



Each DVD sale plants one olive tree in Palestine!

THE PEOPLE & THE OLIVE

THE STORY OF THE RUN ACROSS PALESTINE

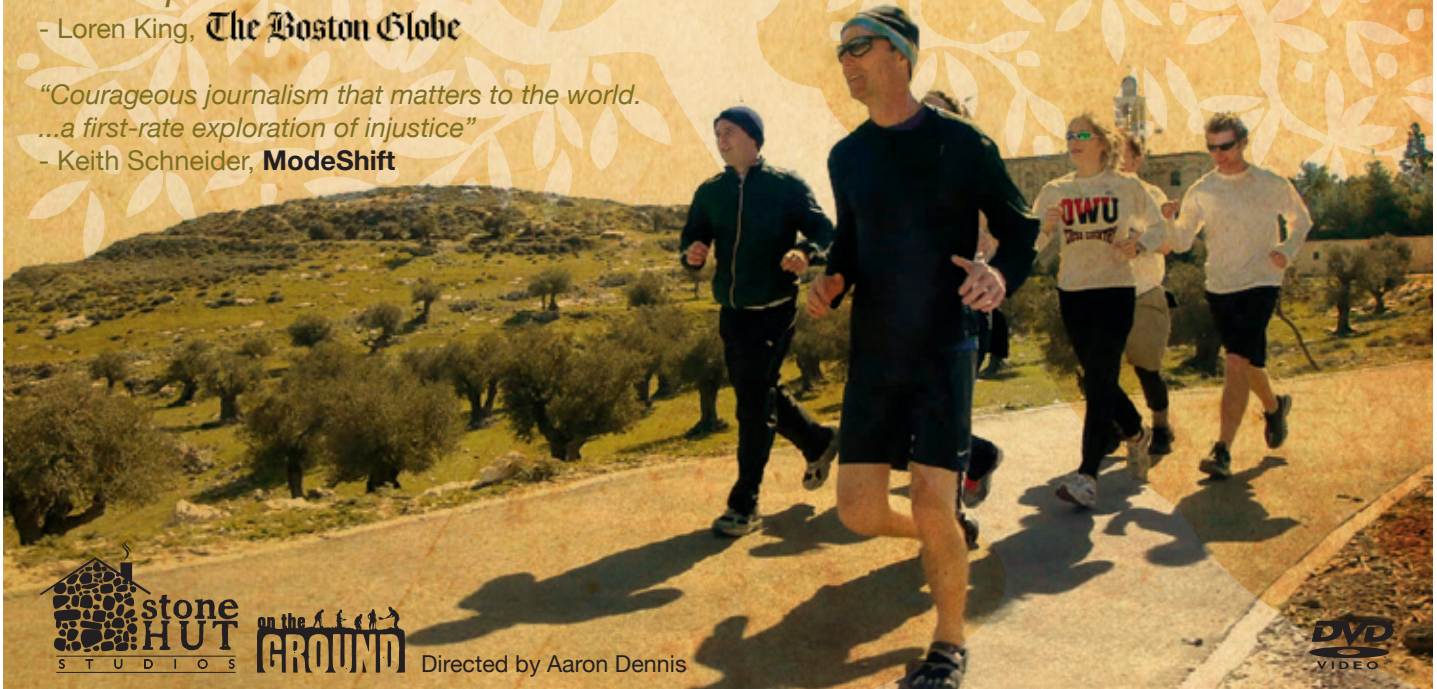
"An inspirational thriller"

- Loren King, **The Boston Globe**

"Courageous journalism that matters to the world.

...a first-rate exploration of injustice"

- Keith Schneider, **ModeShift**



Directed by Aaron Dennis



BEYOND POLITICS. BEYOND BARRIERS. BEYOND "US AND THEM."



PRESS KIT & SCREENING INFORMATION

THE PEOPLE & THE OLIVE

THE STORY OF THE RUN ACROSS PALESTINE

The People and The Olive is an inspiring documentary about the daily struggles and joys of Palestinian olive farmers. When a group of American ultra-marathoners sets out to run 129 miles in 5 days across the West Bank they discover that in replanting uprooted olive trees they are planting hope and building cultural bridges.

The People and The Olive was filmed during the **Run Across Palestine** in February 2012, as a project of the Michigan-based non-profit **On The Ground**, which works to support sustainable community development in farming regions across the world. The run was supported by the **Palestine Fair Trade Association**, a collective more than 2500 small-scale farmers in the West Bank who have embraced fair trade practices to sustain their futures and to sell their products worldwide.

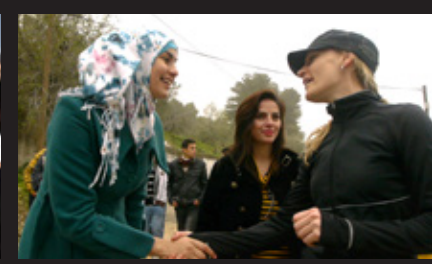
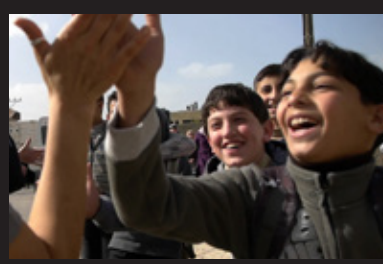
“Past generations planted these trees that we’re eating from and are supporting our lives, and we plant trees for our future generations to support their lives.”

- Nasser Abufarha, Palestine Fair Trade Association founder

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Director's Statement

The "People and The Olive" is a film about hope, peace and the cross-cultural connections that the Run Across Palestine created. We feel that in our mainstream media the human side of Palestinians is rarely shown. Instead we are given stories of conflict and violence. As the leader of the runners, Timothy Young, points out, "99.9% of people on either side of a conflict just want peace and to raise a family." We strove to show the stories of this majority and to reveal the challenges and joys of the life of a Palestinian olive farmer.



It was great honor to work locally with On The Ground and in the West Bank with the amazing Palestine Fair Trade Association. The warmth and hospitality we felt during the production of this film, and the friendships we created, are something that we won't forget.

This film was created as a labor of love, on a very small budget, in some challenging situations. It wouldn't have been possible without the support of the many volunteers and donors who believed in our message. I'm excited to share the film with a wider audience. And I'm thrilled that the movie will continue to be a tool to help these farmers - 50% of all DVD sales will go to On The Ground to replant olive trees in the West Bank.

-Aaron Dennis
Founder of Stone Hut Studios

Stone Hut Studios is a Traverse City, Michigan-based production company with a mission to create "Films For A Better World". For more information visit StoneHutStudios.com

"An inspirational thriller"

- Loren King, **The Boston Globe**

"Courageous journalism that matters to the world. ...a first-rate exploration of injustice"

- Keith Schneider, **ModeShift**

"Creative Activism Exemplified"

- **Boston Palestine Film Festival**

Total Running Time: 70 minutes

Produced by Aaron Dennis and Jacob Wheeler. Directed, Filmed and Edited by Aaron Dennis

Featuring music from Al Andalus Ensemble, Souad Massi and Joshua Davis

50% of proceeds from the sale of this DVD will go to On The Ground to support the planting of olive trees in Palestine. To find out more about The Run Across Palestine, or to donate to On The Ground, visit www.OnTheGroundGlobal.org

For more info about the film and to watch the trailer, go to:

ThePeopleandTheOlive.com

231-620-8072

StoneHutStudios.com

stonehutstudios@gmail.com

PHOTOS and POSTER

thepeopleandtheolive.com/press

WHY NOW?

Today, the Fair Trade movement is gaining momentum across the globe, but fair trade organizations are vulnerable to politics. The importance of olive trees to the Palestinians can't be overstated; they're an ancient source of sustenance and symbols of peace and heritage, and they are being uprooted at an alarming rate. The Palestine Fair Trade Association, a collective of over 2500 farming families in the West Bank who have embraced fair trade practices to sustain their future and to sell their products worldwide, supported the Run Across Palestine. Beyond politics, the film tells the human story of Americans and Palestinians forging deep bonds while witnessing the harsh reality and uplifting beauty of life in the West Bank.

WHAT DO OLIVE TREES MEAN TO PALESTINIAN FARMERS?

Olives are their livelihood, their source of sustenance and the way they root themselves, historically and spiritually, to the land. But Palestinians are denied access to nearly 30 percent of their beloved olive trees in the West Bank as they struggle to live under Israeli military occupation. How do they persevere? And what should the international community understand about Palestinian olive farmers, who love their land and harvest it every season to feed their families — just as farmers across the world do?

HOW WAS THIS FILMED?

The People and The Olive was created as a labor of love, with a minuscule budget and thousands of donated hours. In order to avoid security restrictions filmmaker Aaron Dennis and Journalist Jacob Wheeler filmed the The People and The Olive using guerilla filmmaking techniques - one small DSLR camera, a small microphone and no lights. Each day they filmed and

edited a daily web-series that followed the run, and was uploaded to Youtube. By posting it online, the record of each day was preserved against the possibility of camera and editing equipment seizure. Upon returning to the States the web-series was expanded into the feature-length documentary.

WHAT WAS THE RUN ACROSS PALESTINE?

The Run Across Palestine was a 129-mile, 5-day ultramarathon across the West Bank to replant uprooted olive trees and raise awareness of the struggles of Palestinian farmers. Ultimately the goal was to help re-establish sustainable olive growing practices in a place whose history, economy, culture, and identity are all rooted in the ancient olive tree.



WHAT IS ON THE GROUND?

On The Ground is a Traverse City, Michigan-based non-profit whose purpose is “to support sustainable community development in farming regions across the world.” In 2011 they organized the Run Across Ethiopia, where a group of American ultra-marathoners ran 250 miles in 12 days across the coffee growing regions of Ethiopia, raising over \$200,000 to build three schools there.



HOW MANY TREES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN PALESTINE?

Palestinian farmers have lost access to 2.1 million olive trees, which grow behind settlement walls, separation barriers and security zones. 500,000 more have been uprooted or bulldozed since 2001. Trees for Life, the program that On The Ground is partnering with, has replanted over 50,000 trees in the last 5 years. \$20 replants three olive trees. If you're interested in replanting trees, you can donate at ontheground-global.org

IS THIS FILM “ANTI” ANYTHING?

We feel that the the mainstream American media gives little attention to the human side of the Palestinians. For this film we wanted to show the perspective of the Palestinian fair trade farmers who were hosting the run. These farmers face harsh realities – the everyday challenge of farming is compounded by living under military occupation and controversial policies of the



Israeli state. It's impossible to tell this story without presenting policies such as the “separation barrier” and illegal Israeli settlements. These policies have been condemned as violating international law and they present a major challenge to the livelihood of the farmers.

This is a complex and emotional subject and we spoke to many experts and activists, both Palestinian and Israeli, to give context. And on a personal level, during the documentary we see the internal struggle of the musical ambassador of the run, Joshua Davis, a Jewish-American, who grew up in family that strongly supports Israel, trying to come to terms with the reality he sees.

In the end though, this film is less “anti” and more “pro”. It's an uplifting story about connecting people on the human level. We wanted to show viewers that Palestinian farmers are farmers like everywhere else. They love the land from which they have fed themselves and families for generations.

HOW DOES THE DOCUMENTARY RELATE TO THE WEB-SERIES?

The web-series was a media marathon that followed the ultra-marathon. Dennis and Wheeler spent the days of the run filming the activities and interviews with experts and then working late into the nights, editing and uploading the videos to give the world a daily view into the experience. These videos were viewed over 10,000 times worldwide. The documentary builds on the web-series but has been completely restructured and re-edited to tell the whole story, including much that was not included before, including many new scenes, interviews with dozens of farmers, activists and academics.

We're excited to present the documentary to a wider audience through film festivals, a theatrical release, universities, and other venues. For the present, the web-series will be available only to its supporters via link and password. E-mail us at StoneHutStudios@gmail.com if you would like to access the web series.

HOW WAS THE DOCUMENTARY FUNDED?

This project has been a labor of love, created with with a small crowd-funded budget and thousands of donated hours. Over 80 supporters helped raise \$5000 via Kickstarter to help pay for travel expenses and to get the web series off the ground. After the film was created another 110 people supported an additional Kickstarter campaign to help cover some post-production fees and to help support distribution goals (film festivals, DVDs, etc). The film will work as a tool to advanced the goals of The Run Across Palestine -

50% of all proceeds from DVD sales will be donated to On The Ground to support further planting of olive trees in Palestine.

PALESTINE FAIR TRADE ASSOCIATION

The Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA) is the largest fair trade producers' union in Palestine, with over 2500 small-scale Palestinian farms joined in fair trade collectives and cooperatives across the country. Collectively the farmers produce the traditional olive oil and food delicacies from Palestine, and sell them internationally to buyers and markets not available to an individual farmer. Fair trade means social and economic empowerment – a dignified living for farmers who have not had access to the outside world for over 40 years. They revitalize farming traditions and a culture of sustainability by linking the traditionally organic farming methods of Palestine to modern organic/ecological movements and markets. The farming communities benefit from the living wages paid to farmers and producers, the fair trade reinvestment in the community through the payment of social premiums to cooperatives above the price, and the cooperatives and collectives that are established along the production process serve as vital community organizations that can address other issues of common interest.

WHAT IS STONE HUT STUDIOS?

Stone Hut Studios is a Traverse City, Michigan-based production company founded by Aaron Dennis, whose mission is to create “Films For A Better World”. We help organizations, companies and movements that are helping others, by spreading their message and telling their stories. More than any other medium, film and video have the power to reach an audience's heart, to inspire them and to move them to action.

LINKS

On The Ground
<http://onthegroundglobal.org/>

Stone Hut Studios
<http://www.stonehutstudios.com/>

Palestine Fair Trade Association
<http://www.palestinefairtrade.org/>

Trees For Life
<http://www.canaanusa.com/trees-for-life-1.php>

Joshua Davis
<http://joshuadavismusic.com/>
The “musical ambassador” of the Run Across Palestine, one of the main characters and a contributor to the soundtrack. His upcoming CD will be inspired by his experiences with this project.

Al Andalus Ensemble
<http://andalus.com/>
A major contributor to the soundtrack, Al Andalus Ensemble is a Grammy Award winning group. “Led by oudist Tarik Banzi, the Al-Andalus Ensemble is internationally known for a creative fusion which etches a fine line between the exquisite and raw, the passionate and powerful while treating the listener to a confluence of the best of the East and West.”

Souad Massi
<http://www.myspace.com/massisouad>
A world-renowned singer/song-writer and contributor to the soundtrack.

Chelsea Bay Design
<http://chelseabaydesign.com/>
“Good-for-the-world creative services.” Graphic design and strategy for the movie and website.



AARON DENNIS

– Producer/Director/Videographer/Editor

Aaron Dennis, founder of Stone Hut Studios, creates films for good-for-the-world causes, companies and campaigns. He has worked across the globe to tell the stories of non-profit, environmental and humanitarian organizations.

A graduate of the University of Michigan's Film program, Dennis has been a part of several national PBS documentaries and specializes in filming, editing and motion graphics. He lives in Traverse City, MI with his wife Chelsea.

JACOB WHEELER

– Producer/Narrator

Jacob Wheeler is a Minneapolis-based independent journalist, editor and videographer. Wheeler edits the cutting-edge video news website TheUptake.org in the Twin Cities, is a contributing editor at the progressive political magazine *In These Times*, publishes the *Glen Arbor Sun* in northern Michigan, and authored a book about the Guatemalan adoption industry titled *Between Light and Shadow*.

Wheeler's stories have appeared in such publications as the *Utne Reader* and the *Earth Island Journal*, and newspapers including the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. He speaks fluent Spanish, German and Danish.

VIVIEN SANSOUR

– Coordinating Producer/Translator/Photographer

Vivien Sansour is a lifestyle writer and photographer. Trained in the field of Anthropology Vivien has worked with farmers in Honduras, Uruguay, and Palestine on issues relating to agriculture and independence. Vivien has been a contributing photographer for several magazines including *Organic Processing Magazine*, *Specialty Food*, *Fair World Project*, and *This Week in Palestine*, and *Danish Fair Trade Magazine* among others. Vivien has both a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Theatre Arts, and an M.A. in International Studies with a focus in Anthropology from East Carolina University.

To read about the the behind-the-scenes and On The Ground team check out their bios at onthegroundglobal.org/projects/run-across-palestine/the-run-across-palestine-team/



Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker

MAIN CHARACTERS AND RUNNERS

MERYL MARSH – RUNNER

Meryl is a resident of Traverse City, Michigan where she has worked for the Michigan based non-profit Archangel Ancient Tree Archive as the Global Operations Coordinator since 2009.



Her passion for trees and running motivated her to join the Run Across Palestine, but she knew very little about the West Bank and the Palestinian people before going in. Watch how this project and experience changed her outlook, and touched her heart.

JOSHUA DAVIS – MUSICIAN

Joshua is a singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer, traveler and educator who is especially interested in the ways music can serve to bring communities together, to educate and to foster peace and understanding.



This Jewish-American folk musician was brought up in a household that strongly supports Israel, and he had previously visited the holy land on a birth-right trip. He was motivated to join the RAP team because of his heart for peace and truth, and because of his connection to the land. Many of his family and friends had misgivings about his involvement. Throughout the film his internal conflict is clear, but he discovers that goodness goes beyond barriers as he befriends the warm and welcoming Palestinian people the team meets along the journey. Joshua shared the universal language of music each day of the run, playing for and with the people of Palestine.

NASSER ABUFARHA - SUPPORTER

Nasser is the founder of Canaan Fair Trade and The Palestine Fair Trade Association. When he discovered fair trade coffee in early 2001, he realized that fair trade is what could help his people. So he made it happen by bringing home the concept of fair trade cooperatives using traditional farming methods to



produce high quality organic foods that would reach markets across the globe while joining the farmers of the West Bank together. Today there are more than 2500 farming families that are making a fair wage from their work because of Nasser's motivation to live out "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Nasser played an important role with the RAP, as he helped coordinate the route, organize the support team and motivate the runners. He is also at the center of some of the most dramatic parts of the film.

TIMOTHY YOUNG– R.A.P. TEAM LEADER

Timothy is founder, president and chef of Food For Thought, Inc., creators of organic and wild-harvested gourmet specialty and fair trade foods in northern Michigan. He is passionate about Fair Trade, and is a founding board member of the Domestic Fair Trade Association, and On The Ground, the non-profit organization that organized the Run Across Palestine. Timothy was the RAP team leader, and worked diligently to keep the teams spirits high during the emotionally and physically draining ultra-marathon. He ran every mile of the grueling run while working to find solutions to many obstacles that the team faced.



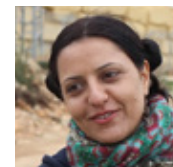
ADDITIONAL RUNNERS

Randi Lyn Stolz
David Gardner
Claire Everhart
Chris Treter
(And the hundreds of Palestinians that joined in along the way!)



RUNNING NARRATORS

Jacob Wheeler
Vivien Sansor



The Boston Globe

RAISING AWARENESS AT PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL

Aaron Dennis's documentary "The People and the Olive," about a group of American marathoners who run from Hebron to Jenin (that's 129 miles over five days) to raise awareness about olive farmers in Palestine, may be best described as an inspirational thriller. Nothing that's shot surreptitiously in the West Bank under the threat of gunfire and harassment by military police could be anything else.

"We tried to stay under the radar so we kept the equipment simple; just a small camera and no lights," says Dennis, who, on foot or from a car, followed the runners, who hail from the Michigan-based humanitarian group On the Ground. Dennis created and posted a Web series about the Run Across Palestine in February because "we never knew if our equipment would be confiscated. I'd film all day and edit at night . . . I really wanted to show the human side of Palestine because usually all we hear about is violence. You can't avoid politics, but we wanted to transcend politics."

The runners did make it to the finish line and the full documentary will screen as part of the sixth annual Boston Palestine Film Festival (running Oct. 5-13). Dennis will attend a post-screening discussion about "The People and the Olive" on Oct. 7 at 2:30 p.m. at the Museum of Fine Arts.

Loren King loren.king@comcast.net.

Mode Shift

THE PEOPLE & THE OLIVE CHARTS TRAVERSE CITY'S NEW GLOBAL FOCUS

Bravo to Aaron Dennis, Jacob Wheeler, and all the rest of the Run Across Palestine crew for producing an event and a piece of courageous journalism that matters to the world. In *The People & The Olive*, a 70-minute documentary that received its premiere Monday night in Traverse City's downtown State Theatre, Aaron and Jacob join camera, reporting, and story-making skills to explore the dangerous irony of a native people, Palestinian olive farmers, walled off and occupied by a Jewish nation that itself was formed to escape oppression.

And bravo to Traverse City. The restless little city near the top of Lake Michigan is producing a new generation of talented artists and business owners who are reaching across continents to connect with communities confronting the limits of poverty, ecology, education, and liberty.

In political advocacy and community branding terms there is almost nothing like a good film to boost both ideas. *The People & The Olive* is not just a first-rate exploration of injustice. It is a study in how Aaron and Jacob stitched the fine silk of character, place, music, and pacing to create a narrative brocade that, at times, dances in the brightness of laughter and human connection, and at other moments, many other moments in fact, reflect the dark colors of indignation and contempt.

The movie's director and producer weave this tale from the simplest of human stories — a five-day, 129-mile Run Across Palestine by a small group of marathoners, most of them from Traverse City, that occurred in February to raise money and elevate to western attention the daily trials of West Bank olive farmers.

In a strong article in *Tikkun*, Jacob describes the olive industry's perilous conditions:

Largely forgotten amidst a political debate that too often focuses on rocks and bulldozers, fear and hatred, intifadas and historical trauma, the Israeli occupation has prevented many West Bank farmers from harvesting the olive trees their grandfathers planted, and caring for the land they know and love like their own children. Nearly 60 percent of the arable land in the West Bank is used for growing olive trees, employing over 100,000 Palestinians, making it by far the most lucrative agricultural industry for an aspiring nation that suffers from a crushing unemployment rate of 30 percent.

Among the film's heroes is Nasser Abufarha, the founder of the Palestine Fair Trade Association, a group of 1,700 olive farmers who've allied themselves and generated a commanding market presence. In one of the film's most telling scenes, nervous Israeli security forces arrest Abufarha on the side of the highway, on the morning of the run's first day, and charge him with organizing an illegal demonstration. Abufarha attended the Traverse City premiere and told the packed house that during his hearing in June, and with the help of the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, he learned that the charges had been dismissed.

Another of the film's compelling characters is Timothy Young, the owner of Food For Thought, a fair trade maker of high quality organic jams and jellies here in

Benzie County. Timothy is well-known in these parts as a man capable of commanding language and emotion to articulate big ideas about land and agriculture, community and justice. In *The People & The Olive* he fills the role of senior American counsel. Timothy is a steady presence at tense moments, like Nasser Abufarha's arrest. He's also the eloquent observer when the runners confront the impassable Israeli-built wall that encloses Palestine, as well as the charming visitor moved to tears when his hosts dedicate an olive tree in his name.

The Run Across Palestine was organized by On The Ground, a Traverse City-based non-profit founded by Chris Treter, whose Higher Grounds coffee company is an admired local institution, and not just because its coffee is excellent. Higher Grounds' business plan is centered around a mission to advance economic justice through fair trade, resource conservation, promoting safe farm practices, and supporting the people in the places that Higher Grounds does business.

Last year, in a similar ultra-marathon expedition organized by On The Ground, ten Americans and six Ethiopians ran over 250 miles across Southern Ethiopia in a campaign that raised over \$200,000 to build three schools.

The two expeditions, and the set of values and principles of justice and sustainability that underlie them, are helping to open a new era of social activism in Traverse City that finds its energy in the deep well of global concerns. Traverse City, for those who don't know, enjoys a national reputation for the strength and ardor of its civic campaigns, whether they safeguard the land and water, promote gay rights, develop a film festival and a grand downtown theater to anchor it, take interest in caring for the homeless and hungry, promote transit and downtown development, build a new regional farm economy around locally produced fresh foods, or convert a mouldering state hospital into a new neighborhood and an engaging center of commerce.

A new generation is building on this work. Chris Treter, Aaron Dennis, and Jacob Wheeler are part of a loose confederation of Traverse region professionals, many of them just starting their careers — business owners, artists and musicians, Internet and communications specialists, non-profit leaders, even a film maker with impressive skills — who are leveraging their time and concerns to cross national and cultural boundaries.

Higher Grounds and Food For Thought are actively making the economic case for fair trade as profitable and satisfying business strategies. The Great Lakes Bioneers organization, with Sarna Salzman at its center, focuses a good deal of its annual conference on global environmental risks, particularly the damage climate

change is already producing in the Great Lakes. Aubrey Ann Parker, a Benzie County journalist who photographed the Run Across Palestine, is an editor at Circle of Blue, the award-winning news and science organization, founded by Carl and Eileen Ganter, that reports on the global confrontation between water, energy, and food.

These are the specific global projects that I know in Traverse City. I'd like to learn about others. I also hope you'll join me in financially supporting Aaron and Jacob's work to produce and promote the film.

As I watched the story of Palestine's olive farmers unfold in *The People & The Olive*, I also recognized something essential about our community. The marathon journey across uneven ground, so difficult to organize, so arduous in its execution, and so successful in its results, is another exceptional reminder of why we lead lives of purpose here.

– Keith Schneider, modeshift.org



Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker



ABU ADNAN ABED EL SALAM

Canaan Fair Trade Olive Oil Producer from the Village Of Faqua.

A NATURAL ENVIRONMENTALIST

Abu Adnan does not talk about a global movement to save the earth. He doesn't know much about Greenpeace or the Kyoto Protocol; but he does know everything about keeping his soil healthy and fertile, and the terraces he builds to protect his soil make his mountainous piece of land a visual paradise.

A farmer since childhood in his home village of Faqua in the Jenin district, Abu Adnan Abed El Salam, who is now 78 years old, has built more than 60 terraces in his lifetime, one stone at a time. When people come to talk to him about the "new" trend of organic agriculture he smiles. "My grandfather, my father, and I have been planting trees all our lives without using any chemicals." He declares proudly, "I have a thousand olive trees, and I remove all the weeds from under each one of them with these bare hands. I never get tired."

He is aware that he could buy a bottle of pesticide for 70 shekels and get the job done in half a day, but such an idea would be considered criminal in his book.

WORKING BY HAND

Using an old cycle and his bare hands, Abu Adnan, bends the weeds, cuts them, and piles them to carry for his sheep. "My sheep don't eat anything that doesn't grow in my land. Is there anything more beautiful than the land?"

TRUE ROMANCE

And if you spend a day with him in his fields you would know that he is right. He and his wife, Siham, consider their days working together in the field to be the most romantic experience. They don't go out to the movies or to fancy dinners, instead they pick wild zataar, sage, and grape leaves together. They take water breaks next to their well where Abu Adnan drops a bucket and brings out fresh clear rainwater for his wife to enjoy. Their snack is some grapes, a piece of bread, and zataar to keep them healthy. Depending on the season they eat wild milk thistle and sinari, a wild thorn that has a crunchy and juicy stem that keeps one's body hydrated while working in the sun.

RECONNECTING WITH THE TREES

The father of six children, Abu Adnan is proud to say that his eldest son, Adnan, who used to work as a day laborer inside Israel has returned to the land and his daughter and her fam-

ily, have joined the Canaan co-op and are planting almonds and olives. Before Canaan started buying Abu Adnan's olive crop, Abu Adnan says that he came to a point where despite a lifetime of serving the trees he almost stopped loving them because no matter how much he took care of them he knew that at the end of the season he would have nowhere to sell his crops. Today, he says, "I reconnected to my love for the trees and I even planted new ones because I am encouraged and I know my hard work will be appreciated by people from all over the world. I will be rewarded by the end of the season. Why do you think I am spending all my days in the field? Because I want to offer Canaan the same healthy olives I eat in my home and I know there will be people who will buy and love them."

And now his sons and daughter who grew up knowing the smell of soil, the taste of cool rainwater from their father's well, and the taste of organic olives are continuing the family tradition of growing organic foods. This makes Abu Adnan happy because he says, "the day I die I will die in peace because I know that my children will be taking care of my fields."

CONTENTED HEARTS

However, Abu Adnan's relationship to nature is not limited to taking care of his trees. He and his wife don't carry cell phones and they don't need watches to tell them when the day begins and when it ends. Their clock is the sun and when it comes up it is time for work and when it starts to fade away they load the weeds on their donkey's back and stroll down to their village enjoying an evening walk to their home where they cook a hearty dinner and prepare for the next day's work. They both attribute their health and strength to their life style and what they describe as their "content hearts" because they believe that there is nothing more sacred than the humble meal and the simple life of the earth.



RWADA KADER

Canaan Fair Trade Olive Oil Producer, Nos Ijbeel.

LIVING BY THE SEASONS

Rawda, also known as Um Hamza, is popular in her village of Nos Ijbeel in the Nablus district. Her day begins at six in the morning with a cup of coffee, the morning news, and then feeding her chickens. Set on a beautiful hilltop, Um Hamza's house is surrounded by ancient terraces of olive trees, almonds, and an abundant amount of tumrac bushes that she plants each year. A fully sustainable farm, Um Hamza knows each season and what it entails. She plants beans amidst her trees and saves some of their seeds for planting the next year.

When walking in her well-kept terraces one can indulge in the fresh taste of her produce that she loves to offer to her guests. Fava beans, wild oregano, olives, onions, garlic, lentils, wheat, tumrac, lettuce, cauliflower, and turnip greens are just some examples of the things she will make sure you try because she knows that her produce “has flavor”.

While Um Hamza still has to buy basics, such as sugar from the market, she is adamant that eating should be about enjoying and not just getting full. Her big blue eyes sparkle as she explains the benefits of eating vegetables in season. “Aside from the health benefits, there is the added appetite that comes from a year of joyful anticipation for your favorite fruit or vegetable.”

An artist at heart, Um Hamza loves literature and she is no stranger to the world of academia. She earned a degree in Islamic Law and went on to study Public Law before she returned to their village of Nos Ijbeel. That is when she started raising chickens as a way to survive. But today, Um Hamzas re-found love for the land is not just about survival it is a way of life that Um Hamza and her farmer coop in Nos Ijbeel are engaged in.

ORGANIC ON PRINCIPLE

The only woman farmer in her co-op, Um Hamza leads the other farmers in her village with vision and commitment to organic agriculture. When she thinks of people using pesticides or herbicide she feels outrage because she says “we endure occupation and political hardship, the only friend to us is the land so how can we poison it with chemicals?”

While Um Hamza lives alone with her only son Hamza, 13 years old, she also opens her home to other kids from the family who come to eat and study in her house. When asked how Canaan Fair Trade impacted her life, her smile widens as she speaks with gratitude. “I am a survivor and I will do what it takes to make ends meet but with the situation being so hard I almost lost hope in ever being able to market my olive oil. When Canaan Fair Trade approached me, I asked my brother to help me buy more land and I planted 2 acres of olive trees. Now I feel at ease, I know that every year someone will come and buy all my crops and that gives me so much emotional and economical stability.”

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER HOPE

Her son Hamza, who loves drawing and architectural engineering, is very excited about Canaan because he knows that doing well in school could qualify him for a scholarship from Canaan that would pay for his engineering career. His drawings that include tractor designs, schools, and farmland fill the heart with so much hope because it says that the new generation that once felt despair is finding encouragement through their parents’ work and their heritage. Unlike most young boys who aspire to move to the city and never come back to their village, Hamza is determined to further his education to better the lives of his farming community. The son of a tenacious woman, Hamza is very proud of his mother whom he says, “works harder than any man I know.”

He loves Canaan Fair Trade because since it started he began meeting more people from the outside world who come to visit

his village, and is proud to know that people in the U.S. and Europe love the olives his mother grows.

While Um Hamza appreciates much of modern technology she feels that it is a two edged sword “because even though technology has given us comfort it has taken away from people the appetite of eating.”

This is why she wants everyone to try her delicious olive oil because she is certain that once you taste her olive oil you will find your body reconnecting with your natural appetite for healthy foods!



MUSTAFA AND SHAFaq JARAR

Canaan Fair Trade Olive Oil Producer, Jarar Family Farm

FATHER OF THE TOWN

Mustafa Jarar is an organic olive oil producer from the village of Burqein in Jenin District. He is known in his village as Abu El Balad, a term in Arabic that literally translates as father of the town. It is used to describe a community elder who can solve feuds and problems between people in the village.

Taking after his father, Mustafa is indeed Abu El Balad and his counsel is sought after by almost everyone in Burqein. Since he started working with Canaan Fair Trade his home has become what his wife, Shafaq, calls an International Center. When people from other countries who are interested in organic olive oil and fair trade initiatives come to visit their village Mustafa and Shafaq offer their home.

Over the past four years the Jarar family hosted people from more than five countries and they say this makes them very happy because through these visits they feel connected to the world. “We are always surprised how little people around the world know about us. Often people come here and they have bad ideas about who we are. When they stay with us, share our food, and pick olives with our family they start to feel at home.”

WELCOMING THE WORLD

Mustafa and Shafaq’s son Mahmoud is very grateful for the olive oil business but he says for him it has nothing to do with the economic progress. He is happy that since Canaan Fair Trade started buying his family’s oil he has been able to tell the story of his people to the outside world. He says, “Before I never imagined that internationals cared to know anything about us. I never thought I could communicate with them because I am

limited to Palestine. But when they started coming I developed friendships that have changed my life.”

Mahmoud who is a freshman at the American University in Jenin says he would like more internationals to come to Palestine “because we cannot go visit them so it means a lot when they come to visit us and learn about our lives.”

REDISCOVERING HOPE

Mahmoud is one of six children in the Jarar family who are constantly being impacted by the cultural exchange olive oil trading has created. As youngsters they are not only finding excitement in meeting the world in their home but they are inspired to create more opportunities for their village. Mahmoud is organizing a youth group in the village of Burqein that wants to invite people to sports activities and historic tours of the Melkite Church of Burqein that is considered one of the oldest churches in the world.

In that same life-force, Mustafa feels that Canaan Fair Trade came at a crucial time in the lives of young people who were depressed. As the Burqein co-op representative, Mustafa says that hiring young people to work in presses and encouraging them to work in their land has had a major social impact. On a personal level he explains that before Canaan Fair Trade, his eldest son stopped wanting to go to the field and his whole family became disheartened and would only go pick enough olives for the family to eat and they would leave the rest of the crop to waste.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

Mustafa’s wife, Shafaq, sees the social impact of participating in the fair trade coop from a woman’s perspective. She says, “When Canaan Fair Trade started asking women if they want to work in making Maftoul the women were hesitant. Some women even said no because they were afraid that it would be socially unacceptable for them to work. Today, all the women want to make Maftoul and they wait for the Maftoul season with great anticipation.”

The Jarar family olive oil is one of Canaan’s finest olive oils. Due to their proximity to the Canaan Fair Trade olive press and the uniqueness of their land their oil is bottled as the Estate Olive Oil and is enjoyed by hundreds of people around the world. According to Mustafa this makes him feel very proud because he now knows that he is part of a global culture of organic producers. And as Shafaq likes to say, “I exist through my olive oil and for my family and I it is a source of income and high spirits.”



IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT PALESTINE

- For thousands of years, the olive tree has been an integral part of the Palestinian landscape: a symbol of Palestinian identity, culture and tradition.
- Olive cultivation provides employment and income for around 100,000 farming families who are olive oil producers. Most are small-scale producers with needs for investment to improve their fields.
- 45% of the agricultural land in the West Bank is dedicated to olive production.
- Eleven out of 100 under-five children suffer chronic malnutrition in 2010, including 11.3% in the West Bank.
- The poverty rate in 2010 among Palestinian households in the Palestinian Territory was 21.4% in 2010.
- Nearly 40% of the students in the West Bank were not enrolled in basic education in 2010.

*Stats courtesy of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Oxfam International.

TREES FOR LIFE... REPLANTING THE OLIVE TREE

Much of the funds we raise from this project will go to replanting thousands of olive trees...

SUPPLYING TREES TO FARMERS

Trees for Life is a program that gives thousands of olive trees to farmers starting out, as well as smaller farmers and those whose trees or lands have been destroyed by Israeli forces. In five years, the project has planted almost 50,000 trees (49,559 to be exact)! When you buy tins of Canaan olive oil a contribution of one dollar for each tin goes to the program and some of our partners do the same. In addition, a number of solidarity communities sell tree sponsorships and work directly with the PFTA. The Trees for Life project is solely funded by grassroots movements abroad and solely invested in the Palestinian fair trade movement in Palestine. This project helps offset the enormous destruction of olive trees by the Israeli occupation army in Palestine.

REVERSING THE DESTRUCTION

Trees for Life started in 2005 and is administered by the Palestine Fair Trade Association, with the support of Canaan Fair Trade and our olive oil distributors around the world, like Higher Grounds Trading Co., US Campaign, Zatoun, The Olive Coop, Canaan USA, Jewish Voice for Peace, Alter Eco. The project plants thousands of olive trees in Palestine every year. Besides its development aspect, this program helps connect the Palestinian farmers and producers in the fair trade movement in Palestine to the grassroots fair trade movement in Europe and North America.

A committee of PFTA farmers implements and administers the program. Growers must qualify for lots of 25-50 trees. They must have suitable land, the capacity to nurture the trees, fields prepared for planting immediately upon delivery, and a commitment to fair trade practices. Priority for trees goes to small farmers, young farmers with inherited or acquired land, landed women interested in farming, and farmers who have lost trees to the occupation. Trees are planted between Tree Day, January 15, and Land Day, March 30. The ritual of planting symbolically connects growers to their international supporters and the international fair trade movement.



ANCIENT ROOTS
Olives have been cultivated in Palestine for thousands of years. Many trees are over 1000 years old.