

#### **DREAM BIG**

Our vision of reconciliation is big. We see a new relationship between Iraqis and Americans: one of peace, friendship, and respect.

Join us at: ReconciliationProject.org/Get-Involved

#### SO THEY **CAN DREAM**

Reconciliation means that when Iragi and American children dream of safety, security, and opportunity, they are able to realize their dreams.

Read some of their dreams at: ReconciliationProject.org/Letters-for-Peace

#### **ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

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KATHY MCKAY, Executive Director SAMI RASOULI, Executive Director, Muslim Peacemaker Teams LUKE WILCOX, Development & Communications Director TRICIA KHUTORETSKY, Curator, Iraqi Art Project LAUREN TRAVER, Coordinator, Iraqi Art Project

Report design donated by Anita Su



We dream big at the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project. We dream about expanding friendship and mutual respect. Cultural

relationships. In 2012 you helped our dreams start to come true. You helped us plant seeds of reconciliation:

We facilitated the first American citizen delegation to Najaf, Iraq since before 2003.

- We provided clean water to 8,686 students in Iraq.
- We presented contemporary Iraqi art to thousands of individuals in Minnesota and the upper Midwest.
- We helped 11 Iraqi refugees and Iragi-Americans tell their stories through their own books and videos.

- supported American youth exchanges, including with Songs of Hope in St. Paul and the "Iraqi Young Leaders" program at the University of Minnesota.
- We honored peacemakers who have spoken out and acted for nonviolence, including Iraqi-American peacemaker Sami Rasouli.
- We welcomed several Sister City delegations from Najaf to Minneapolis.

Even with these successes, we have a long way to go. So we invite you to explore this report and join us. Together we can transform a legacy of violence into one of reconciliation. Together we can nurture and sustain the seeds of reconciliation. Together our seeds become a forest.



Kathleen McKay, Executive Director Iragi and American Reconciliation Project



Sami Rasouli. Executive Director Muslim Peacemaker Teams (partner organization to IARP)

# Challenged stereotypes of Iraqi, Muslim, and Arab women by presenting the Not About Bombs art exhibition in Minneapolis, featuring the work of 5 contemporary Iraqi women artists.

- Provided clean drinking water to over 8,000 children in the area of Najaf, Iraq.
- Helped local Iraqi refugees and Iraqi-Americans in Minneapolis tell their stories through their own books and videos. The project was a collaboration with the Veterans Book Project, The Advocates for Human Rights, filmmaker Nathan Fisher, and Columbia Heights High School.
- Welcomed a delegation of government employees from Najaf for event management training and exchange with IARP and Meet Minneapolis.
- Hosted the President of the University of Kufa, Iraq for meetings and exchange at the University of Minnesota.
- Partnered with Target to host an arts and crafts area for children at the 2012 Minneapolis Sister Cities Celebration during the city's Aquatennial week
- Worked with medical students in Baghdad to exchange toys and art between children with cancer in Iraq and the United States.
- Hosted an event honoring Iraqi-American peacemaker Sami Rasouli with a celebration of his life and work at Crescent Moon Banquet Hall in Minneapolis.
- Organized the first citizen delegation to Najaf, Iraq since before 2003. The Sister City delegation from Minneapolis brought a message of friendship and strengthened ties between citizens of the two cities.



# SAVE FUNDS, SAVE LIVES:

Start your own savings plan for saving lives, from this website link:

ReconciliationProject.org/Give-Monthly-Sustain-Reconciliation

# FROM THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION TO YOUR COMPUTER

View Iraqi artwork on our program website:

IraqiArtProject.org

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#### "I was a journalist in Iraq. One morning, on my way to work, around 7 a.m., I noticed that three men were my head, telling me to get in their car..."

## AN IRAQI JOURNALIST **BECOMES A REFUGEE**

#### AHMED'S **STORY**

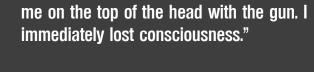
This is an excerpt from the story of Ahmed, a refugee from Iraq who recently resettled in Minneapolis with his wife and 4 children. Ahmed made a book about his story with IARP through a Veterans Book Project workshop. Share his story through our arts website:

IraqiArtProject.org/Bookmaking-and-Videomaking

#### FACE TO FACE

IARP builds friendship and mutual respect between Iragis and Americans through personal interaction. Follow us on Facebook and join our community of Iragis and Americans at:

Facebook.com/iarproject



"After I got into their car, one of them hit

I was released a month later.

I suffered a lot, but it was little compared to what some of my journalist colleagues went through. Some were killed.

One of my very close friends was shot in the head by a sniper while we were reporting together. He was standing only a few feet away from me. Our expression is, 'He died in between my arms.'

He had seven kids.

For a few years I moved back and forth between Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. After that, I settled in Syria and called my family so that they could come live with me. Then I applied to the United Nations for refugee status.

It's calm in America, but I would like to learn the language and be able to communicate with other parties... I want to provide my kids with a better standard of living so that they can live a prosperous life. In my country, I can work in my job and provide a better life, but there is no safety. Here, I cannot work in my field.

When I first came here I understood that this was not a vastly different society. This was not the first time that I've traveled. People are kind here, and I like Minnesota. Even so.

If there were safety in my country, I would go back right away.

Ahmed's book and other books created by Iragis in collaboration with IARP through Veterans Book Project workshops are available on our program website, IraqiArtProject.org/ Bookmaking-and-Videomaking.



#### **NOT ABOUT**

A collection of contemporary works by eminent female Iraqi artists explores an identity in flux.

This is contemporary art by Iraqi women, presented by you in an attempt to deliberately explore and challenge expectations.

IARP's "Not About Bombs" exhibit addresses how a female perspective can fit into the context of turmoil and conflict through art and avoid falling into the typical ways that women are represented... and misrepresented.

You are helping Iraqi women tell their story in whichever form they desire. Here they tell it through art that speaks an unconventional language. Here is a platform for a generation of female artists who are undeniably influenced by the aesthetics of conflict, but not in the least bit limited by them. The 5 Iraqi women in this exhibit contribute art that is visually and conceptually accomplished, as well as unpredictable and emotionally engaging.

Curated by Tricia Khutoretsky, "Not About Bombs" explores what Iraqi women are feeling and thinking. It is showing in 2013 at the National Veterans Art Museum. In 2012 you helped us challenge stereotypes through art in Minneapolis. Now you are helping us do it in Chicago.



#### HOST THE EXHIBIT

Contact us to inquire about bringing the Not About Bombs exhibit or other Iraqi artwork to your community.

info@reconciliationproject.org

#### IRAQI ART PROJECT

The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project brings art and culture from the Cradle of Civilization to the United States. We bring Iraqi and American veteran artists together in dialogue around war and its lasting effects.

We create a platform for Iraqi art in an effort to support the rebuilding of culture and the recording of stories. We invite you to participate.

IraqiArtProject.org

#### FROM US WITH LOVE

Receive emails from IARP directly in your inbox by signing up at:

ReconciliationProject.org

## **HARMONY CIVILIZATIONS**

"This project marks the beginning to create a more hopeful tomorrow. I want my people to bury the past and start over. I seek to remove the clash of civilizations from the dictionary of our lives. I seek to build a future that is based on our hopes rather than our fears and apprehensions."

- Supporter in Baghdad

IraqiArtProject.org/Iraqi-**Futures** 

**USE THESE LESSON PLANS IN** YOUR CLASSROM **OR WITH YOUR GROUP, OR SHARE THEM WITH** OTHERS YOU KNOW:



IraqiArtProject.org/Bookmaking-and-Videomaking



TO PEACE

Mohammed grew up in Baghdad, Iraq. He says, "I woke up to the world with a nice family: a very good, hard working father; an incredible, hard working mother; a beautiful younger sister; and a smart little brother."

Mohammed became an aircraft engineer and dreamed of raising his own family in Iraq. But because he built furniture for U.S. military offices after 2003, he was threatened and forced to flee his home and country. Today he lives in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

You are helping young children in the United States learn about why Mohammed had to leave his home and seek safety somewhere else. With your support IARP developed a curriculum in 2012 with The Advocates for Human Rights around books and videos by Iraqi refugees living in Minnesota, also created with your support. You are helping American children learn empathy and gain an awareness of their brothers and sisters in Iraq. You are helping the next generation depart to peace.

### SEEDS OF

#### RECONCILIATION

#### By Kathy McKay, IARP Executive Director

In slim, clear glass cups four It was just one example of inches tall we were offered tea at least five times a day. After meals, between meals and during meetings the delicate cups with small gold spoons came out on a large tray and were distributed around. The sugar bowl came along too and most of our hosts heaped a couple of spoonfuls of sugar into the hot tea.

Seven of us traveled in November to Iraq representing Minneapolis to its Sister City of Najaf. We were hosted in Najaf by the Muslim Peacemaker Teams and the Governor of Najaf Province. According to the local government, we were the first American citizen delegation to travel to Najaf since before 2003.

We found Iragis eager to form business partnerships with us and expand cultural and academic exchanges. Our hosts were proud to show off their ancient ancestral sites and their holy shrines. They were anxious to partner in rebuilding activities such as planting trees.

On a sunny late afternoon we joined with the Muslim Peacemaker Teams and a group of young Iraqis calling themselves Project Plant a Tree to plant seedlings down the median strip of a major road in Najaf. With cars whizzing by, we stripped the plastic casing from 70 trees, put the trees in the ground and packed the dirt around the roots. "Make Najaf green, little tree," we said.

rebuilding and optimism we found in Naiaf.

The fact that these were 20-30 year old professionals who have overseen the planting of almost 20,000 seedlings over the past year was especially impressive

The tea distribution at meetings and in private homes is a fitting representation of the open armed welcome we received in Najaf. Graciousness and generosity marked every transaction, be it repeated offers of help with hijabs or lush tables with multiple choices of breads, fruits, meats and vegetables, the welcome never waned.

In personal conversations we heard about husbands taken for the Iran-Iraq war never to return, of women who were imprisoned by Saddam Hussein for political activism, and of course about being occupied by the US and left with toxic waste and much higher cancer rates. With this multigenerational grief and anger just below the surface, our hosts still smiled and exuded excitement and enthusiasm about our having come to visit.

The seven of us came away overwhelmed with how richly gifted we were, both by Najafis we had known and those we had just met. We have been forever changed and our commitment to ongoing exchanges with our Sister City is solid.



#### FROM MINNEAPOLIS **TO NAJAF**

Learn more about the Minneapolis – Najaf Sister City relationship or about starting a new relationship between an Iragi city and an American city:

ReconciliationProject.org/Sister-City-Program

#### **PARTICIPATE** IN HEALING

- "Participating in the healing process for someone else kind of heals yourself."
- Marcus Erikson, U.S. Marine in the first Gulf War, on connecting with the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project.

Learn more at:

ReconciliationProject.org

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#### **SEEDS OF** PEACE

"Together in direct and visible actions - the urgent making of a peace bridge during rush hour, the visit to an intelligent and proud gardener's family in the reality of al-Jerawiya, and the purposeful engagement with committed women together we planted hope."

- Deborah Kalin, delegate to Najaf with IARP in 2012

ReconciliationProject.org

#### GATHER YOUR FRIENDS. LOVED ONES, **COLLEAGUES**

Contact us to schedule a group activity, such as short film screenings, a speaker, an art exhibit, or a brainstorming session about a new Sister City relationship at:

info@reconciliationproject.org



translated. The first words were surrender. quite shocking to me: 'Before you For American peacemakers, came here, the US was known we risk getting identified with as the #1 killer of Iragis. But you 'Muslims,' 'terrorists,' and the came in peace. You have done 'other.' the most difficult thing in taking the time and effort to visit Najaf, the Shrines of Ali and Hussein, and nearby Babylon. We see that you come as friends. Children

retaliation.

All of us in the delegation are acutely aware of how dangerous this reconciling work can be - for both sides. For Iraqis, they risk being seen as collaborators with the nation whose 'Shock and Awe' campaign was designed

"Our host stood up as Sami to force an immediate cowering

Only as we reach out and offer the olive branch to each other, to look across the table and see the other as our sister, our brother can that healing salve of reconciliation be allowed to help relieve the festering boil of resentment and

It had been a long day, but in those brief minutes, with those heartfelt words, I/we were revived. Sami said in his translation, 'His heart is full of love and he just keeps repeating how glad he is to be here with you.' This is what the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project is all about: getting on with the business of healing peoples whose heart has been broken and now want to be whole again. Thank you Hussein for opening your heart to us. May we always be ready to reciprocate in kind."



#### MAKE FRIENDS

Build new friendship after the violence of war:

ReconciliationProject.org/Get-to-Know-Iragis

## TEN MARCHES

"Ten Marches have come and gone. The war has significantly ended... But no turning of the seasons can diminish the pain and the loss of the years of war. No passage of time and no dark skies can ever dull the meaning of the war moment. The US rising generation who witnessed war have been called the 9-11 generation and we in Iraq called ourselves "Intelligence mistake" "stay the course" and sometimes "Mission Accomplished" generation.

War has promised us tragedy. War has solved no problem. Apart from that, I write these words firm in my belief, that we both as Iragis and Americans are more hopeful than ever with the US military withdrawal. The dark chapter of war has ended. But now, we seek to see the US brighter face. We need a brighter chapter to unfold before us."

- Iraqi supporter

# SINGING FOR HOPE Photo courtesy of Songs of Hope

#### SEND A **LETTER FOR** PEACE

You and your group can send letters to Iragis about your hopes, dreams, and common humanity.

ReconciliationProject.org/Letters-for-

#### RAISE FUNDS, **RAISE HOPE**

Start your own fundraising page for clean water for children in Iraq, or raise funds for another project supporting reconciliation:

GiveMN.org/iarproject

You helped us partner with Songs of Hope in St. Paul, Minnesota to bring the first-ever Iraqi participants to the 6-week performing arts summer camp.

Songs of Hope is an international performance group of youth, ages 10 to 22, from around the world. The performers wear their native, traditional dress while singing songs and dancing to Motown, rock, blues, world and folk music.

Songs of Hope co-founder Jeanne Junge said, "With young artists from Vietnam, Russia, China and Iraq coming this summer, Songs of Hope will have a lot of children from former 'enemies' of the United States on stage, making music together, enjoying themselves, and we hope – inspiring their audiences to think thoughts of peace."

Sister Cities Day: IARP partnered with Target to host arts and crafts activities for children at the 2012 Minneapolis Sister Cities Celebration in July. Activities included facepainting and making necklaces, comic books, or cards for kids with cancer in Iraq.

## WATER

Imagine not being able to drink a glass or water without fearing sickness...

In 2012, you helped ensure that 8,686 Iraqi kids don't have to. That's a life-saving step in the right direction.

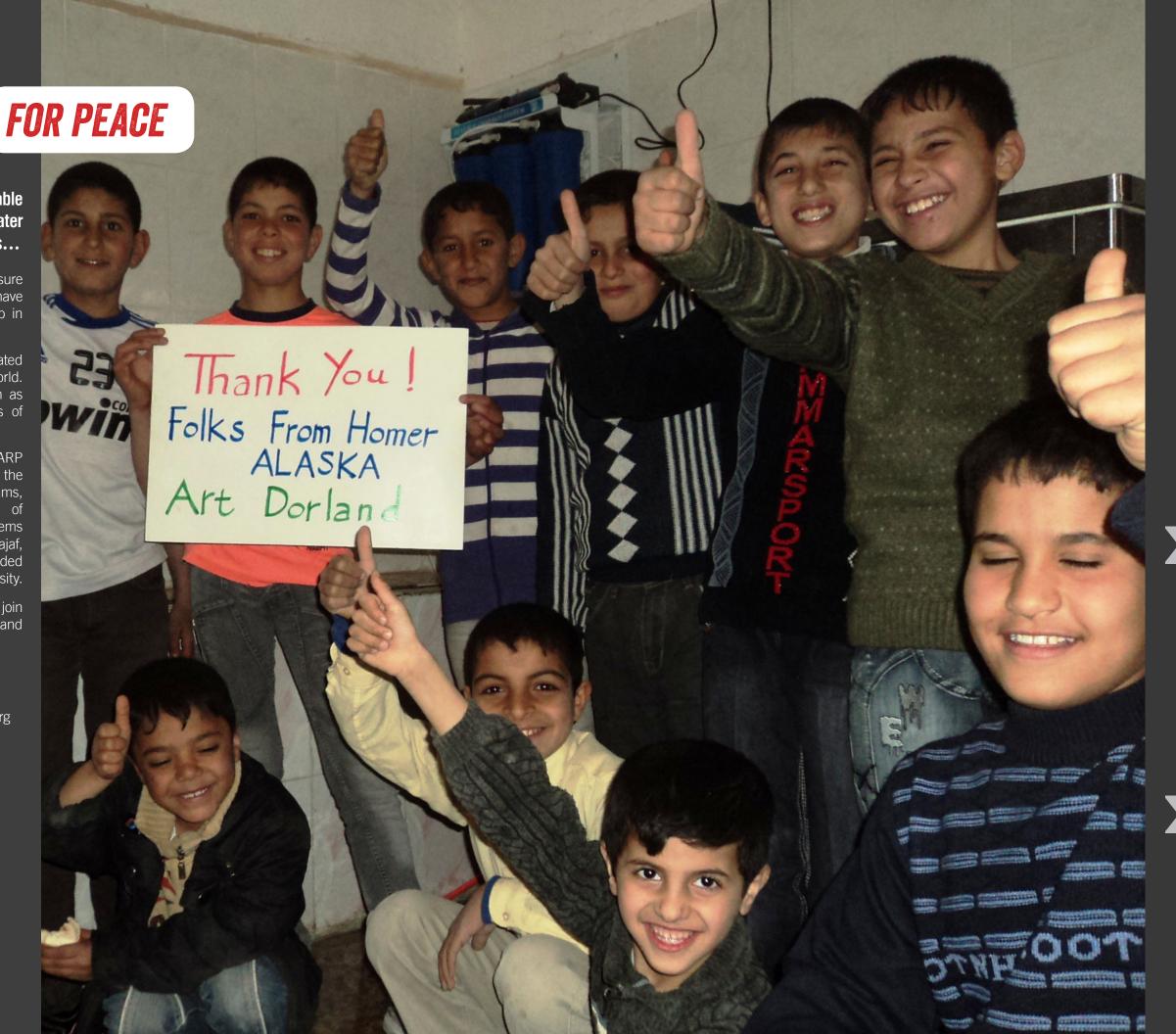
Iraq's water situation is rated the 5th worst in the world. Water-borne diseases such as diarrhea remain big killers of children under 5.

Through Water for Peace, IARP and our partner in Iraq, the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, oversee the installation of clean water filtration systems at schools in the area of Najaf, Iraq. These systems are funded entirely through your generosity.

Learn more about how to join us in bringing clean water and message of peace at:

WaterForPeace.org

or by contacting us at info@reconciliationproject.org



# WATER FOR PEACE

Water for Peace provides clean water to Iraqi children. In 2012 you helped us provide clean drinking water to 8,686 children in the area of Najaf, Iraq. Overall we have provided clean water to 84 schools and over 43,000 children in Iraq.

WaterForPeaceProject.org

# GIVE WATER, GIVE PEACE

You can give the life-saving gift of clean water online at:

GiveMN.org/Water-for-Peace

# YOU HELPED US STRETCH EVERY DOLLAR IN 2012 TO PLANT AND GROW SEEDS OF RECONCILIATION

#### Revenue:

Individual Gifts \$41,042
Foundations \$18,500
Government Grants \$27,063
Total: \$86,605

#### Expenses:

Programming \$44,850
Water / Muslim Peacemaker Teams \$21,600
General and Administration \$10,800
Total: \$77,250

# HELP SEEDS OF RECONCILIATION GROW

Sustain our work and help seeds of reconciliation grow into a more peaceful world at:

ReconciliationProject.org/Donate

We are deeply grateful for all of our donors. If your name has been misspelled, displayed incorrectly, or inadvertently omitted, please accept our apologies and let us know.

#### \$1000+

Bushnell Family
Steve and Christine Clemens
Community of St. Martin
Kathy McKay
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council
Minnesota State Arts Board
Pilgrim Lutheran Church
St. Augustine Church
St. Joan of Arc Justice Fund
The Simple Way
Andrea Wallack

#### \$500+

Paul and Nancy Anderson Shannon Ball David Bicking Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee ECHO Valley Hope Peter and Jane Eichten Phil and Joan Haan Mariesa Harmony Cheryl and Tom Imdieke Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer Jane M. Nicholl Pat Owen Fatma Reda Pat and Narmin Rolston June Prange and Carolyn Schurr Sue Johnston and Bill Stoeri Greg and Gail Wilcox

#### \$250+

501 Fit\* Albuquerque Mennonite Church Bill Deef Catherine Fasy and Ed Murphy Fletcher and Joan Hinds Jawaahir Dance Company & The Cassandra School3 Bob Lyman and Kaia Svien John Marty Judy Miner Salam Murtada and Vanessa Cornett-Murtada John and Mardi Pearson Angelo and Mary Percich Target - Northtown\* University of Minnesota\* Veterans for Peace Chapter 27 Wisconsin Network for Peace & Justice School

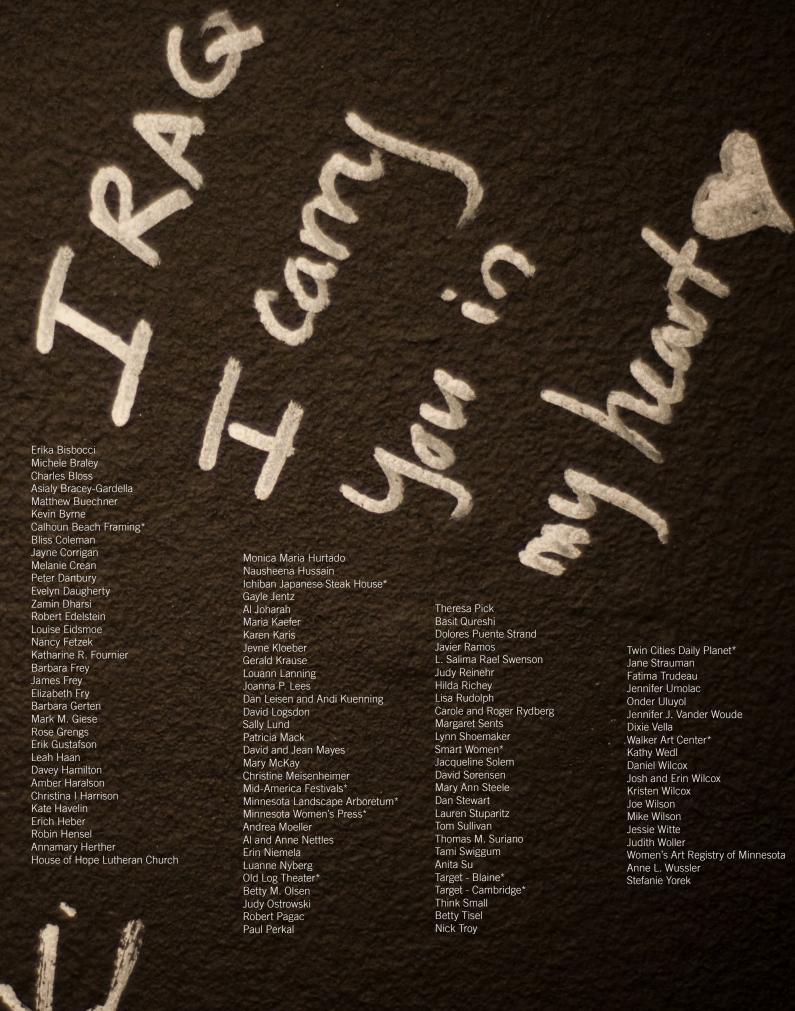
#### \$100+

Phil and Kathy Adam Ruth E.S. Adix Mira Akins Cara Anthony Chris Babcock Greg Barrett Shayna Berkowitz and Phyllis Wiener Daniel and Marcia Bernard William Berneking Jonathan Carver Jim Dorsey Camille Gage Karin and Jeff Grosscup Lynne Hardey Aaron Hughes Carol Bouska and Jeremy Iggers Gerald Krause Dorothy Jung and Craig Hedberg Susu Jeffrey Steve and Nancy Laible Thomas and Ginny Lange Sharon and Antoni Lewandowski Joyce Lyon Macalester Plymouth United Church Polly Mann Siri Margerin Lotti Matkovits Irene Mehlos Donna Minter Mirza Nizamuddin Janet Parker and Walter Novash Susan O'Connor Jane Powers Chris Prendergast Ann and James Ricketts Phil Runkel Elaine Strite Terre Sullivan University of Minnesota Human Rights Program Skip and Kathy Valusek Nick Voss Dana White Luke Wilcox Michael Brett Wilson Carol Witte Katherine Woitan Jodi Wolk Catherine Yamoor Eleanor Yackel Robbie Wyatt

#### Up to \$100

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Lana Barkawi
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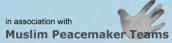




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# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE IRAQI AND AMERICAN RECONCILIATION PROJECT





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