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(IDAN)



MAYA & IDAN

Yitzchak Rabin High School
Kiryat Yam, Israel

Two years ago, we began to participate in Seeds of Peace, which is an organization that was created by Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat in 1993 following the Oslo Accords. Its main goal is to bring together youth from both sides of the Arab Israeli conflict to learn to work together and see if it is possible to live in coexistence.

This project is very important for us because we do not usually get to meet and engage in discussion with Arabs in our community. The political conflict is always on the news, and we learn about it from a distance, but this program provides a chance for us to meet with people who are our age and learn their perspective, to communicate with them, and to relate to them.

Idan: The teenagers that we met from Arab communities from the West Bank, Jordan and Egypt were very different from what we had imagined. I learned that though we all have differences, everyone is human. Rabin High School gave me the opportunity to take part in this important project. If it wasn't for my school, I wouldn't have had the chance to experience this first hand, to meet new people and to transcend

borders and cultures. This program has affected me as a person. Since the program's inception, there have been many graduates who have gone on to do very impressive things. I am proud to be a part of this effort and hope to be as successful as these graduates one day.

Maya: Seeds of Peace was the best experience I have ever had. I met people from all over the world—from India, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Gaza, the West Bank. It made me realize that not everything we hear is true. There is more to the story than that, and we must tell that story.

It changed my perspective, and now I look at issues differently. I question everything, and I try not to form opinions based on preconceived notions, but rather on my own interactions. I have been able to meet so many new people and the experience has made my life more interesting. The program taught me practical skills, like how to speak in front of people, how to communicate effectively, and how to be independent when I am far from home. When I grow up, I would like to use these skills in my profession and hopefully whatever I do will give me the chance to speak in public in an international arena.

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