



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

VOICES OF GAZA'S YOUTH—RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION

On Oct. 10, Fresno had the honor of hearing from two Palestinian siblings from Gaza, 20-year-old Lama Abed and 22-year-old Ahmed Abed. Within days after the war began, the siblings helped their family, including their younger siblings, make the difficult decision to evacuate their home. Their neighborhood was bombed, with rubble and people lining the streets everywhere. So they chose to go to what was supposed to be a safe zone, but after arriving, that area was also bombed and leaflets were dropped from Israeli planes advising them to leave immediately to South Gaza. They evacuated with thousands of others to the south, not knowing what to expect.



(L to R) Stan Santos of Raza Against War; Matt Walsh of Rebuilding Alliance; Lama and Ahmed Abed, siblings from Gaza. Photo by Lori Garcia of Raza Against War

The family was able to locate a distant relative's house in South Gaza and stayed there with 100+ others. It was there that Lama, Ahmed and their father launched a soup kitchen with Rebuilding Alliance to serve 700-1,000 hot meals each day. They wanted to help any way they could, especially for all the children. Destruction surrounded them, water was scarce and contaminated with bugs and worms, food supplies were scarce and the threat of death was present daily. After many months, the siblings were able to flee to Egypt where their mother had been before the war began. After that, they were able to travel to the United States with representatives from Rebuilding Alliance and spoke with members of Congress in Washington, D.C., before going on a speaking tour throughout the country. Rebuilding Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to advancing equal rights, working with Palestinian NGOs for more than 21 years. They serve hot meals daily across Gaza with the help of the World Food Programme.

BEVERLY FITZPATRICK RECEIVES UPLIFTING THE HUMAN SPIRIT AWARD, CELEBRATING A CHAMPION OF COMPASSION, RESILIENCE AND HOPE

In 2012, Beverly Fitzpatrick co-founded Wings Advocacy Fresno and has since dedicated her time to uplifting those who have recently transitioned from homelessness into permanent housing.

Through Wings Advocacy Fresno, she served a special need by coordinating and providing furnishings to the newly housed. Many newly housed individuals lack the resources to acquire basic furnishings, leaving them in stark unwelcoming environments that can trigger feelings of isolation and despair. By supplying essential items such as beds, chairs and kitchenware, Wings Advocacy Fresno helps create warm inviting spaces that foster a feeling of belonging and dignity.

Wings grew out of a group at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Fresno. Homes mean hope and dignity to people. Fitzpatrick is a founding member of this project. Wings volunteers serve Fresno's homeless families, veterans, individuals, and women and children escaping domestic violence. Home furnishings for newly housed folks in our communities who might otherwise be sleeping on the floor. Assistance to get the identity documents required to apply for getting housed in the first place. Wings makes a difference!

In her own words:

"In 2013, Karen Goodman and I were asked to take a few household items to a lady who had moved into an apartment. When we went to take the items, we found out that she was living in her apartment, still sleeping on the floor and didn't even have a pot to boil water! As we provided her with several pots and pans, blankets, towels and some necessary products, which can't be obtained with EBT, the furniture bank idea was conceived. Returning to our car, Karen and I knew exactly how Wings could help. We would collect furniture, linens, kitchen items, lamps and other furnishings. Eventually, we returned to the lady's apartment with a bed, linens and furniture.



Here to honor Beverly Fitzpatrick! Front (L to R): Gerry Bill, Camille Russell, Nancy Waidtlow, Anne Merrill, Jean Kennedy. Back (L to R): Dan Yaseen, Carol Goiburn, Joan Poss, Kyla Mitchell, Teresa Castillo

"The idea of collecting furniture and household items sounded perfect. Everyone has too much stuff and is downsizing or moving. We knew that member agencies in FMCOC (Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care), such as WestCare, Marjaree Mason and veterans' groups, would refer newly housed individuals to Wings.

"Next, we needed a warehouse. Luckily, a volunteer arranged warehouse space downtown for free. This really helped us get started. Originally, we were gifted a large sum of money from an anonymous donor, which was used to buy mattresses. I felt that if someone had been sleeping on the street they deserved a bed and a new pillow. Everyone agreed.

"At this point, we were making weekly deliveries using cars, pickup trucks and trailers. Soon, WestCare shared with us an employee and the use of their box truck, which helped immensely.

"About a year and a half after moving into the free warehouse, we received notice that the owner was going to remodel it for a business. We began looking for a warehouse in our price range. Having the free warehouse helped us save for rent, and as the community learned of Wings, we continued to receive private donations.

"Once we settled on the warehouse on Selland Avenue, it really felt like we were a real nonprofit. Wings became an official nonprofit in 2016 under the name Wings Advocacy Fresno. Once we moved into the new warehouse, things just got better. The clients kept coming, more people volunteered to help and donor contributions grew.

"Wings has grown steadily, helping more individuals and families to have a furnished home. As a result, more volunteer help is needed in the warehouse to unload and sort donations and prepare for delivery."

Volunteers are always welcome at the Wings warehouse: Mondays 8 a.m.-11 a.m. and/ or Saturdays 8 a.m.-noon. If you would like to volunteer, please call Debbie Ockey at 559-260-5281.



Beverly Fitzpatrick.
Photo by Teresa Castillo

ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

\$2898.00 spent per second

\$173, 880.00 spent per minute

\$10, 432, 800.00 spent per hour

If you like those numbers keep doing what you're doing.

If you don't, get involved. Do something!

In LA county alone, weapons manufacturers made off with \$2, 764, 941, 454.00 in 2023.

That's \$300, 000.00 every hour.

It's time to INSIST ON PEACE, not war.

For more information go to Surge: 2023

https://www.icanw.org/surge_2023_global_nuclear_weapons_spending

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!

HERE'S HOW:

Send dues to WILPF-Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

WILPF-US membership is \$35/year.

WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

For questions and information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF MEETING

Nov. 14 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., via Zoom and sometimes also at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For information on the in-person option, contact Teresa at taca_03@ymail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF

KFCF 88.1 FM

Nov. 27 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

Nov. 6 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

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