



Disciples Peace Fellowship ~ Summer 2016

NewsNotes

An Exciting Partnership!

Disciples Peace Fellowship and Global Ministries are pleased to collaborate in the 2016 Missionary-in-Residence Peace Internship. This year, they will jointly host two Palestinian Christians serving as Missionary-in-Residence Peace Interns alongside DPF's three domestic interns. Disciples Peace Fellowship is excited to participate with the Global Ministries' Middle East Initiative in this way.

Minerva Halteh and Rachel Shomali, two young Palestinian women nominated by the YWCA of Palestine, a partner through Global Ministries, will accompany Disciples Peace Fellowship's domestic interns, Matthew Capestro, Naomi Gonzalez, and Alexis Ofe, to camps and conferences this summer. (See bios of all the 2016 interns on pages 2-3.)

The interns began their summer on June 1st in Indianapolis, Indiana, taking part in Global Ministries' Missionary Conference, as well as Disciples Peace Fellowship's Intern Training Week. The remainder of the interns' summer schedules have been published on our website, dpfweb.org, where you can also find the interns' blogs, in which they share reflections on their adventures. DPF members are encouraged to add comments of support on these blogs or even send mail to our interns at camp!

To learn more about this program and Disciples Peace Fellowship's summer internships, please contact: Phoebe Spier, Intern Coordinator, Disciples Peace Fellowship, (812) 327-7773, dpfintern@gmail.com.

To learn more about the Global Ministries Middle East Initiative, visit: <http://www.globalministries.org/meinitiative>.

DPF T-Shirt Design Contest

DPF is planning to unveil a new t-shirt at the Indianapolis General Assembly in 2017. Are you the artist who will provide the design? We invite you to submit a design inspired by our mission to "keep alive the passion for peace and justice." Visit www.dpfweb.org for full contest details. Youth entries are encouraged!

Designs must be submitted by September 30, 2016. Submissions should come to DPF as print-ready as possible, either by creating a .pdf (vector graphic) document of artwork, a .jpg or .png and submitting it digitally, or by sending a clean hand-drawn artwork that can be easily translated into a vector graphic.

Designs should be appropriate for the front of a t-shirt and should utilize no more than three colors. Copyright to the design will be owned for DPF for its exclusive use.

The creator of the winning design will be featured in the 2017 Summer NewsNotes and receive a \$100 camp or book scholarship, two tickets to the DPF breakfast at the 2017 General Assembly, and two t-shirts.

Send hard copy entries to DPF, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN, 46206.

Email digital entries to maryjacobsaz@yahoo.com.

Meet the 2016 Interns & MIRs

Matthew Capestro

A native Missourian, Matthew is a student at Eureka College, where he is studying religion and philosophy. Prior to college, he served as an NBA XPLORES resident in Ferguson, MO, where he was connected to St. Peter's UCC and helped bring the Ferguson-Delwood Community Resource Center into being. He has participated with a couple Disciples churches near his college home, and was an active leader in his home church, Table of Grace, a new church start in Jefferson City, MO.

Matthew is also an accomplished pianist, which helps him connect with people of all ages. Matthew is interested in leading youth in conversations around LGBT issues, gender inequality and heteronormativity, and racism division and inequality, with a "love first" approach that encourages peace among those with different perspectives.



Naiomi Gonzalez

A Puerto Rican woman who grew up in Pennsylvania, Naiomi is a 2016 graduate of the M.Div. program at Brite Divinity School. While in seminary, Naiomi was part of Refuge, a new Disciples congregation, and worked at the Soul Repair Center, under the leadership of Rita Nakashima-Brock.

Naiomi attended Moravian College, where she studied the church's relationship to war and peace. This interest has continued to shape her studies. Some of the issues she is interested in discussing with campers include the Syrian refugee crisis (and the responsibility of the US to respond to it), Islamophobia and civil rights, and policing reform.

Naiomi is passionate about peace and justice, and excited to share that passion as a Peace Intern.



Alexis Ofe

Alexis Ofe is a native of Montgomery, AL, where she has been part of First Christian Church since she was 8 years old. Lexie will graduate from Huntingdon College in 2017. She has completed internships with Disciples Home Missions and the ACLU-Alabama Affiliate. She has also worked with the Equal Justice Initiative. An English and Religion double-major, Lexie focused her senior capstone project on refugee literature.

Lexie has dreamed of being a Peace Intern for years, because of the impact previous DPF interns had on her at church camp over the years. She is interested in working with young people around issues of criminal justice, immigration, and racism. She is particularly interested in models of restorative justice. As a progressive growing up in the deep South, Lexie has learned how to have respectful conversations about difficult topics with people of varying perspectives, a vital skill for a Peace Intern.



Minerva Halteh

Minerva lives in Jericho, where she is a software engineer with Exalt Technologies. She has a Bachelor's degree in Information System Engineering from Birzeit University, in Ramallah. She is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and an active participant with the local YWCA.

Minerva was able to attend and participate in the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in New York in 2015, her first trip to the U.S. She is currently serving on the national YWCA-Palestine Peace and Justice Task Force.

As a Palestinian Christian, Minerva follows a "religion of love and peace," and believes that "equality leads to peace." She is excited to share her experience of living under occupation with young people across the church, along with leading discussions about gender equality, poverty, and the needs of disabled and elderly people. Minerva also loves music & sports.



Rachel Shomali

Rachel grew up in Michigan and moved to Beit Sahour in the West Bank when she was 12. She is a student at Birzeit University, where she is studying political science and marketing. She is an active member of New Life Community Church in Beit Sahour.

A avid basketball player, Rachel served in a sports ministry internship in South Africa last summer, with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She has also worked with her local YWCA.

As a Palestinian Christian living under occupation, Rachel has learned deeply what it means to follow Jesus and love our enemies. She aims to "find justice for Palestine by peace." Some of the issues she hopes to work with our youth on include sexism & gender equality and the global refugee crisis, along with the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.



Peace-Making in the Changing Face of War

Disciples Peace Fellowship was founded in a time when wars began because they were declared. The distinction between war-time and peace-time was clear, and had an impact on the lives of most citizens. Our Peace Intern program began just as the draft for Vietnam was winding down. The saliency of a group supporting conscientious objectors was still very real. As the Cold War revved up, resistance to nuclear arms enlivened the peace movement, even as guerrilla warfare increased and the U.S. role in international conflicts became more covert.

In these days of the Global War on Terror – a war with no legal declaration, no clear location and no limits on whom its enemies may be – peace-making has gotten complicated. Meanwhile, as we have all grown in our awareness

of the intersectionality of the many fronts of peace and justice, what it means to work for peace has grown and evolved. Additionally, the role of the church in our society has shifted in ways that make our witness more challenging to share.

What is the role of Disciples Peace Fellowship in the face of so much change? How should we go about our work? What should our goals be? Should we focus on global conflicts, gun control, poverty, racism, veterans' issues? We would like to hear from you – our membership – on these questions, as we strive to chart the way forward for DPF. If you'd like to share your thoughts, please email them to me at pastorbecky@yahoo.com.

Yours in Christ's peace,

Rebecca Littlejohn

DPF Executive Committee Co-Moderator

A Word from a Friend

Greetings, Disciples Peace Fellowship!

As we prepare for another Peace Intern Summer, I've been having regular check-ins with our 2016 interns, answering questions, giving feedback and helping to shape their workshop ideas. One of the interns, who remembers having peace interns attend her camp when she was growing up, said on a recent call, "I remember interns talking about difficult subjects and a lot of campers disagreeing with them... What if there's a hot topic in a region that might gather a lot of dissent? Does DPF encourage us to tackle those difficult things?"

I answered on your behalf, Disciples Peace Fellowship, but her question made me think:

What would you say to the youth of our church?

What would you say to young women in Indiana, whose state continues to dismantle their rights, or to the same demographic through the country, who know that upon entering the workforce they will be valued only 3/4 as much as their male counterparts? As the "bathroom bill" continues to make headlines far beyond North Carolina, what would it be like to be in fellowship with youth there? Would you boycott the topic, as many boycott the whole state, or would you welcome those difficult conversations about issues that youth are tackling everyday?

This summer, your interns will go to camps, conferences and youth events to represent you all over the country, always bearing the Good News, but sometimes the Hard-to-Hear News. As they engage youth on a wide range of subjects, DPF Peace Interns are often the first people to help them connect faith with social justice in a meaningful way. And this summer, their conversations will connect them not only with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, but also to the Global Church!

We are so excited about our collaboration with Global Ministries to bring two Palestinian Christians to serve as Missionary-in-Residence Peace Interns. How powerful will it be to witness the connections and transformations that this partnership will inspire? What will it be like for our youth to learn about the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict from young women who have grown up in its midst? To be in community with someone and then learn that she lives under occupation? It seems inevitable that world views will shift. And yet, I can't make that promise. We can never share statistics of achievement: "Look at our success rate! Don't you want to support this advancing enterprise?" Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), faithful conversations can't be quantified. Shalom doesn't work like that. We can't judge the interns' success by whether or not youth choose to be peacemakers. We can't tag our campers like wildlife to measure outcomes, but in our 40+ years we have seen many of them accept our invitation to work alongside us, following the Prince of Peace.

For extending that challenge to me long ago, I will be forever grateful to Disciples Peace Fellowship and our Peace Intern program. I invite you to join me in ensuring that this important mission can continue, enabling difficult but vital conversations and extending the invitation to youth to join us on this journey. It is an honor to walk with you!

Gratefully,

Phoebe Spier,

Peace Intern Coordinator

.....
• "...with Christ, we can see that we are not fighting for peace, so •
• much as uncovering its continual burial. Peace is already here, and •
• it is our privilege to reveal it." ~Alexis Ofe, 2016 Peace Intern •
.....