on Gaza is a policy that denies Gazans their basic human rights guaranteed under international law and amounts to collective punishment. The petition called for an end to this degrading treatment of human beings, and at the same time, a need to provide support to the Gazan people until they can enjoy the standards of development and economic prosperity for which they yearn. By the end of 2012, over 12,000 signatures were collected.

SYRIA



As the conflict and its impact on civilians continue to escalate, UNRWA has continued to exert all efforts to respond to humanitarian needs.

In total, \$35,000 was contributed to UNRWA for Syria relief efforts.

Yarmouk is home to 160,000 Palestine refugees and is the largest concentration of Palestine refugees in Syria.

EMERGENCY IN SYRIA

In 2012, the crisis in Syria continued to devastate the population.

Over 525,000 Palestinian refugees live in Syria (PRS), and thousands have been displaced due to the violence.

In response, UNRWA has provided emergency protection and relief to those in need in Syria and those who have fled to Lebanon or Jordan. AFU's Syria Emergency Appeal raised critical funds to provide protection, cooking supplies, clean water, and cash assistance to PRS in need.

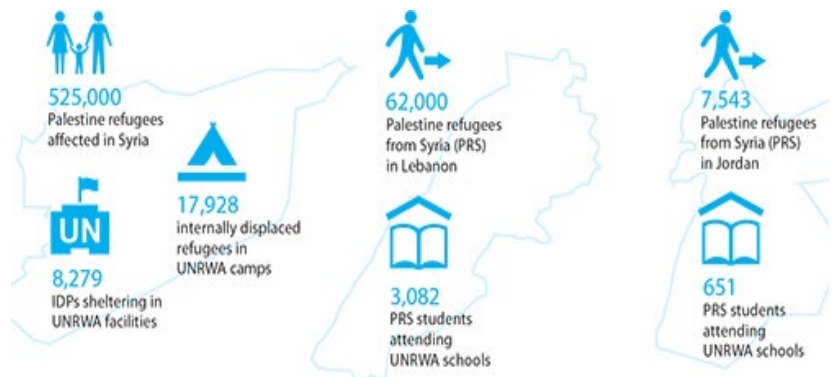


\$35,000

sent for relief operations in Syria

\$150,000

sent for relief operations in Gaza



119.25%

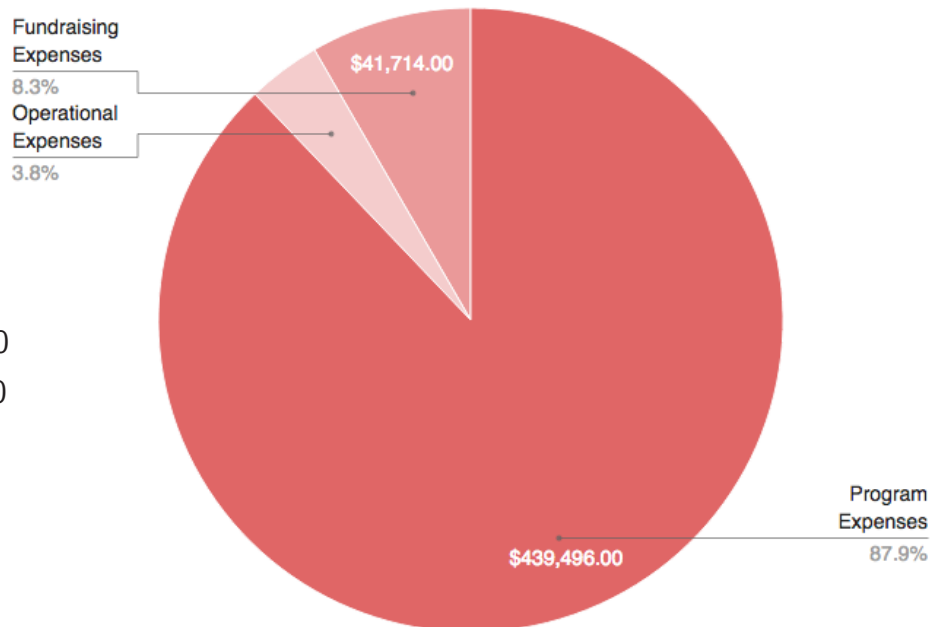
Increase in contributions to UNRWA from 2011 to 2012

	2011	2012
Contributions to UNRWA	\$92,000.00	\$201,711.00
Total Revenue	\$290,872.00	\$536,560.00

Date	Amount	Program
January 2012	\$20,000	Emergency School Feeding in Gaza
	\$16,000	Job Creation Program in the West Bank
	\$10,000	Shelter Rehabilitation in the West Bank
	\$5,000	University Scholarships
February 2012	\$200	Microscope for Khan al Ahmar
May 2012	\$13,646	Community Mental Health Program in Gaza
June 2012	\$50,000	Community Mental Health Program in Gaza
	\$10,000	Job Creation Program in the West Bank
November 2012	\$35,000	Syria Emergency Relief
January 2013	\$41,865	Gaza Emergency Relief

2012 Expenses

Program Expenses	\$439,496
Operational Expenses	\$18,961.00
Fundraising Expenses	\$41,714.00





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