

“Learning From Our Students”

Hand in Hand's response to the escalation in violence was featured on the front cover of Yedioth Jerusalem, a local section of the Friday paper of Israel's major newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth, on October 9, 2015, with a full article within the paper itself. Both are pictured below. A translation follows.



Translation by Hand in Hand staff:

Learning From Our Students

Nadia Kinnani and Arik Sporta, Principals of the Max Rayne Hand in Hand Bilingual School in Jerusalem

After returning to school this week, the first lessons were dedicated to class discussions. Both Jews and Arabs expressed concern and frustration about what is commonly referred to as the “conflict”. But alongside these feelings were also pride, determination and confidence in the justness of the path they are treading together.

There are those among our student body, both Jews and Arabs, who are apprehensive about traveling on public transport wearing their school shirt with Arab writing emblazoned upon it—and so our students, both Jews and Arab, organize to walk to school in groups so they won't be exposed to trouble on the streets. There are Jewish student activists that attend demonstrations while understanding the difficulty in their Arab friends joining them there. One student spoke of

her experience traveling to school through East Jerusalem where she passed by burning garbage cans and surprise spot-checks; another student was attacked in the evening in a local mall by a group that detected his Arab accent. But the bottom line is that most students still arrived to school this week, to this safe yet complicated place, a place that inspires confidence in our path, our place.

Our students know that it is here where we will contend with this terrible wave of violence. It is the courage of their parents to continue sending them to school, despite their trepidation; It is thanks to the students that see their bilingual education not only as a requirement, but as a personal statement; And it is thanks to our teachers, who sustain the daily routine of educating towards values; against violence and the killing of Jews and Arabs.

Alongside the many differences, we witnessed this week something important that is shared by both our Jewish and Arab students: a desire to not be satisfied by the daily act of arriving to school as a response to this period of violence, but to go out from its protective walls to initiate social and civic engagement in an attempt to end the violence.

Our students are right, and we cannot leave the arena of positive action to them alone. It is during this time that our role as school principals becomes clear: We, as educators in the city, call upon the educational leadership of Jerusalem to learn from our students and to initiate formal civic action against the violence, to ensure that it does not dictate daily life in our city. The younger generation is showing us the way, and it is our responsibility to choose to traverse this path with them.