



Isaacs-Rawitscher Memorial Fund: Travel Grants to Palestine-Israel

Purpose: Quakers Advocating Justice for Palestine (QAJP) designed the Isaacs-Rawitscher Memorial Fund to provide seed money for Friends to visit the West Bank to learn about life under Israel's military occupation. We encourage travelers to join a delegation such as those organized recently by Community Peacemaker Teams, Eyewitness Palestine, Pilgrims of Ibillin, and Tree of Life Educational Fund. From now to the end of 2025, the Isaacs-Rawitscher Memorial Fund will partially subsidize expenses for Friends while they travel in the Israeli occupied West Bank: there is a cap of \$1000 on each travel grant.

We ask that travelers speak in monthly and quarterly meetings to share their discoveries (after returning home) to help our yearly meeting achieve a level of understanding that may begin to match other faith communities in this country.

Application Process: The Isaacs-Rawitscher Memorial Fund's Managing Group invites you to submit an application, which they will review and make decisions in mid September, December, March, & June. To apply: Please complete the following five steps, attach your response to an email, and send it to: IR_memorialfund@burlingtonquakers.org

- 1) List your name, phone, email and postal address in a Word document.
- 2) Describe your Quaker affiliation.
- 3) Share potential travel plans by responding to these two questions:
 - When do you hope to travel to the West Bank?
 - What cross-cultural group will you accompany in Palestine-Israel?
- 4) Please indicate evidence of your having:
 - curiosity beyond familiar patterns;
 - willingness to be uncomfortable;
 - dialogue(s) and interaction(s) across political divides.
- 5) Suggest ways you'll share what you have learned when you return home.

Background: Joyce Rawitscher, Nancy Isaacs, and Sandy Isaacs held dear the concept of justice in the struggle for Israelis and Palestinians to live together; they cherished their work with Friends throughout New England Yearly Meeting.

Valuing genuine interaction across political divides, they organized ways for Friends to understand the call for justice in Palestine and Israel. Their activism in the early 2000s



was a forerunner to the Permanent Board's creation, in 2021, of the Israel Palestine Working Group (IPWG). Burlington Friends Meeting approved holding the funds, which Christopher McCandless will disburse according to the Managing Group's decisions.

The Religious Society of Friends has a long history in the region. It includes more than 150 years of supporting the Ramallah Friends School (RFS) (see photo at left) whose website explains that RFS "has served not only as schools, but also as a center for refugees, hospital, and a center for community lectures, concerts and other cultural activities."

Another Quaker presence in Palestine Israel is the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) that first worked in

1948 with Palestinians, Israelis, and the international community to realize a just and lasting peace. AFSC continues to work for "implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law" and to "call for full equality between Palestinians and Israelis."



Reflecting upon the impact of visiting Israel-Palestine in 2019, Carole Rein wrote:

"When I traveled there, I had been actively working on issues of racial justice at home. After a couple of days in Palestine, I began to realize how the U.S. situation paled in comparison to Palestine. I was also torn, wondering why or how I could give any attention to the Middle East, when there was plenty to do at home. By the time I returned home after 18 days, I felt a calling, a pulling in my gut to share my experiences. I had no desire to be a speaker, but I HAD to share my experiences."

[All photos by Skip Schiel, teeksaphoto.org]