

Dear Friends and Colleagues for Peace with Justice:

It is really an honor to accept this award from Peace Action Maine, our state's premier organization for peace and justice. PAM takes on the challenge of confronting a range of issues in various parts of the world, whereas Maine Voices for Palestinian Rights confines itself to one conflict only. This makes us all the more appreciative of having our work recognized and appreciated. So, on behalf of my many colleagues in MVPR, I offer our deeply felt Thank You!

MVPR, which morphed from the earlier Maine Peace and Justice in Israel/Palestine, has been operating for almost ten years. Our mission is largely one of education. We seek to inform the general public, the media, other peace and justice organizations in the state, and our political leaders, at both state and federal levels. We try to do this with rallies, attendance and presentations at appropriate fairs and gatherings, action alerts via our e- list, an active website and Facebook page, letters and op-eds in Maine's papers, appearances on local media outlets, and a steady flow of contacts with political leaders.

We would never have been deserving of this award without the persistent efforts of a wonderful core of MVPR-ers (you KNOW who you are!) including those who show up time after time at our rallies, volunteer to write letters and appear in local media, and respond to our action alerts and send out our home-made postcards. And then there are the splendid members of the Planning Group--Sally Bowden-Schaible, Dana Colihan, Shelly Elmer, Abby Fuller, Cynthia Howard, Steve McLaughlin, Jessica Moore, Tim Paradis, and Kristen Salvatore. Their ideas, energy and commitment are crucial to our success. I want to call special attention to two of these, Tim Paradis and Kristen Salvatore, who are the key players in all of our most effective efforts--from writing and lobbying ideas to the creative concepts and designs of bumper stickers, buttons and postcards. And through it all, Tim takes on the essential job of keeping us laughing. Finally, it must be said that I would have dropped out long ago were it not for my life-partner, who is herself a dedicated seeker of Palestinian human rights. Sally doesn't just encourage and support me; no, she created and manages our website and also often leads me with her own ideas, creativity and commitment. Belief in the importance of justice for Palestinians is a unifying bond in our marriage.

To connect with us and become part of these efforts, all one need do is contact me at mvprights@gmail.com. If you are interested in an action you can take right away, simply volunteer (with your street address) to send Sen. King four of our specially created (by Kristen) postcards, which you'll soon receive already stamped and addressed. OR volunteer to contact King's office, via email or phone, using short messages we will provide, which you can alter as you see fit. The cards, calls and emails comprise our Drumbeat Campaign, whereby we make sure 20-30 messages go into his office each week.

A final word about how dedication can bring results. When we began our efforts a decade back, what we met on the streets of Portland was a mix of indifference and hostility. Today, we encounter almost nothing but interest and support.

Again, MVPR thanks you, Peace Action Maine, for your own work on behalf of peace and justice, and we want you to know that this award will lead us to work even harder for the cause of peace and justice for all peoples in Israel and Palestine. After beginning to see with new eyes, a Jewish friend of Sally's and mine recently wrote that she was committing herself to being "relentlessly active and actively relentless." Your recognition of our efforts inspires us to accept this as our challenge

Bob Schaible, Chairperson
Maine Voices for Palestinian Rights