

Dear Friends of Seeking Common Ground:

Transitions: I have the difficult and joyous task of announcing a major transition in Seeking Common Ground's leadership. After 17 years of tireless, visionary and inspiring leadership, our founder and my good friend and colleague, Melodye Feldman, has decided to move on from her position as executive director to an exciting new phase of her professional life. She intends to spend more time in the Middle East working on independent media projects focused on the regional conflict and her vision of the paths toward peace. She also will apply her breadth of knowledge and experience as a consultant to Seeking Common Ground and other organizations promoting similar goals throughout the world.

I know that you all join me in wishing Melodye well as she climbs the next step in her committed career.

Melodye's legacy and energy for new challenges promotes renewed commitment, excitement and energy from all of us on the board of directors. We draw strength from Melodye's leadership in establishing our organization as a force for peace greater than any one individual or group of people. Melodye's gift has been her commitment to nurturing hundreds of young leaders throughout the Middle East, the United States, Northern Ireland and South Africa. She also has assembled and trained our immensely talented, creative and dedicated staff.

We recognize the challenge set by transitioning from Melodye's leadership toward the future and we believe we have appointed a successor who will carry the executive director mantle with energy, commitment and grace. I am pleased to announce that our board has named Erin Breeze, currently associate director, as our new executive director. Erin has been with us for five years, has served

with distinction, and now is ready to carry Seeking Common Ground forward.

Please join me, the entire board and staff on August 6th as we honor and celebrate Melodye's priceless contributions to Seeking Common Ground and its mission, and share our exciting future plans.

I thank you for your support in building Seeking Common Ground into the vital organization it is today. We are committed to re-doubling our future efforts to promote peaceful communities and train community leaders on whom our hopes and dreams depend. With this in mind, I ask you to honor Melodye and her legacy with a donation to support our continuing work. I can think of no better tribute to Melodye than renewed commitment and financial support that will ensure our continued growth and success. With your help, we can make the world a better and more peaceful place for ourselves and for posterity.

I look forward to seeing you on August 6.

In peace,



Charles Jacobs
Board Chair

P.S. Please read the back of this letter; you will find there a summer full of reasons to provide your support now. We are proud to be able introduce our Building Bridges alumni who now are assuming major leadership roles in Seeking Common Ground.



MELODYE FELDMAN

Founding Executive Director

Melodye began her professional career in the 1970's working as a rape crisis counselor. In the 80's she headed up a domestic violence center and served on the board of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In 1987 she witnessed the first Palestinian Intifada (uprising). She met with Israeli and Palestinian

women working for peace and reconciliation, as well as government officials from both sides. In 1993 after the historic Oslo peace agreement Melodye co-founded Seeking Common Ground.

Melodye is pictured here on the June 2009 Middle East encounter trip for U.S. teens with a Bedouin woman from the Negev desert.



A Word from Melodye

On a personal note, my words will fall short in conveying my heartfelt thank you for the privilege of working together with the many volunteers, staff, participants and supporters of SCG. Each one of you has had a major impact on the success of our work. I leave the position of executive director filled with such fond memories, strong friendships and enormous respect and admiration for the dedication and support that each of you has brought to the organization. SCG's mission remains more vital today than ever before. I look forward to seeing you at SCG programs and events as we work together to create a more just and peaceful world.



"SCG's mission remains more vital today than ever before."



Sixteen Years of Peacebuilding

Over the course of 16 years, Seeking Common Ground (SCG) has invested in more than 2,000 young people from throughout the United States, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa.

'People-to-people' work like that of SCG is recognized by the U.S. and other governments as a critical counterpart to their work of diplomacy. While governments may forge agreements and enforce them with 'peacekeepers,' it is only when a critical mass of individuals understand and value the humanity in the 'other' that they can join together in the hard work of building peaceful communities.

SCG alumni have met the 'other' in an environment where they have a voice and are safe to express themselves fully. In a world of harsh black and white, they have discovered the grey. And there they have found hope. Hope that a better future—a shared, peaceful future—is possible.

Yet there is much more work to be done. If peace is to be achieved, it is time to capitalize on the early investments we have made over 16 years—from the teens in our current program to the alumni who are now young professionals—by creating new opportunities.

The seven young leaders featured here will be gathering with other alumni in Denver this summer to take part in the Alumni Symposium. They will also take part in SCG's community programs as facilitators, guides, speakers and friends.



Adva (1999) is an Israeli living in Tel Aviv. After high school she decided not to enter the military but to fulfill her national service by working with children who have mental and physical disabilities. She will be honored at the SCG Circles of Change breakfast on November 13 for this work as well as for her leadership in SCG that includes co-founding the Interns for Peace program. Adva is currently completing her degree in Education for Social Justice, Environmental Justice and Peace Education at Kibbutzim College of Education.



Mohammad (2004) is a Palestinian living in East Jerusalem. He is currently studying electrical engineering at Birzeit University. He has been involved with Seeking Common Ground as a participant, leader in training, and staff member of Face to Face/Faith to Faith and Building Bridges for Peace. Mohammad was among the first male staff when young men were included into the program in 2007. Mohammad has also served as the BBfP Middle East co-coordinator and has been involved in numerous community-based programs related to his SCG experience.



Rachel (2007) is part of the International Development and Social Change program at Clark University and has just completed the SCG Leadership in Training program. For her BBfP follow up project, she started a successful pen-pal project between her Denver high school and a high school in Israel. She has given trainings on BBfP methodology and spoken to many groups about her experience with SCG. Rachel, who is Jewish, describes her invitation to spend her winter vacation with a Palestinian friend she met at BBfP as "the greatest adventure of my life."



Rawan (2000) is from Beit Hanina, East Jerusalem and recently completed her Master's of Social Work degree in Civil Society and Peace Building at McGill University. She will be honored at the SCG Circles of Change breakfast on November 13 for her work with the disadvantaged Jerusalemite community to obtain their rights from the Israeli government and for her leadership in co-founding the SCG Interns for Peace program.



Tonia (2007) is a student at Stanford University. She is originally from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and has been involved in SCG follow up programming including presenting about the Lakota people and culture and developing a suicide prevention project in her community. She is currently helping to develop and staff SCG's Badlands International P.E.A.C.E. program.



Zena (2004) is a 21-year-old Palestinian living in Jordan where she is studying physical education. She graduates in a few months and plans to continue her education with a master's degree. Zena says of her experience as a BBfP participant and leader in training: "The process made me understand that it is possible to dream of peace and work for achieving it; BBfP gave me the chance to see different things in life, hope, peace, and friendship...I'd love to show other women this kind of hope."



Zohar (2005) is an Israeli living in Yaffo. She studied at the Israeli Arts and Science Academy in Jerusalem where she majored in Visual Arts, Biology and Philosophy. Since completing her degree, she has been involved in a variety of community service projects in Yaffo that focus on creating an open space for the art and voice of youth of varied ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. She currently works as the BBfP Middle East coordinator for SCG.

PEACE IN THE MOUNTAINS PEACE ON THE PLAINS

The 2009 Seeking Common Ground Summer Program in Colorado

Alumni Symposium

Denver—July 26 - 30

Leaders from past Building Bridges for Peace programs will meet to develop the new Alumni in Action Association and plan the expanded two-year Building Bridges for Peace model. The results of this gathering will be presented on August 6.

Teens Build Peace

Denver—August 2, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Attention teens! Meet with Israeli, Palestinian and American peacebuilders in this day-long training. Gain communication and leadership skills! Get involved to build peace locally, nationally, internationally! Learn about SCG's international peace education programs for teens. Participation is free, but space is limited. Call to reserve your space now.

Building Peace in Israel and Palestine: Youth Perspectives

Boulder—August 4, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Join SCG alumni at this evening program where they will share their personal stories, their efforts to promote peace, and their joint vision for a more peaceful future in the Middle East.

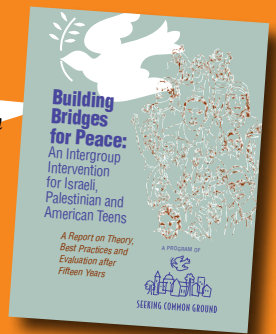
Seeking Common Ground Celebration

Denver—August 6, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Wine & Cheese Reception

Please join us for this special evening reception as we:

- Honor SCG's founder Melodye Feldman as she charts a new path for peace
- Release the groundbreaking Building Bridges for Peace: A Report on Theory, Best Practices and Evaluation after Fifteen Years
- Launch the new Alumni in Action program—alumni will share their vision for a more peaceful future in the Middle East through Alumni in Action



Seeking Common Ground at Home and Abroad

Winter Park—August 7 - 9

During this weekend retreat in a beautiful mountain setting, adult participants experience firsthand SCG's best practices in building bridges between former adversaries, facilitated by SCG Founder Melodye Feldman. Explore issues of identity, perspective, power, privilege and conflict. Meet other community members who are working to find common ground locally, nationally and internationally. Gain skills in SCG's "Intentional Communication and Facilitation" methodology. Come away with renewed energy and inspiration in your own efforts to build a more peaceful world. No special skills are required – only an interest in peacebuilding.

MORE
INFO

For details on all of the programs or to register for an event, please email info@s-c-g.org or call 303-691-2393. Additional details will be posted to our website after July 1.

Meet the Alumni this Summer!

July 26-August 16

Take advantage of the opportunity to meet directly with SCG alumni – young adults working for peace throughout Israel, Palestine and the United States. Contact us to arrange a gathering with your congregation, school or other community group.

CONTACT SEEKING COMMON GROUND AT:

www.s-g-c.org 303.691.2393 info@s-c-g.org