



SEEKING COMMON GROUND
Words of Change
ANNUAL REPORT

The logo consists of a white dove with a yellow sunburst on its tail, flying above a stylized orange cityscape with various buildings and trees. Below the graphic, the text "SEEKING COMMON GROUND" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Underneath that, "Words of Change" is written in a larger, orange, serif font. At the bottom, "ANNUAL REPORT" is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.



MAILE, EMMA, ANNA, JENNA, AND LIZ, 2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS

“My hope is that our strong will and powerful minds will enable us to build a better world in which we can all live.”

- Dana, BBfP program alumni, 2003 & 2004



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



TROY & YOUNG, 2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS, NORTHERN IRELAND



From the Board Chair
Making Grassroots Impact

I am pleased to add my comments to our second formal annual report to the Seeking Common Ground (SCG) community and the greater community at large. It seems that we just finished

last year's report. This is evidence that the world continues to speed along at a breakneck pace, becoming more complex and dynamic every day. Conflict is everywhere: Iraqis fight Iraqis in sectarian strife; American forces and Iraqis fight insurgents; terrorists victimize innocent citizens; Israel is still fresh from a conflict with its Lebanese neighbors and remains in conflict with Palestinians; Palestinian factions battle each other...and the list goes on. We see more terrorist or potential terrorist activity throughout the world and chaos seems imminent.

Against this ugly background though, we are beginning to see glimmers of hope, some brighter than others. We seem to be in the midst of a regime change in the United States. The potential presidential candidates, for the first time, seem to be coming from diverse and solid backgrounds. More and more, we hear comments from people fed up with the status quo, concerned about the direction various aspects of our lives are taking.

The irony in all of this confusion and chaos is that SCG has a credible model for progress. Our Building Bridges for Peace program is a microcosm of conflict and it's resolution, or at least it's being placed in proper context.

Every summer we host American, Israeli and Palestinian young women, many of whom start from the perspective of being enemies, full of fear, distrust and hatred. In a period of intense personal discourse, these young women channel their energy from destructive paths to positive steps toward understanding, reconciliation, conflict resolution and peace. While they do not completely resolve all of their issues in the short time allotted to them, they nevertheless redirect their energy from destructive

**“Our mission is to help,
in our innovative way, to encourage
and build peaceful communities
throughout the world.”**

attitudes and behaviors to positive, life-affirming goals and processes. We hope that someday, peoples and governments in conflict will learn from the model these young people follow.

Our mission is to help, in our innovative way, to encourage and build peaceful communities throughout the world. This mission stays the same despite discouraging world events. Every time we hear of a setback in any aspect that might affect peace in communities, we redouble our efforts and resolve.

Our Circles of Change Awards Breakfast, which took place last November, provided fuel for our continuing efforts. We were all energized and inspired by Jenny Koff, Anita Sanborn, and particularly for me at least, Hafsat Abiola. Ms. Abiola personifies a person born into a community in strife, whose family was seriously and severely affected by events surrounding her. Nevertheless, she has an inspiring aspect, a positive attitude, and calls us to action – to do what we can, however little it is, to effect change for the betterment of personal integrity, opportunity and peace in the communities in which we have a stake. We all need to do our part just like Jenny, Anita and Hafsat.

As an organization, SCG intends to continue doing its part. We were named in 2006 as one of the 50 most innovative, creative and effective organizations in the nation, with the honor of appearing in 21/64's Slingshot 2006 publication.

We pride ourselves in making a grassroots impact on the societies from which our participants come and in which we conduct our work. Our success continues in fits and starts, but always on an upward path. Energized and inspired, I remain proud to be a part of this organization, and I welcome your continued support throughout this year.

Charles H. Jacobs



2006 BBIP PARTICIPANTS



2007 BBIP PARTICIPANTS AND STAFF, DERRY/LONDONDERRY, NORTHERN IRELAND



MELODY ON THE CARRICK-A-REDE ROPE BRIDGE, NORTHERN IRELAND



From the Executive Director Peace Begins at Home

When I began Seeking Common Ground (SCG), my son Coby was 9 years old. I would tell people that if Coby grew up saying ‘my mom worked for peace but she was never home for me’, I would have been a total failure. I strongly believe that peace begins at home, and I was clear that my family would always come first when I founded SCG. What I did not anticipate was how much my family would embrace this work and how much our home would come to embody the mission of SCG.

Early on in the creation of the organization, my husband, Josh, told me that the work I was doing was ‘our’ work, and that he shared the organization’s philosophy and mission. He wanted to be as involved and supportive as possible. And he has been. He is my sounding board and my inspiration. He has encouraged me to continue when at times I wanted to give

“The mission and philosophy of Seeking Common Ground has become a part of who we are.”

up. We are partners in raising Coby and while we both travel a great deal for our work, we understand that our work sustains us and allows us to grow as individuals. And we cherish our time together. Josh is also a member of our Board of Directors.

Every summer, we open our home to the many young women and men that travel from Israel, Palestine, the US and other areas of the world to staff our program. Our basement is filled wall to wall with mattresses and suitcases. With Josh happily in the lead, mealtime becomes an event at our home, with all the staff helping prepare. The music is loud and the conversation deep, comical, entertaining, and captivating. Every year, Josh and I feel privileged to have entered into the lives of these young people.

Coby, an only child, has grown up with many “siblings” from around the world. He turns 22 in May and in the last few years has become a member of the BBfP program staff. Now I watch as he welcomes new participants each summer and leads them in introductory games of getting to know one another. Some of his closest friends are other staff members from South Africa, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Palestine. He has traveled on his own and with me to each of these places to live, work and educate himself on the issues these countries face. He doesn’t know what career path he will choose, but he does know that his world reaches far and wide.

SCG has enhanced our family life on so many levels. For Josh, Coby and myself, the mission and philosophy of SCG has become a part of who we are and has added incomparable experience and value to our family. Over the years, I have seen this organization grow, and my family and I have grown with it. The participants who attend our programs believe that they have been transformed and changed, but the reality is that we have been as deeply transformed and touched by this experience as they have.



Melody Feldman



LAMA WITH OTHER 2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



REEM, ANNA, HADEEL, AND YARA, 2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



From the Associate Director
Searching for answers

Six years ago this summer, on many a rainy afternoon I could be found sitting along the bank of the River Shannon in Limerick, Ireland. I had arrived in Limerick several months before, in the fall of 2000, to pursue

my MA in Peace and Development Studies. I was there as an inaugural George Mitchell scholar, a program of the US-Ireland Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening ties between Ireland and the United States. During that long, wet summer, I was trying desperately to finish my MA thesis exploring the challenges political leaders faced in implementing the 1998 Belfast or Good Friday Agreement. I had spent the spring traveling back and forth between Limerick and Belfast, Northern Ireland, to conduct interviews with political leaders, including Nobel Prize winners John Hume and David Trimble (Mr. Hume is a former leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party and Mr. Trimble was then First Minister), Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness (Mr. McGuinness is currently Deputy First Minister), Ian Paisley, Jr. (son of Reverend Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party, current First Minister), former Women's Coalition leader Monica Williams, and the late David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party.

And that summer, having listened over and over to my interview tapes, to these men and women who in many ways determined the future of the historic new coalition government, I felt confused. I wasn't confused by their differing opinions (that, of course, I expected), nor was I confused by their lyrical northern accents (my ear had become trained by then), but I felt confused because I didn't know what to write. I didn't know what insights I, a young American college student, could contribute to a centuries old conflict. Who was I to make observations, much less recommendations?

Thankfully, that summer I also had a kind, wise and firm academic advisor who saw through my requests for an extension on my

thesis deadline. I'd probably still be sitting there beside the Shannon if it were not for his insistence that I must finish. It has taken me years to understand the lessons of that experience. I share this with you now because the lessons are also the reasons that I find such fulfillment in my work at Seeking Common Ground (SCG).

Upon returning to Colorado from Ireland, I had a dream to create a school-based program to teach high school and college age students about the Northern Ireland conflict, not so that they could go there and "help," but for precisely the opposite reason. I wanted them to learn about the conflict in Northern Ireland as I had – to wrestle with questions of injustice, governance, security, human rights, and others – in order to become better equipped for finding solutions to these issues back home in the United States. I wanted to be part of educating a generation of young Americans who have firsthand knowledge of another part of the world and of the complexities of both inter-group and intra-group conflict.

A year later, I met Melodye Feldman, Founding Executive Director of SCG. One of the aspects of SCG that most impressed me was that the organization's flagship Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) program included American participants. More than 3 years later, I am now honored to be serving as the program director of BBfP. In this role, people often ask me why Americans are involved. I want to ask them back: how could they not be? If we are talking about peacefully resolving conflict worldwide, how can Americans be excluded? Now more than ever I

"I have come to realize that the answer for me is in each and every one of SCG's participants"

believe that young Americans need, and want, to gain the skills to communicate, cooperate and collaborate with the 'other' – whether that 'other' happens to live across a city or across an ocean. I believe that we, as members of the US community, have much to learn about how to create a truly just, equitable, inclusive and peaceful society. And I have hope that we are moving in the right direction. Year after year, I see American participants of the

BBfP program from all backgrounds grapple with questions about their role in creating peace, both in the Middle East and in the communities in which they live. I see these young women becoming agents of change. This is why I do this work. And the work is expanding.

This summer, SCG is launching the pilot BBfP program for teen men. Now we will be able to reach young women and men and give them the tools they need to work as partners in achieving the change they wish to see in the world. There is also the new Building Bridges for Peace-Denver (BBfP-Denver) program, designed for female and male high school students from throughout the Denver metro area, and conducted in partnership with Denver Public Schools and in consultation with the national organization Facing History and Ourselves. This pilot program includes an international enhancement trip through which students will travel to a region of the world experiencing conflict. This spring, I led the BBfP-Denver trip to Northern Ireland from March 22nd – April 1st, 2007.

As you now know, my return to Northern Ireland, this time as an educator and practitioner with 17 American high school students, is a dream fulfilled. To have watched these young people engage with their peers, meet with community and political leaders, and wrestle with how what they were seeing in Northern Ireland is or is not similar to what they face back here in Denver was gratifying beyond words. When asked about what she had learned on the trip, one participant stated that she now believes that “in order to make peace you need to work in your own community [because] then you will have more of an understanding on how to work in other communities around the world.”

I think back to my hours spent searching for answers on the banks of the River Shannon and I have come to realize that the answer for me is in each and every one of SCG’s participants. My answer, and my reason for continuing to do this work, is to inspire them to go in search of answers to the difficult questions we face if we are to be engaged and responsible members of our international community.

erin breeze

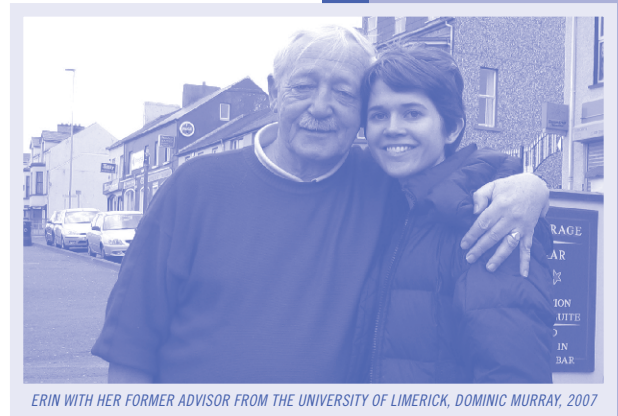
Erin Breeze



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS



ERIN WITH HER FORMER ADVISOR FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK, DOMINIC MURRAY, 2007



GALI AND REEM, 2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS, NORTHERN IRELAND



ISLAM AND JENNA, 2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



It's Like Riding a Bike

In 1998, I was excited to attend the Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) program for the first time as a participant. The year before, my sister had returned from a trip to Israel married to a Palestinian. This event brought the Middle East conflict out of the TV and into my own home. Suddenly, not only did I know people affected by the violence in the Middle East, but they were now a part of my family. After my first summer at the program, I knew that my life would never be the same. I was very active in the follow-up program and decided to return in 1999 as an LIT (Leader in Training). I was honored to be hired on as a counselor in 2000 and again in 2004.

It is sometimes hard to pinpoint the effects that the program has had on my life. I tend to think that every experience in life becomes a part of you, changing your mindset and outlook on the world. I was so young when I began BBfP and it has been a part of my life for so long, that sometimes it is hard to remember a time when I wasn't a participant, much like trying to remember a time when you couldn't drive or ride a bike. When I think about the things I learned at the program – the communication techniques, the stories of the other participants, a deeper understanding of myself – I realize that these experiences are so deeply ingrained into my being that I can't separate them out anymore. BBfP is just a part of me. After a long time, mirroring, one of the communication techniques we learned at the program, has become natural, like reading, speaking and writing.

“After my first summer at the program, I knew that my life would never be the same.”

The truth is, I don't know what my life would look like if I had never been involved in BBfP. Maybe I never would have visited Israel and Palestine. Maybe I would not have studied conflict resolution in graduate school. Maybe I would not be working in the non-profit sector or trying to obtain my teaching certificate. What I do know for certain is that without the BBfP program, my life would not be

as rich, and I would not have met all of the wonderful people that I have. I believe that without BBfP, my life would not be as fulfilling as it is today.

My name is Becca, and I received a Master's degree in International Administration with a concentration in Conflict Resolution from the University of Denver in 2005. I am currently teaching Emotional Intelligence to teens at the YESS Institute, a non-profit organization in Denver, and also working at the Center for International Studies. ✨



Finding My Path

Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) has been woven into my life. When I first became involved in the program as a participant in the summer of 1998, I was entering my junior year of high school. I was on the brink of developing my individual thoughts and choices. The BBfP program helped guide me through this process and has been a part of my life ever since. After high school, I attended Indiana University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies and minors in Philosophy and Leadership Ethics and Social Action. Throughout college, people would ask me why I had chosen to pursue religious studies in general, as opposed to Jewish studies in particular. My response to them was that we live in a world with diverse religious traditions, and how could I learn to react and live in such a world if I only knew about myself and my own faith?

I continued on my path of self-discovery after graduation, and took my first job as a youth director at a temple in Maryland. During my year there, I watched as my two supervisors went through mediation. I experienced, first-hand, the discomfort of interacting with individuals who are involved in conflict with each other. I was reminded of what I learned from BBfP, and I decided to pursue a master's degree in the field of conflict

resolution. I left my job and moved back to Denver, and I am now working toward this degree at the University of Denver.

My story is not that different from other young women coming into their own independence, but because of BBfP, there are differences. I experienced new perspectives and choices, and the program gave me the opportunity to explore options different from those I had already known. Some would even say I rebelled in redefining what it means for me to be Jewish and re-evaluating how I fit into this world as a Jewish woman. My path in life has strong roots in BBfP, and what I learned from the program continues to stay with me in my travels down the road of self-discovery.

My name is Alana, and this is my story. I am now finishing my Master's thesis and training for two half-marathons. When I am done with both, I hope to find a corporate training position here in Colorado. ✨



2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS, NORTHERN IRELAND



One Woman's Magic

I first joined Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) as an idealistic 16 year-old tomboy. I thought I had the power to change the world. When I came back from the program, I knew that the power to change

the world was already within me. Looking back on that time, the program seemed like such a crazy idea. Who takes thirty teenagers from Palestine and Israel and brings them to one of the most beautiful places in the world and thinks peace will come of it? Luckily, there were brave women who thought it was possible.

I spent nearly ten years in the army, serving on the border near Tol Orem and later in Hebron, Gaza. In times of combat, I tried to remember that the person who was shooting at me was not the same person who sang with me near the campfire at BBfP.

I am now 28 and not as idealistic as I used to be. I am more of a woman than ever before, and I am more a part of the solution than a part of the problem. I study political science and have a passion to be like one of the women I met in Denver – strong, independent, and part of a process to become a better person and help others do the same. Sometimes my professors talk about the peace process. When I ask them if they have ever spoken to someone on the other side, most of the time the answer is “no”. I feel blessed that I was given this opportunity. I met many young women who, like me, knew that there had to be a solution and were willing to go the distance to make it happen.

Someone once asked me when I returned from the program if it was worth it. I couldn't answer him at the time; my emotions were too strong and I didn't know how to handle them. Now I am ready to give him that answer: if it meant being able to grow into a strong, independent, sure woman; if it meant being able to lead and affect other people with my experience and give them knowledge to find their own answers; if it meant becoming aware that no one but us, Palestinians and Israelis, will solve this conflict; then yes, it was all worth it.

I am not a person of many words, and my words are simple. If I had to sum up all that I was given I would tell you one thing – be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem, in all aspects of your life. I wish that in the years to come more women would become aware of their power. I know that the BBfP program can do magic.

My name is Tal. I am a student of political science at Bar Ilan University in Israel, and I work for a human resources company. In the future, I hope to work for the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry. ❁



2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS, NORTHERN IRELAND



The Will of Women

I was a participant in Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) in 2003, and I returned as a Leader in Training (LIT) in 2004. After I graduated high school in 2004, I decided to study pharmacy. I'm currently attending the

University of Jordan and pursuing a degree in this field. I try to apply the skills and knowledge I gained from BBfP to my field as often as I can.

The BBfP program empowered me to stand up for women and to work toward ensuring that every Arab woman is given the full respect that she deserves. To improve the role of women in society and help prepare them for a better future, I worked on a project with a friend of mine at the University of Jordan. This project was called *Step on the Career Highway*, and was designed for women ages 19-23 who are smart, open minded, and ready to become the powerful women of the future. The project focused on increasing the involvement of women in social and political life and helping female students prepare for their future careers.

My friend and I led sessions for young women alongside women activists from Jordan and professors from various faculties within the university. The workshops involved teamwork, discussions, and group activities. My goal throughout these sessions was to equip these young women with the knowledge and skills necessary to help them build successful futures and encourage them to play an active and positive role in society. After leading a twenty-one hour course for twenty-two students of different majors and nationalities, including Palestinians and Jordanians, I felt empowered.

I realized that I have the initiative and vision to lead future projects and overcome whatever obstacles and challenges may arise. The young women who participated in my workshops gained confidence in their abilities and are now better prepared to face whatever the world may bring them. I am proud to be a source of inspiration for these women. My hope is that our strong will and powerful minds will one day enable us to build a better world in which we can all live.

My name is Dana. I'm 20 years old and from East Jerusalem, Palestine. I not only want to be a pharmacist and a great basketball player (I play on the women's team at university), but I also hope to become a woman of power and influence in my community so that I can create change. ❁



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS



JESS, LINDSAY, AND ARI, 2007 BBfP-DENVER PARTICIPANTS



Listening with My Heart



I was born almost 23 years ago in Israel to two left-wing Jewish parents. I was brought up in a family that believes in mediation and in the power to change situations. I first heard about Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) when

I was 16. In the summer of 2000, my first year in the program, the Camp David Accords failed. This event made me want to become more active in my country, so I decided to return to BBfP the next year. The summer of 2002 was my third year in the program and my last year of high school. After I returned from Colorado that year, I decided to postpone my army draft and pursue a service year, so that I could give more to my country. I then went into the army for three years, and just recently finished my service.

Through my experience in BBfP, I learned about myself, about how to listen and hear others, and about how to confront conflicts. I'd like to share with you one event, although there have been many, in which I found myself using my BBfP skills in an environment, and a type of conflict, new to me.

I come from a very non-religious background and grew up with stereotypes and dislike toward religious people. Then I found myself in the army, where I had to work with many religious girls because my program enabled them to join the army and still maintain their level of religious practice.

In my third year of army service I was a lieutenant, and most of my staff was religious. One of the officers who I was in charge of had lived in Gush Ezion, a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. It was an eye-opening experience for me to speak with someone who was so different in her political views.

“Because of the BBfP program, I can understand and appreciate perspectives different from my own.”

It was likewise hard for her to understand that in 2000, I went to the West Bank, to Ramallah, and visited a friend who wasn't Jewish. We talked a lot about politics,



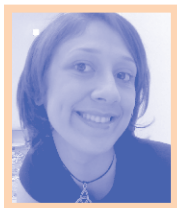
2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS

and it wasn't easy for either one of us. But we were open to listening to one another, and I found myself saying the words "I hear you" without even realizing what I was saying. At that moment, I felt like I was back in Colorado, at BBfP.

My friend and I didn't always agree, but we talked. We talked about all kinds of subjects, especially about women, religion, and the situation between Palestine and Israel. She is now one of my best friends.

In the last three years, I have learned so much from her and the rest of my religious staff. They have all opened my eyes to many things. It is because of the BBfP program, that I have the skills to communicate with the 'other'. It is because of the BBfP program, that I can understand and appreciate perspectives different from my own. And it is because of the BBfP program, that I found common ground and gained a new friend.

My name is Ilil. I am now working on my matrix exams and hope to start university next year in Bar Ilan, Israel. This summer, I will travel to South America to learn about and experience new cultures. I see myself as a feminist who is looking to affect change. ❁



Meeting Myself

I came to Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) expecting to meet new people and learn new things. I believed I knew who I was, and I wanted to share that with others.

When I arrived in Colorado, however, I realized just how far away I was from my country, home, family, and friends. I was away from everything I identified myself with, and I started to wonder who I was when far away from home. Who was I when I was not a daughter, a student, a friend, or a sister? It was then that I realized that the person I really needed to meet was myself.

Far away from everything I knew and in a new environment, all I had with me was my personality, ideas, and past experiences. Day by day, I started to interact with people and share my opinions and stories. I started to engage with the interesting conditions I was living in: staying in cabins with Israelis, people I saw as enemies; being away from my family; not speaking in my mother tongue; and adjusting to strange weather and different food. I thought I would crack from all of the pressure on the first day, but as time passed, I learned that I had both the strength and the will to go on. I never thought I could smile at an Israeli girl and say to her "yes, I understand your pain." I never thought I could cry when hearing the stories of strangers. I never thought I would care for people who were strangers to me and become their shoulder to lean on.

"As the days went by I spoke more, listened more, and shared more."

As the days went by I spoke more, listened more, and shared more. For the first time ever, I heard my own voice and saw the real me. I learned that I was a person who can listen, feel, share, and affect others. I was a person with a story and a mission – that mission was to show the world who I was, as an individual, as a woman, and as a Palestinian. I had met myself.

It has been three years since I was in Colorado, yet not a single day passes when I don't remember BBfP and apply something I learned from the program. "Feel comfortable being uncomfortable", "stretch as much as you can", "life is a challenge by choice" – every single word I heard then is still in my mind now, reminding me of the tools I need to master my own life. The BBfP program affected my life and changed it for the better. I learned to listen, to understand, and to speak my own mind and be heard. BBfP took everything I had and believed in and helped me shape it in a way that has made me a stronger and better person.

My name is Dima. I am an 18-year old Palestinian young woman who just graduated from high school and is trying to find her way in Jordan. I am also studying to be a pharmacist. ❁



ABRAHAMIC INITIATIVE'S INTERFAITH YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS AT A SCG TRAINING



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANTS AND STAFF



2006 BBfP PARTICIPANT HOLDING UP THE BOTTOM OF HER PEACE BOWL



Renewing Hope, One Person and Community at a Time

This year will be the fourth summer that we have hosted young women attending Seeking Common Ground's (SCG) Building Bridges for Peace (BBfP) summer program. We have thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the participants we have hosted. There is always some anxiety about how they will respond to us, since we are much older and from a different background than they are. Every year however, we find these young women to be delightful and extremely interesting, and they never fail to enrich our lives.

We also find some of what they say to be heartbreaking and emotional. This past summer, one of the young peacemakers stated upon her arrival that she had no hope of any progress in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; rather, her only hope was that taking part in the BBfP program would at least give her a chance to vent her feelings.

During the silent auction at the 13th Annual BBfP Celebration Luncheon at the end of the summer program, we purchased a peace bowl that she had made. In the bowl, she had written down her thoughts about the program. She said, "Thank you for donating to this program. I loved it a lot. It was full of challenges, love, learning, stretching, meeting new people, making new friends, and recharging hope – hope for peace and hope for a better future. Now I know myself better and I know that there are many amazing people who are willing to make a change and willing to accept differences in others and respect them. Thank you again and keep believing in us because we are trying." What this young woman said is the epitome of why we continue to support and believe in the BBfP program and SCG.

Mary and Peter Peterson
Hosts, BBfP program, 2004-present

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We apologize for any errors or omissions to this list.



ANDREW AND HUDA, 2006 BB1P SUMMER INTENSIVE STAFF



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Keeping the Lights on and Phones Ringing

It has been an honor to be associated with the dedicated group of people who are Seeking Common Ground (SCG). I first met Melody Feldman years ago when SCG was run from a tiny dark office with a part time bookkeeper and a rickety old computer. SCG's offices now boast sunny windows, several ringing phones, numerous computers and a staff still dedicated to the cause of peace. Grants are written, interns buzz around, ideas are exchanged and a tremendous amount of mission work is accomplished. The part time bookkeeper has been replaced by a talented accountant.

This amazing growth is partially the result of a dedicated staff, but just as importantly, it is due to the continued support of SCG's donors. This support is what sustains and enables SCG to continue building a generation of strong and empowered leaders, year after year. As Treasurer of SCG, I know the struggles that we have gone through to keep talented staff. I know the penny-pinching that we must do to make it possible for so many young women and men to participate in summer and yearlong follow up programs. I know what it takes to shuttle our staff across the country and around the world so that they can continue presenting our message of peace and reconciliation. And I know what we must budget each year to keep the lights on and the phones ringing. Without the infrastructure in place to support a competent staff, a safe office and updated technology, the awesome programs of SCG could not continue.

As we plan for the future, SCG strives to keep its organizational costs low. Our goal to reach more young women and men through our programs remains utmost in our minds, and in our budgetary planning. I wish to thank our insightful current contributors who continue to fund the infrastructure of the organization, and I urge you to encourage others to join us in our mission of spreading the message of peace and reconciliation.

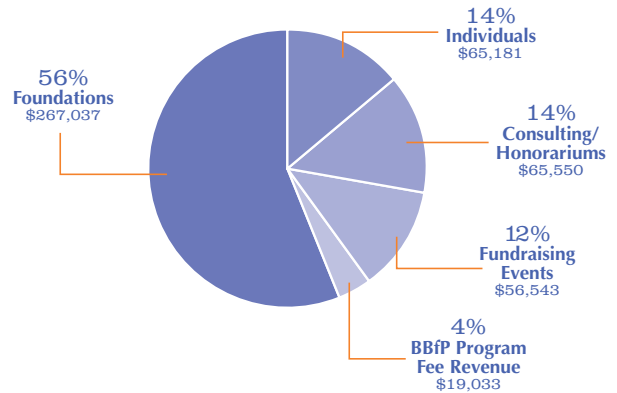
Nickie D. Rounds

Nickie Rounds
Treasurer, SCG Board of Directors, 2005–present

Seeking Common Ground Income – 2006

BBfP Program Fee Revenue	\$19,033	4%
Foundations	\$267,037	56%
Individuals	\$65,181	14%
Consulting/ Honorariums	\$65,550	14%
Fundraising Events	\$56,543	12%
TOTAL	\$473,344	100%

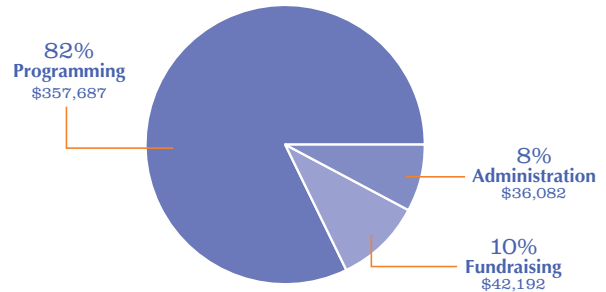
IN ADDITION TO INCOME, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF THOSE WHO GIVE TO SCG WITH THEIR IN-KIND DONATIONS. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE VENDORS, HOST FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, INTERNS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO SUPPORT SCG BY OFFERING THEIR VALUABLE TIME.



Seeking Common Ground Expenses – 2006

Programming	\$357,687	82%
Administration	\$36,082	8%
Fundraising	\$42,192	10%
TOTAL	\$435,961	100%

AMOUNTS INDICATED ARE APPROXIMATE AND WERE NOT AUDITED.





SEEKING COMMON GROUND

Seeking Common Ground's mission is to empower individuals to change the world by creating peaceful communities through integration, socialization, communication, and leadership development.

Since 1993, Seeking Common Ground (SCG) has helped more than 1,000 diverse young women and men acquire the skills and confidence to wage peace and become agents for change in their home communities and beyond.

SCG believes that just as race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, and other identities are critical to the coexistence discourse, so too is gender. Women often possess qualities that encourage a more collaborative approach to strengthening inter-group relations and approach conflict resolution from a place of greater inclusion, consensus, and empathy. These qualities model a style of inclusive leadership that creates more peaceful relationships and communities.

Predicated on this female-centered paradigm, SCG's programs teach participants how to communicate through conflict, transform antagonistic relationships, and recognize within themselves the capacity to effect change. SCG's goal is to build a generation of leaders who understand the complexities of inter- and intra-group conflict and have the tools and confidence to construct sustainable solutions for peace.

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