

Students travel to Israel and Palestine on volunteer trip

BY TIM LEISMAN
GUEST WRITER

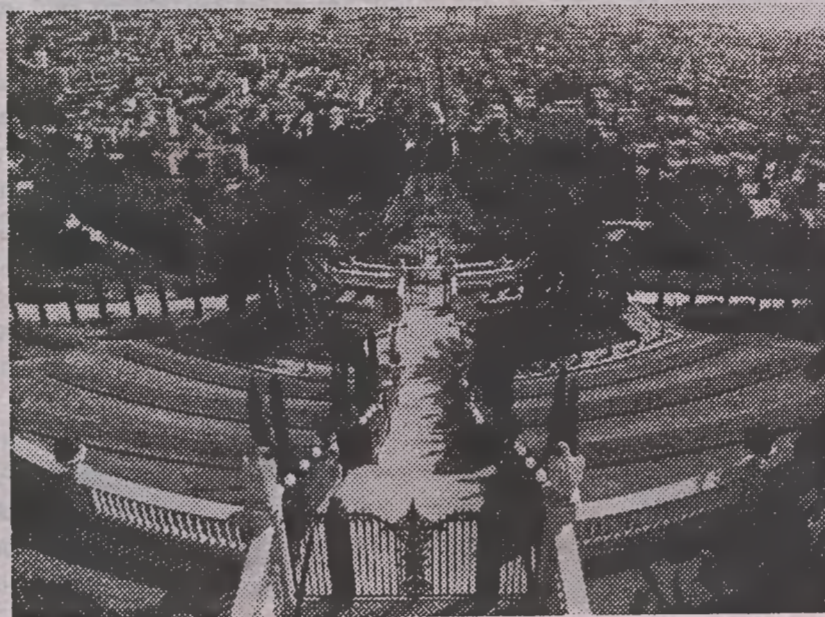
Over the summer, Director of Campus Ministry Max Carter and his wife, Jane, led a work trip to Israel and Palestine for the fifteenth time since 1976. Grounded in the Quaker testimony of peace, this trip provides an educational opportunity for American students, and citizens in general, to witness and learn about the situation in Israel and Palestine. In the summer of 2011, I participated in Max Carter's 17-day work camp and was so inspired to spend 11 weeks of this past summer in Bethlehem, Palestine, interning at the Wi'am Conflict Resolution Center.

The typical Holy Land tours are tailored to Americans and provide an incredible glimpse of ancient stones and religious sites, while overlooking the people and politics. Every day, tour buses bring visitors to wear out the stones of such places as the Church of the Nativity and the Milk Grotto. Most of these international visitors give only a cursory glance to the people of Bethlehem, mark them as street vendors and tourist hawkers and leave.

Max and Jane, through their relationship with the Ramallah Friends School, successfully avoid the typical tour experience and focus on the "living stones" of the Holy Land: the incredible people who live there and struggle every day to make ends meet and to find some measure of peace.

"The quiet power of nonviolent resistance is felt in the spirit of so many people there, and you can feel it when you talk to them about their experiences with injustice," said Sarah Barnett, '12.

The trip focuses first on volunteer work, and participants



While on the trip, students traveled to beautiful places like the Bah'ai Gardens, in Haifa, Israel, pictured above.

find themselves working hard at tasks such as painting playgrounds at the Friends Schools or giving the Ramallah Quaker Meetinghouse a thorough cleaning. The rest of the time is dedicated to learning. The group meets with notable political and social leaders nearly every day.

On one day we met for an hour with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, a leading female politician in the Palestinian Authority. Immediately afterward, we jumped in a taxi to ride across town to the headquarters of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, where the director and former presidential runner-up

Dr. Mustafa Barghouti spoke with us for another hour.

Most evenings the group dines with various Palestinian families to whom Max and Jane have grown close, some of whom have children who are Guilford graduates.

Spirituality and faith are also important subjects of exploration. Each morning the group wakes up and breakfasts together, while Max reads a verse from the Bible, selected for its relevance to the day's activities. It was always inspiring to hear these verses before seeing the places they described, especially the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered the famed Sermon on the Mount. The group tours the Old City of Jerusalem each year and visits the Western Wall and Temple Mount, subject to the availability of these sacred spaces.

While Max and Jane are no strangers to the danger and conflict that most people think of when Israel and Palestine come up in conversation — on one trip during the Second Intifada, Max and Jane's tour guide from the Christian Peacemaker Team was chastised by an Israeli army captain that it was "neither the time nor the place for peacemaking!" — the trip they lead is safe. The majority of Palestinian society has long embraced nonviolence as the only viable strategy in working towards peace. Participants meet activists on both sides of the Green Line and hear from Israelis as well as Palestinians about their perspective on the situation.

After all these years, Max shares this powerful insight about how his experience in Israel and Palestine affected his perception and understanding of other cultures. "Even in the worst of situations, people find a way to live, raise their families, try to create a future for their children, and find innovative ways to address impossible situations," said Carter.

CCE SGA hosts events for all students

BY EMILY CURRIE
STAFF WRITER

The Center for Continuing Education Student Government Association is a great place to use your talents to enhance college life for all students and help the community.

The CCE SGA is an organization that addresses needs specific to adult students at Guilford, represents them to college administration and encourages their involvement in campus events. They provide an opportunity for students to establish friendships and a sense of community and belonging to Guilford College.

"Guilford provides an opportunity for the college experience for CCE students who may not otherwise have the opportunity," said Yvette Bailey, president of the CCE SGA, via email. "Guilford affords us this opportunity for adults to have an adult student government association. That is to be commended."

Adults are at different points in their lives, and have different needs than traditional students.

"(Adult students) face the challenge of having to juggle career, education and family," said Bailey. "Some (who) are unemployed face the challenge of going to school with limited funds. They may be trying to change careers or get qualified for a better job."

The CCE SGA helps adult students utilize vital resources such as Hege Library, the Learning Commons, computer labs, a lounge area in Hendricks Hall, and many scholarships for which only adult students qualify.

This organization is especially helpful to adults who are first generation college

students because the CCE SGA consists of "people they can go to on their level to help them navigate the college system," said Deborah Stephens, CCE SGA secretary.

Vivian Lutian, CCE SGA faculty advisor, serves as a liaison between students and faculty.

"Studies have shown that students that get involved in activities complete college," said Lutian. "If students don't feel connected, it makes it too easy for them to drop out. (The CCE SGA) is a way to really immerse yourself in the college experience."

There are many new and exciting things happening within the group this year. The CCE SGA has upped recruitment, doubling its number of representatives.

"We use the quote, 'Each One Reach One,'" said Bailey. "Our vision is to have each student reach out to another student."

The CCE SGA is planning events for all students in an effort to bridge the gap between traditional and CCE students. There are plans for an amateur basketball game with traditional versus CCE students in the works, as well as a talent show in the spring.

"The SGA is like a family to me since I moved to North Carolina a year ago," said Ben Nnodi, CCE-SGA representative. "It has been helpful because I got to know who is in charge of what in the CCE department, so that if I have any issues I will know who to take it up with."

To get involved, attend a CCE SGA meeting on the second Sunday of each month at 4 p.m. in Hendricks Hall, participate in any CCE function, or contact Bailey at bailey@guilford.edu.



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