Welcome to icnews - written by, and for, Cleveland and Arab Teens. In the section titled “lebanese”, we delve deeper into the country’s history and culture, exploring themes that are relevant to Israel, Lebanon, and the broader Arab world. Our contributors share their experiences and insights, offering a unique perspective on the cross-cultural exchanges and relationships that exist between these communities. Whether it’s a personal story, a historical account, or a cultural commentary, we aim to foster understanding and bridge the gaps that exist between cultures. In this edition, we feature articles by young people from both sides of the conflict, highlighting their perspectives on the importance of peace and cooperation. Through their words, we hope to encourage dialogue, promote empathy, and inspire actions that can contribute to a brighter future for all. May you find these stories enriching and thought-provoking as you continue to engage with the complex issues that shape our world.

LEBANESE AND SYRIAN BORDERS WITH SARI HALEBI-ZAHAR

Our long drive over the winding road took us to the top of the mountain. We were on the official Golan Heights and Ma- leh (Gas) - Sari Zahari would be our tour guide for the day. Major Zahari has served over 14 years in the Israeli Defense Force’s military intelligence corps, and she used her personal experiences during her time in Israel to illustrate for our group the Israeli border security concerns. What stuck with me most as we travelled along the northern border that day were the jaw-dropping views. The glistening waters of the Kinneret was beautiful, and in the distance one could see the mountains of Lebanon and Syria that are closest you can get to the Lebanese and Syrian territories.

The next day, we drove to the top of Mount Hermon and then to the front line. It was a memorable experience to be on the border between Israel and Syria.

Izir AR-ZARQA DIVISION

After visiting with an Israeli-Arab in the Galilee the day before, in the day we made our way to izir Ar-Zarqa, an Arab village on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. As we got off the bus we were greeted by Ganimov, an English teacher at one of the village’s schools, and several of her current and former Arab students. The students shook our hands warmly and guided us to a place where we would spend time together. Once inside the building, we all formed a circle and introduced ourselves. We said our names, our age, what we liked to do or fun facts about ourselves. It was interesting to hear how much we all had in common with the Arab and Israels. Many of them enjoyed listening to singers from America that many of us liked as well, and almost everyone had a favorite soccer team. Sometimes, it seems that Arabs and Jews are very different because of the political conflict but in reality, we have a lot in common despite our differences. After both groups were introduced, we split into groups that were a mixture of Arabs and Americans. Each group had to draw or write on a large piece of paper what we thought of when we heard the words: respect, culture, and nature.

At first, it was hard to communicate but we all ended up understanding each other. My group was fascinated when the Arab student explained their lifestyle. It was thought it was something beautiful and unique about Arab culture because they had drawn their poster boards. We started drawing with a marker, with the红线 on the Mediterranean Sea where many other families from the village were playing. We got a chance to interact with the Arab kids in a more personal setting and understand how the other Arab kids interact with each other. We then took the bus back to the hotel, and everyone had their own tables to eat. At this delicious meal, we were very comfortable with the Arab kids. The conversation was flowing and we were having a lot of fun. After we took a group photo and said goodbye, we got on the bus and headed to Tel Aviv.

JISR AZ-ZARQA - Kobi Einhorn

As we got off the bus, we were greeted by a friendly guide, explained the typical lifestyle of a Sderot citizen and how adults have to wait their turn to get food. It was a memorable trip in many ways.

We learned about the reality of Sderot, a city that is a constant target for the enemy. It was a realization of what it means to be in constant danger.

Izir Ar Zarqa is a small village in the Negev Desert that is close to the border with Israel. The village is surrounded by fields and mountains, providing a beautiful scenery.

Aft er 5 TIMES IN ISRAEL, I WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE GARDEN

Approximately 800 meters from Sderot is the Gush Katif settlement, a small Arab village surrounded by Israeli cultures. Sderot is famously known as the “Gaza of the West Bank”. It is a city that is constantly under attack from Hamas to try and have the war continue. Once we arrived at the garden, we were greeted by a friendly guide who showed us around the garden. The guide explained the history of the garden and how it was started. We were then taken on a tour of the garden, where we learned about the different plants and flowers that grow there. It was a beautiful day, enjoying the nature around us.

While concrete walls greeted us at the entrance of the garden, we were greeted with a warm welcome by the guide. She showed us how the garden was designed and how the plants were arranged. We also learned about the different types of plants that were grown in the garden, including some that were native to the area.

The border wall in Sderot is so immense, so as one can imagine life very different when living near the border.

As we continued our tour, we were able to see the different types of plants and flowers that were grown in the garden. We were also able to see the different types of fruits and vegetables that were grown, including some that were rare and difficult to find. It was a beautiful experience, learning about the different types of plants and flowers that grow in the area.

The guide explained the history of the garden and how it was started. We were then taken on a tour of the garden, where we learned about the different plants and flowers that grow there. It was a beautiful day, enjoying the nature around us.

It was a culminating experience of all we had studied. After seeing Gush Katif and being able to see everything I had learned to experience this, I wonder if Israelis and Palestinians can ever get along and live in close proximity. Will Israelis and Palestinians be able to tolerate hand in hand despite their constant hatred and life threatening interactions? One can only hope that there will be peace in the future, and that we can continue to learn from each other and get to know each other.

- Adan Kahan, Israel 2018