



Dispatches from Seraj

2022 TOUR



Bethlehem
Tuesday, October 25

Touched My Soul, Leaving With Hope Ten Days Exploring Palestine with Seraj

Anne Koerber, on the "trip of a lifetime"



My shoes are covered with the yellow dust of Palestine!

My shoes are covered with the yellow dust of Palestine. **May my soul always carry some of this land** as my shoes carry its dust.

May I always remember the people who hosted this trip. **Fidaa Ataya** was our passionate storyteller. **George Ghattas** made music and wanted so much for us to experience Palestinian cuisine. **Mohammad Saleem** was our translator, guide and stand-up comedian.

I am so grateful to all the staff who interrupted their lives to care for us, educating us and planning our visits down to the last detail, yet shifting on little notice to a new itinerary when needed.

I think of thoughtful **Estephan Salameh** who helped unsnarl the complexities of Palestinian politics, and whose family allowed us to participate in the olive harvest. I remember all the women who staffed the Seraj libraries and community centers. Of course, getting to know **Laurie Salameh**, the CEO of the Seraj Project, has been special. **Laurie has cared for us as if we were family**, and allowed us to join her family.

All these people told us stories of how the occupation of Palestine has affected their daily lives. We have seen films and been briefed by experts on the lives of Palestinians. We have had a brush with a general strike. We have had a brush with a general strike over Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. **Our bus was boarded by Israeli soldiers carrying rifles who sought to scrutinize our papers.** We have traveled indirect byways as Palestinians are denied access to direct routes to major Palestinian cities. We have experienced in some small way the problems faced daily by our hosts.

We have also experienced some of the awe and spiritual presence in this land through the holy sites and the sheer spareness of the desert.

In the end what I found was hope. This came from witnessing the people and activities of the Seraj libraries. We saw how each library is itself a community which supports its own larger community in self determination and self improvement.

I am grateful for the opportunity to witness this, and grateful for the hope it brings.





My dusty shoes.



We played with the children and staff at **Al Mizra Al Sharkieh** Seraj Library.



The wonders of the olive harvest.



Contemplating the desert from the shrine of Moses.

We hope you have enjoyed these 8 snippets from our trip. And hope you will find ways to learn more about Palestine and Seraj.

See the full 2022 tour itinerary [HERE!](#)

See past tour Dispatches [HERE!](#)

18 PEOPLE are exploring Palestine up close and personal with our SERAJ executive director, Laurie Salameh, and her dedicated staff. October 16 -25. We hope you enjoy these reports.

REMEMBER we are dependent on your support for the programming and the maintaining of the libraries.

JOIN US and learn more at our Benefit on November 13. www.serajlibraries.org

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