

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Rachel Corrie Foundation and  
Break the Silence Mural Project co-present

## The Mural Speaks

Event Marks the Completion of the Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural

6 p.m. Saturday, May 8, Labor Temple, Olympia WA

*4,000 square foot Multi-Media project*

*~Collective effort of 150 local, national and international groups and individuals*

The Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural is a community building memorial honoring all who have lost their lives in struggle and all who are resisting oppression. The mural was inspired by the killing of Rachel Corrie, a resident of Olympia who was crushed to death by an Israeli army bulldozer while defending the home of a Palestinian pharmacist and his family. The mural tells a tale of two cities linked through tragedy, Olympia WA and Rafah, Palestine. It is the tale of people working together for a better world. The mural uses technology and advancements in printing processes to include artists from Palestine who are forbidden to travel.

April 22, 2010, Olympia, WA – Come celebrate the completion of this dynamic, interactive mural at a free event at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, May 8 at the Labor Temple building, corner of State and Capitol Streets, downtown Olympia. The Mural Speaks event is more than a mural commemoration; it's a public art project that has galvanized and touched local residents, as well as individuals and groups nationwide and globally. The Mural Speaks is also the finale to the People's Assembly, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 9-5, a gathering of Olympia's grassroots organizers to discuss the US Social Forum and other strategies moving forward (For more information: <http://omjp.net>).

The Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project furthers Rachel Corrie's dream of building a sister city relationship between Rafah, Gaza Strip, Palestine, where she was killed in 2003, and Olympia, Washington, USA, where she grew up and attended The Evergreen State College. "Through collaborative art the mural educates and raises awareness that human rights are universal – everyone deserves a viable life," says Susan Greene, a clinical psychologist and muralist, who conceived of the project.

The 100-foot-long mural is located on the north wall of the Labor Temple building, at the corner of State and Capitol Streets in downtown Olympia WA. It features an enormous olive tree with more than 150 leaves representing issues of environmental justice, racism, colonialism, rights of indigenous peoples, and anti-war movements, and that range from the Americas to Europe, Asia,

and the Middle East. This summer, a related effort, the Rafah Public Art Project will be completed in the town of Rafah in Gaza, Palestine.

The Olympia Rafah Solidarity Mural embraces innovative technology. Viewers can use a cell phone to call and hear the creator of each leaf talk about its meaning and theme. Some artists have included poetry and/or music to add cultural flavor to the image and the audio soundscape. Conceived in 2008 by Susan Greene in collaboration with San Francisco's Freedom Archives, and created by program designer Sam Stoller, this audio/visual computer technology is also available on the mural's web site (<http://olympiarafahmural.org/>). It adds a powerful and dynamic dimension to the project, utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to communicate the message of the mural and each component, as well as the history, mission, and goals of each participating artist or organization.

"It was very exciting to include electronically-provided images from Gaza school-age children alongside art by Olympian school-age children," Greene says. "We were able to use technology to include images and ideas from those in another part of the world who couldn't come to Olympia and work on the mural."

The mural features artwork by numerous local, national and international artists and organizations. Olympia and Washington State contributors include Pastors for Peace; GRUB, a gardening and youth empowerment program; International Trauma Treatment Program; Buddhist Temple of Bainbridge Island; Black Student Union, Evergreen State College; Safe Place Women's Shelter; anti-war and veterans groups; KOWA-FM; several organizations in solidarity with Latin America; labor organizations; and others.

National contributors include Common Ground in New Orleans; Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism--San Francisco; Pomo Indians; Indigenous Youth Delegation--San Francisco; and Valarie James, Arizona artist and creator of the sculptural installation "The Mothers; Las Madres," a response to the human suffering and ongoing death of migrants crossing the Mexican/American border.

Ziad Deeb, a Gazan artist who lost both legs and his family in the January 2009 Israeli bombings of the Gaza Strip is represented, along with a Palestinian soccer team named for Rachel Corrie; Indonesian muralists Sama Sama ("together"); the Bogside Muralists from Derry, Ireland; artists with Middle East Children's Alliance; and many others from Palestine and Israel, including work by Israeli Jews.

The Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project, in the tradition of political muralists and artists such as Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, recognizes the unique relationship that exists between the people of Olympia and Rafah. The project highlights the transformative potential of global solidarity, linking struggles for peace and justice in Palestine/Israel to a range of oppressions and social justice struggles around the world.

"The project uses culture and technology in innovative ways to build community and to organize for justice for all" says Barbara Lubin, founder and executive director of the Middle East Children's Alliance, which partially funded the project.

The project is co-produced by The Rachel Corrie Foundation (Olympia, WA) and Break the Silence Mural Project (San Francisco, CA), along with co-sponsors The Middle East Children's Alliance (Berkeley, CA), the Gaza Community Mental Health Program (Gaza City, Palestine), and the International Trauma Treatment Program (Olympia WA).

The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice is dedicated to the continuation of the work that Rachel Corrie began, and hoped to accomplish. The Foundation carries out that work with her vision, spirit, and creative energy in mind.

**WHAT:** The Mural Speaks—Celebration of the completion of interactive public art

**WHEN:** project, the Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project  
6:00 p.m. Saturday, May 8, 2010  
**WHERE:** Labor Temple building  
corner of State and Capitol Streets, Olympia, WA 98501  
**WHO:** AudioPharmacy (from San Francisco) will perform  
Speakers: representatives of Olympia groups introducing their leaves, Cindy Corrie, of Rachel Corrie Foundation, Susan Greene, Project Director, Indigenous Youth Delegation to Palestine, Inmigrantes Unidos, Safe Place and others TBA  
**COST:** No charge  
**INFO:** 415-271-0576 or <http://olympiarafahmural.org/>

**SCHEDULE:**

6:00 p.m. Doors Open- DJ and Refreshments  
Gathering at the Mural  
Food & Beverages  
DJ Turtledove  
7:30pm: Live Music  
Southern Skies, Olympia  
Audio Pharmacy, San Francisco  
Cindy Corrie of the Rachel Corrie Foundation,  
Susan Greene, Project Director, Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project  
8:30pm: **The Mural Speaks!**  
Introduction of the Mural Audio Components  
Mural participants will introduce their leaf images  
Representatives of local Olympia groups will speak and recorded audio of national and international participants will be featured.

The Rachel Corrie Foundation  
The Olympia Rafah Sister City Project  
Parents Organizing for Welfare & Economic Rights  
Indigenous Youth Delagation to Palestine  
Inmigrantes Unidos  
Safe Place  
Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB)  
Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace (OMJP)  
Books to Prisoners  
Stonewall Youth  
The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador  
Industrial Workers of the World  
Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Azatlan  
Gateways for Incarcerated Youth  
and more!

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