

# PLACES AND FACES IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

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## THE PLACE

If you are like me, you know very little about Palestine. You may not know the differences between Israel and Palestine aside from the name, the flag, and a few other things. Do not fret! We are in the same boat. I have been here for a couple of weeks now and so few of my questions have been answered. But rest assured that you and I may continue to wrestle with the uncertainty together. And that very

word, uncertainty, could be the best descriptor of this place. The precise borders between each nation, the laws that will govern the land, even the future of the people is uncertain. We must make no mistake, the livelihood of the Palestinian people, with or without walls, is very much active. It is certain. The earth beneath our feet is dented with the prints of countless walkers. As it has been for millenia. Before my time. Before yours.

## FIRST ARRIVAL

We seven YAGM volunteers arrived in Israel-Palestine on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2018. From Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, our journey began.

## SECOND ARRIVAL

Phifer Nicholson and I, the two male volunteers of the group, arrived in the city of Ramallah on the morning of September 8<sup>th</sup> to begin our year of service.

## EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Under the leadership of two extraordinary country coordinators and some spectacular local guides, we began to learn the nuances of the West Bank and her history.

## THE PEOPLE

I am truly honored to be a member of this talented group of American volunteers. The seven of us have taken to our adventures with immeasurable gratitude and openness, the like of which I have not seen. We are, all of us, deeply engaged in a year of accompaniment with the Palestinian Christians of the West Bank. Eager to learn, teach, and live among the people of the Holy Land. We are blessed to be so lovingly supported by you at home and by our partners here.



How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

*Psalm 133, Verse 1*

I care for those I have met in this Holy place. The students, teachers, administrators, the ministers, housekeepers, cooks, the list goes on. It is hard to not be sentimental. They want us here, to accompany them. So that's what we'll do.

*The teacher with whom I will be working this year is Mr. Islam Diab. I could not have been paired with a more talented man. He is one year older than me and, already, he has nearly completed his Master's degree. During the few days that I have known him, Mr. Islam has proven to have the utmost respect of his students and extremely high proficiency in the classroom.*



A cook prepares falafel in the city of Bethlehem.