paccusa.org

How Has PACC Responded to the Recent & Ongoing Crisis in Palestine?

Since **October 7th**, our world has been turned upside down.

We were faced with a challenge and put to the test.

Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers have always and will continue to go to our brothers and sisters on the ground in Palestine.

At **PACC**, you have risen up, met the challenge, and represented our community. You have been and will continue working together tirelessly until we see a **Free Palestine.**

While maintaining and continuing its regular community programming, **PACC** has been taking on several new initiatives and we invite you to **read** more about them:

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Together, we are doing everything we can to help our community!

PRESS & MEDIA

Media attention always increases with major events in Palestine, but with the recent attacks, attention has increased in an unprecedented way. PACC has had to dedicate a major amount of time and resources to addressing and dealing with media and the press. As a Palestinian American Community Center, PACC has become a source for many major/national and local news outlets for both stories and communications. **We have:**

- Created a press@paccusa.org email to manage the press intake.
- Have fielded over 100 media requests.
- Streamlined media contacts/outreach within our organization.
- Maintained regular communication with media outlets in regards to press updates and invitations to conferences, rallies, and marches.
- Created a talking points/soundbites guide to help PACC staff and community members when talking to press about Palestine. and invitations to conferences, rallies, and marches.
- Helped connect individuals with media outlets when the media has requested Palestinian voices, both in America and in Palestine.
- Have been fielding and facilitating press meetings, interviews, and visits to PACC in order to address and shift the biased one-sided media narrative.
- Worked with partner organizations to hold a community gathering and press conference at the beginning of the October 7 events with PACC, AMP-NJ, CAIR-NJ, JVP-NJ, and Black Lives Matter Paterson.
- Hosted a press conference with CAIR-NJ to address the siege on Gaza and rise in anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic sentiments in the U.S.
- Been invited by AMP-NJ and CAIR-NJ to speak at multiple press conferences to reiterate our demands for a ceasefire from our officials and community.
- Hosted a press conference in solidarity with healthcare workers in Gaza.

Future plans: We are coordinating events, press conferences, interviews, and meetings with the media in response to the continuing assault on Gaza and all of Palestine. We plan on advocating for fair media coverage and the inclusion of more Palestinian voices in media, including op-ed press submissions.

CNN US Crime + Justice Energy + Environment Extreme Weather Space + Science

A world away from Gaza, Palestinian Americans in this New Jersey community hold their breath

By Dakin Andone, CNN
11 minute read · Updated 2:34 PM EST, Mon November 20, 2023

THIRTEEN - New York Public Media

NJ Palestinian community mourns, pushes for c

On Thursday, pro-Palestine rallies took place ou
Newark and Rep. Pascrell's office in Paterson, de
minimum a ceasefire in Gaza. The Israeli army ha
Palestinians in Gaza, some of whom have conne
diaspora Palestinian community living in and arc

Reuters

Palestinian Americans fundraise for Gaza, as aid groups re
donations

Palestinian Americans and aid groups in the United States a
Gaza, which faces a deepening humanitarian crisis as the Is
enters its fourth week - but they have as yet limited ability
the besieged enclave.

Oct 31st (140 kB)

NewsBreak

Rallies set across Tri-State after multiple people arrested at pro-Pale
demonstration - NewsBreak

Despite a night of unrest at a pro-Palestine demonstration in Brookly
events surrounding the war in the Middle East kick off Sunday. (57 kl

North Jersey Media Group

NJ doctors decry Al-Shifa Gaza hospital tur
community support

Medical professionals gathered in Clifton to
be more forceful in denouncing the siege of

The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com

The PACC is filled with lies and hate - opinion

OPENED IN 2014, Clifton's Palestinian American C
PACC, was built, per its website, with a mission for
strengthen ties to their Palestinian heritage." (68 kB

NJ Spotlight News

NJ Palestinians say they're targets of bias att
Speakers weep with anger and grief at news c

Est. reading time
2 minutes

Writte
Brend

NJ Spotlight News

Palestinian Americans grieve, heal and find sup

New Jersey is home to one of the largest Palest
states.

Written by
Bobby Brier and Taylor Jung

Est. read
5 minut

Oct 24th (388 kB)

WNYC Studios

'It's Worse Than Ever' | Notes from America wit

A mental health cr
Gaza escalates. (16

northjersey.com

Bergen Passaic Sports HS Sports Advertise Obituaries eNewspaper Legals

"It's just unrelenting," said Basma Bsharat, education director of Clifton-based Palestinian American Community Center. "Our history is we have tried peace talks, we have tried mediation. We don't condone violence, but we have to look at context of what is the larger picture here."

Basma Bsharat, education director at the Palestinian American Community Center (PACC), speaks during a press conference and rally in solidarity with Palestinians on Monday, Oct. 9, 2023, in Paterson. Danielle Parhizkaran/NorthJersey.com

"It seems like all the stories are coming from New Jersey- and that was because of you."

- local Journalist

ADVOCACY

Once the events of October began to unfold, the community found itself grieving over those in Palestine, as well as having to defend ourselves here in America. The rise in Anti-Palestinian sentiments in the country have brought to light countless government officials, educational institutions, and workspace employers that have expressed pro-Israel, biased views. PACC has dedicated outreach and advocacy efforts towards the defense of the Palestinian cause and protection of its community members. **These efforts have included:**

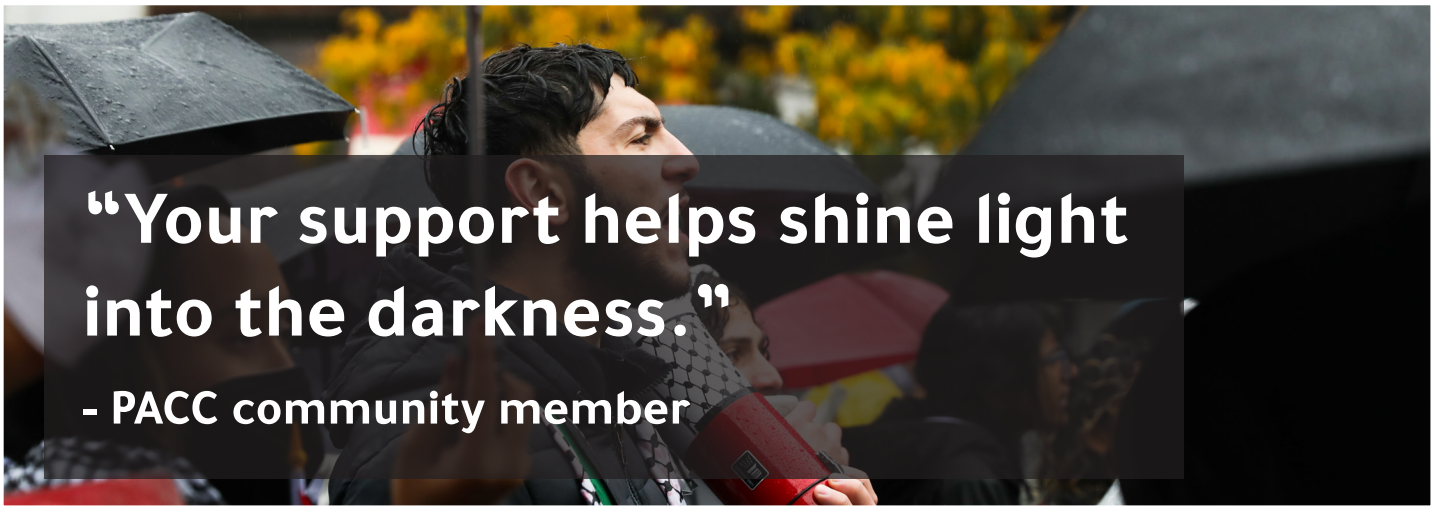
- Launch of the PACC Solidarity & Advocacy Toolkit that is now utilized nationwide.
- Advocated for 12 Palestinian American families to leave Gaza for their safety and for the US government their responsibility to them as their citizens.
- Created a How to Talk to Kids About Palestine Guide.
- Launched the GOT (Grassroots Organizing Team) Internship, which tables at events for Palestine as well as engage in phone banking to advocate with Congress/government officials for a ceasefire in palestine.
- Launched the ACE (Advocacy and Civic Engagement) Internship for high school students to advocate in the capacity they can.
- Organized multiple community phone banking sessions to contact Federal Representatives.
- Utilized our text me service to push members to text “FreePalestine” to our number 833-648-0391 for a list of linked action items they can take in support of Palestine.
- Worked with partner organizations to hold a community gathering and press conference at the beginning of the October 7 events with PACC, AMP-NJ, CAIR-NJ, JVP-NJ, and Black Lives Matter Paterson.
- Expanded our volunteer network in response to the increase in involvement requests.
- Promoted our “Get Out the Vote” Campaign to encourage voter registration and participation.
- Coordinated and pushed for an early voting day under a “VoteForCeasefire” campaign.
- Conducted an online/social media voting campaign to get people out to the polls

ADVOCACY

- Assisted Voters by providing support and transportation to polling locations on Election Day.

- Wrote an open letter to congress officials asking them to support a ceasefire. We asked local and county level officials both elected and appointed to sign on this letter.

Future plans: We intend to continue our advocacy efforts in the community by engaging with schools, districts, and officials in every capacity we can. We are meeting and discussing with officials, but also calling out our demands when our voices refuse to be heard. We engage with the youth through multiple internships and opportunities to get them more involved in advocating for our community.



OUTREACH

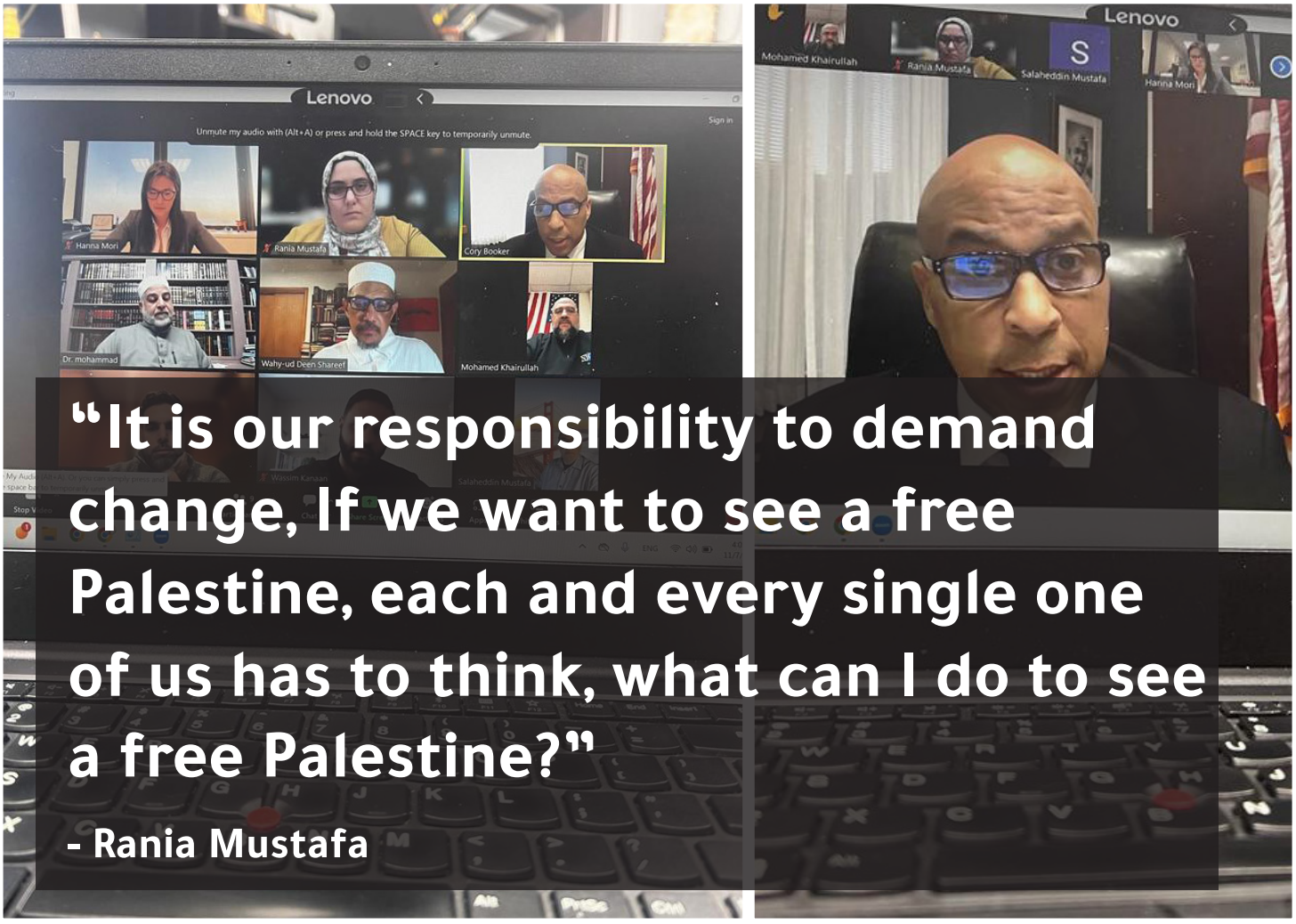
PACC has always been proactive with reaching out directly to community leaders and government officials to allow the appropriate communications and relationships to happen so that our voices can be heard. In response to recent events, **PACC has worked with many partnering organizations** to meet with and voice our community's concerns.

- PACC's Rania Mustafa, as well as Salah Mustafa, Ibrahim Fahmy, Sami Shaban, and Selaedin Maksut, met with Governor Murphy to discuss the impacts of Governor Murphy's words/ stances in support of Israel and allowed our community needs to be heard.
- PACC met with Clifton officials Mayor Grabowski, BOE President Jim Smith, Superintendent Robertozzi, and Vice Superintendent Gengaro to express concerns over rising bias towards our community members and discuss ways to protect our students.
- PACC met with Senator Corey Booker on multiple occasions to discuss our demands for a call for a ceasefire and voice our community's concerns and needs.
- PACC, CAIR-NJ, AMP-NJ held an in-person meeting with Congresswoman Mikie Sherill to voice our demands for a ceasefire.
- PACC has been in communication and met with Board of Education Superintendent Newell and Vice Superintendent Badawy and school 9 principal of Paterson to advocate for supporting our community's students and staff.
- PACC has reached out to private schools and colleges to provide support and resources for students.
- PACC and other local organizations met with Montclair University to determine the cause of a student death amid rising fear of hate crimes. It was deemed not a hate crime.
- Provided help with statements and reaching out to schools on behalf of community members to counter pro-Zionist statements that have been released by educational institutions in the NJ area.
-
- Met with Laurie Doran the Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness to discuss safety concerns of our constituents and advocated for anti-Palestinian billboards to be taken down

OUTREACH

- Advocated for Community members who were facing job loss, school suspensions, and getting doxxed with no one else to help them.
- Worked with other organizations and built a NJ coalition to unify the voices of Muslims and Mosques all over NJ.

Future plans: We fully intend to remain committed to our outreach efforts in protecting our students, professionals, and all community members in this unprecedented era where we are being silenced when our people in Palestine need us most. We will continue hosting and coordinating networking and advocacy efforts, such as a Young Professionals Networking event coming soon.



ORGANIZATION & COALITION BUILDING

PACC believes in uplifting and empowering both members and organizations within our community. One way in which we do this is by consistently building upon and organizing with partner organizations. With recent events, we have reached out to and built, strengthened, **and formed partnerships and coalitions with:**

- CAIR-NJ
- BLM Paterson
- American Muslims for Palestine NJ
- North Jersey Muslim Coalition
- Clean Water 4 Newark
- Samidoun
- USCPR
- Sabeel
- NJAIJ
- UNRWA
- PYM
- ICPC
- WOL
- SJP National
- PSL
- JVP North Jersey
- Jews 4 Palestinian Right of Return
- Masjid Omar
- Falah Masjid
- Al-Awda NY
- Local SJPs
- Palestinian Feminist Collective
- DSA NJ
- AUCC NJ
- NNAAC
- HerUproar
- Wafa House
- Smile For Charity
- Aida Refugee Camp
- Human Appeal

“The first time in a long time I’ve seen an organization that truly empowers and strengthens the community of arabs and Palestinians. I wish I were a millionaire so I can donate more. God bless you all and I hope this grows more and more.”

- PACC community member

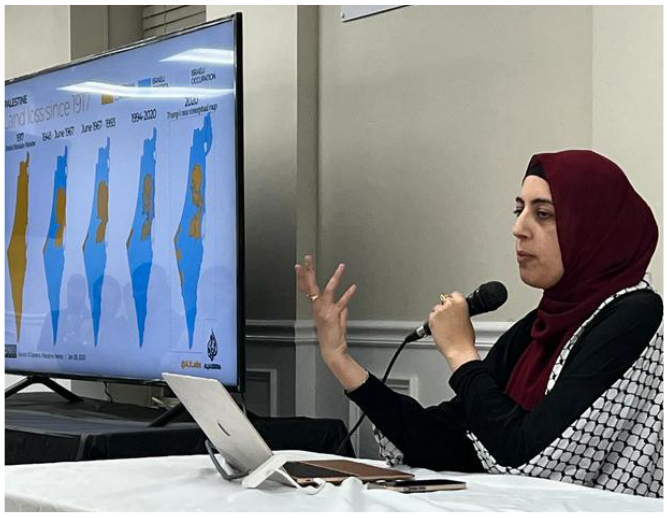
EDUCATION

We have increased our focus on Palestine Education in response to the increasing attention on Palestine at this time. PACC already had established Palestine Education events that included monthly themed speaking events, as well as monthly education events from voices in Palestine that speak in Arabic. We have Palestine courses for high school and adult age groups annually. With recent events, we have coordinated and been invited to multiple schools and universities to speak and spread awareness on what's going on now, as well as provide context and historical information regarding the ongoing genocide against Palestine. **Education events have included:**

- Ask me anything about Palestine virtual workshop
- Sunday Series virtual event on settler violence in West Bank
- Teach in about Genocide virtual workshop with Palestinian Feminist Collective
- Rising Star Academy workshops
- Noble Leadership Academy workshops
- Falah Center Masjid Presentation
- ICPC Friday Forum: Ask Me Anything
- William Paterson Culture Night Speaker
- PCRF/MSA Rutgers Speaking Event
- Beit Anan Teach-In
- Sabeel Palestine Actions Event
- Fairleigh Dickinson Teach-In About Palestine
- Bergen Community College MSA Teach-In
- Rutgers New Brunswick SJP Documentary Screening
- Documentary Screenings
- Next edition planning of our literary magazine, Falastin, under the theme of Qahr wa Fakhr

Future plans: PACC hopes to increase education efforts as we gain more interest by both Palestinians and non-Palestinians. We have prepared a school-aligned HOPE teaching syllabus to teach in Noble Leadership Academy as a spring high school elective and hope to expand curriculum to be inclusive of both public and private school curriculums. Our winter programs session includes Freedom is the Future, our Palestine Solidarity course for adults. In the spring, we will be having our fifth annual PACC conference.

Support Groups



What is Zionism?
A political and nationalist ideology rooted in white-supremacy and genocide that supports and sustains the Jewish state of Israel in occupied Palestinian territories.

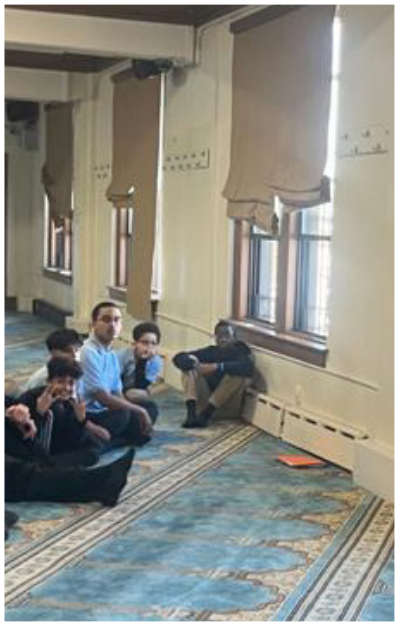
EVENTS

PACC continues to be a hub for community events, now even more crucial for our members than ever before. Our events provide resources, opportunities, and a safe space for our community members to gather and participate in activities and events together. While continuing our regularly programmed events, we felt and recognized it to be necessary to revamp our events in every capacity we could to include Palestine advocacy.

Events included:

- Board of Education Candidate Forum so our community can get to know their candidates and learn about each one's platform.
- Community Healing Event, which was originally our Fall Fest, was revamped to provide a safe space with breakout sessions that were inclusive of all ages. We had support group sessions, art therapy, kids' businesses, community resources, a tatreez circle, and health fair.
- For our last two Women's Brunch events, our main focus was community healing and comfort in response to everything happening in Palestine. The first provided a safe space with a counseling session and the second was a Know Your Rights workshop with CAIR-NJ.
- Community Healing Support Groups both in person and virtual to help members process what is happening to our community in Gaza and here in the diaspora.
- Khadija Salim, a trained trauma-informed therapist, provided two sessions on addressing the impact of Palestine activism on our mental health and providing ways to cope. The first was for local SJP/college activists, and the second was for our PACC staff
- Multiple sign-making sessions for those who were interested in making signs to take to protests and do so in community.
- Documentary screening on November 22 called "Spaces of Exception," as well as a discussion with one of its directors, Matt Peterson.

Future plans: PACC will be hosting at least four events in the immediate future in partnership with other organizations/individuals advocating for Palestine. PACC is a welcome space for community members to provide ideas and organize events and workshops with PACC support. We continue to provide events that cater to all ages and interests.



PACC

RALLIES, PROTESTS & VIGILS

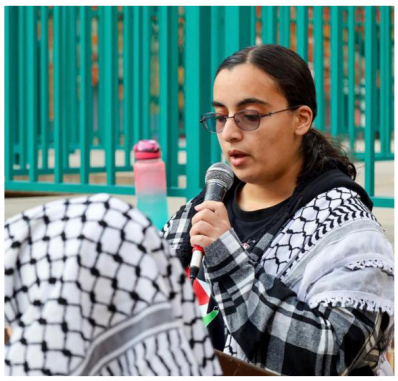
PACC has led efforts in hosting and co-hosting over 20 protests, rallies and vigils all over New Jersey. While multiple individuals have been motivated to organize, PACC's experience and connections have helped us organize, host and endorse smooth rallies, vigils, and protests that are both appropriate and safe for all community members to attend.
Some of these include:

- National Marches in DC: organized and financially covered the cost of a bus to Washington DC march on 10/20.
- National Day of Action: Flood Brooklyn For Palestine. PACC joined Within Our Lifetime's protest in Brooklyn 10/21 by funding and transporting 2 buses.
- PACC led a United For Palestine Rally with 35 sponsors and an estimated 5,000 community members on Palestine Way in Paterson.
- PACC sponsored a Stand With Palestine Solidarity Rally in Newark NJ on 10/29
- Historic March on Washington DC: PACC endorsed, funded, and sent 5 buses of 260 community members to a national march that consisted of at least 300,000 people. Our executive director, Rania Mustafa, shared a speech.
- PACC was invited by United Jumma in Morris County for a "United Prayer and Rally for Peace."
- For Shut it Down For Palestine Day, PACC organized a Silent Protest outside Congressman Bill Pascrell's office to demand he calls for a ceasefire.
- Advocacy Day In Trenton: Our team attended and spoke about World Children's Day and the effect of the genocide on Children in Gaza.
- Our Palestine Education Director, Basma and our Program and Events Coordinator, Fedah Mohammed have attended and spoken at rallies and vigils in Montclair and William Paterson Universities, as well as Teaneck High School Student Walkout for Palestine.

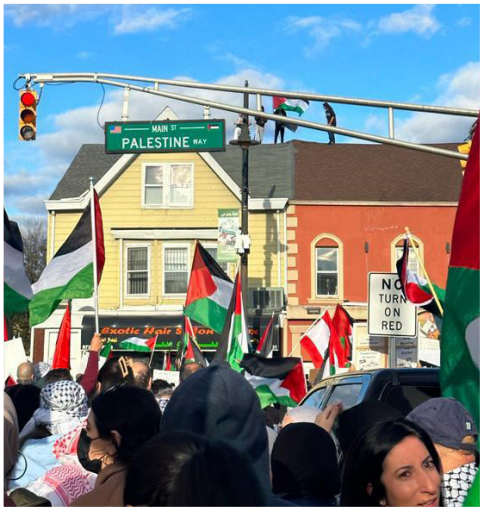
Future plans: PACC has a Children's Rally planned already for this Friday. Our community continues to mobilize and speak out in support of its members. We will continue to show up together for as long as needed in demanding a ceasefire now, justice for our community, and lasting freedom for Palestine.

Israel: Attacks on Palestinians is NOT self Defense
HOSPITAL

FREE PALESTINE!



Israeli Attacks on Palestinians is NOT Self


MAIN ST
PALESTINE WAY
NO TURN ON RED

STAND WITH PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE!
END ALL U.S. AID TO APARTHEID ISRAEL

Gould

Israel- Hands Off Al Aqsa Mosque!

MARKETING

Since the events of October, PACC has gained an estimated 4,000 instagram followers. Engagement has increased by 875.4%, and we have reached 2.1 million accounts. We have engaged 103,475 accounts as we have increased our social media presence and campaigning for Palestine. **Our marketing efforts have included:**

- Sharing reliable accounts and posts consistently to follow.
- Sharing on-the-ground updates, resources, and more.
- Releasing regular statements updating our community on situations in Palestine and in our community in America.
- Fully launching our Nakba documentary on Youtube.
- Calling out for stories with our #StandUpForPalestine Campaign to amplify Palestinian voices.
- Sharing reputable organizations to support on-the-ground in Gaza and made links with the organizations to donate directly to.
- Received support from major influencers and members with the launch of our NFLFans4Justice Campaign advocating for Palestine and addressing NFL's one-sided support for Israel.
- Followed up the campaign by sending a letter from a coalition of over 100 organizations along with a petition that received almost 20,000 signatures to the NFL Executives.
- Launched a "What would it look like if Israel was bombing you?" awareness campaign that asked people to visualize the scale of Israel's seige on Gaza.
- Launched "Nakba: 1948-2023" graphics to compare and shed light on the ongoing Nakba.
- Launched "Boycott For Justice: BDS Campaign for Black Friday and Cyber Monday" campaign with both a video and informational slides on targeted boycotting during peak consumer seasons.

Future plans: PACC hopes to expand our marketing outreach with a wider focus on interactive education on Palestine and community engagement. We hope to continue to provide as many resources as we can through our marketing.

“Being here in community gives us the opportunity to connect with one another”

- PACC community member

PROGRAMS

We have been teaching our youth about the Palestine struggle through our community programming, which we host at our center year-round. In doing so, we are continuing to fight cultural appropriation and preserve our Palestinian identity. **Some of our community programs that are directly related to our heritage include:**

- Dabka classes for ages 5+
- Tatreez (traditional Palestinian embroidery)/Sewing classes
- Palestinian cooking classes
- Arabic storytime
- Arabic language classes for ages 5-12
- Holding onto Palestinian Existence
- Freedom is the Future

Future plans: We plan on starting our winter session in January for anyone interested in registering for our Community Programs. We plan on adding a new reading/writing workshop series dedicated to Palestinian children's literature and identity representation. We will also be reframing the way we offer our Tatreez program by making it a monthly workshop open to the public rather than a weekly program with set registrants. For more information about our programs or to register, please visit the Programs page on our website at: paccusa.org/programs

“It is our responsibility to demand change.”

- Rania Mustafa

FUNDRAISING

PACC's work as a nonprofit organization is only successful through the support of our community. Through our partnerships and our individual members, **PACC has been able to:**

- Raised over $350,000 in funds for Gaza for various organizations on the ground.
- NNAAMA hosted a fundraising dinner for Gaza at PACC and medical professionals of our community were able to fundraise $300,000 to go to the humanitarian aid on the ground in Gaza.
- Set up donation page with UNRWA
  https://getinvolved.unrwausa.org/team/536482?is_new=true
- Set up donation page with ANERA
  https://support.anera.org/P2P/_QS2PGcS1UKtVNJxjUk3uA2/kwADIWoAEe6ZNwANOhQ7qQ2
- Launched PACC Givebutter campaign where we were able to secure funds to provide regular security for all our PACC events/programs.
- Worked with local Chocolate House business on two occasions to facilitate days in support of Gaza where all sale proceeds went directly to Gaza.
- Raised funds through our PACC Young Adults group and were able to raise $21,750 that contributed to posting 5 Palestine awareness billboards in the NJ area
- Human Appeal hosted a meeting at PACC where guests fundraised for Gaza. A team from Human Appeal was successful in providing the aid directly to the people of Gaza.
- For Giving Tuesday 2023, we focused on replenishing our scholarship fund and our emergency fund and surpassed our goal of $5,000 in one day. contributed to posting 5 Palestine awareness billboards in the NJ area

“We’re definitely feeling an immense level of grief. I’m happy to be here because being alone is definitely not the answer during this time,”

- PACC community member

PACC STORE

PACC has received numerous phone calls and online communications in regards to Palestine related clothing and merchandise. In response, PACC added new designs and ordered more merchandise to include in its store. PACC's store currently offers not only clothing but pins, flags, puzzles, and books. PACC hopes to restock on these much-asked-for items soon, so that local community members have a reliable place for their purchases and can represent Palestine wherever they go.

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SAFETY & SECURITY

We are living in a time where being Palestinian and pro-Palestinian is a threat. While we cannot allow fear to control us, we as a community must remain vigilant and take all the steps we possibly can to protect our members. **At PACC, we have done so by:**

- Remaining in contact with Clifton Police in response to constant threats and harassment towards the center.
- PACC staff have reported any threatening individuals.
- PACC has been taking extra safety measures in response to the threats including locked doors and buzz-in entrance policy.
- PACC has been having security present during all of our programs and events.
- PACC secured funds to hire security personnel for 15-20 hours weekly.

PACC SPACE

PACC is fortunate to have a physical space that continues to be improved upon. PACC continues to be a space for our community to utilize for private events and gatherings.
In addition, PACC:

- Is a welcome space for organizations that align with our mission and vision to organize and host their events in our space.
- Commits to be a safe community space for individuals to utilize as needed.
- Renovated our classroom upstairs to be a "Children's room" that features Palestinian and BIPOC kid's literature and a reading corner.

Future plans: Applying for security specific grants, which are already in process. We continue to take extra precautions for the sake of the well-being and safety of our community members. PACC is in the process of transforming another of our rooms into a tatreez room, fully themed around the Palestinian tradition of tatreez. We also have plans to dedicate some of our space to being a "coffee corner" where anyone can stop by and treat themselves to coffee. This idea came about in response to the recent boycott of many coffee franchises, as well as rising issues from outside the community. We also have ambitious plans of turning our property purchase into a Palestinian Museum.

Civic Engagement
#CountMENAin
Please include in your comment
"Add Palestine as a category"
Annual Fundraising Id...
Cloudy

Palestinian American Community Center

paccusa.org | @paccusa

388 Lakeview Ave, Clifton NJ 07011