

Palestinian-American scholar and social entrepreneur visits Portland

Nasser Abufarha, whose company improves economic conditions for more than 1,700 Palestinian farmers in the West Bank, speaks on Jan. 20 at 7pm.

Portland, OR – Nasser Abufarha, Palestinian-American scholar and social entrepreneur, will present a free public talk in the Equal Exchange office at 1033 SE Main, Portland, OR 97214 on Thursday, January 20, 2011.

Abufarha will speak from 7 to 8:30 pm. His talk is entitled “Insisting on Life”. There is a reception prior to the presentation starting at 5:00 pm in Banyan Tree Portland at 18 SW 1st Avenue, Portland 97204 (in the Mercy Corps building), with an informal talk at 5:30pm.

There will be fair trade olive oil tasting and sales at both locations on Thursday. Our hosts at Equal Exchange will provide fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate for the evening presentation.



Abufarha is the founder of the Palestine Fair Trade Association and [Canaan Fair Trade](#), which is bringing Palestinian olive oil and other traditional foods to mainstream American and European markets, while also improving economic conditions for more than 1,700 farmers in the West Bank. Canaan Fair Trade today is the largest exporter of certified fair trade and organic Palestinian olive oil to America and Europe.

“Fair trade isn’t just about the price,” Abufarha says, though he acknowledges that the increase in income has been vital to many farmers in Palestine. “We have given farmers hope. An economic exchange that recognizes Palestinian farmers’ rights and respects the value of their connection to their land, after years of marginalization under Israeli occupation, is a major accomplishment.”

In 2008, Canaan Fair Trade broke ground on a new state-of-the-art olive processing facility nestled on five acres of olive country in Burqin, near the West Bank city of Jenin. The company ships to over 15 countries. “Palestine may not be in the atlas,” Abufarha says, “But we have put it on the shelves.”

Abufarha earned his PhD in Cultural Anthropology and International Development from the University of Wisconsin in 2006. His first book, which focuses on landscapes, the environment and violence, was published by Duke University Press in 2009. He founded the PFTA in 2003 and Canaan Fair Trade in 2004.

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