Share the Plate for November and December 2023

After Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, Share The Plate committee decided we wanted to raise donations for both people of Israel as well as Palestinians living in Gaza. First, I turned to UU Service Committee to gain knowledge regarding what the UUSC was sharing about the violence.

I was impressed with this sentence from the UUSC's website. "Human rights work requires us to hold a multiplicity of perspectives and to reject simplistic, binary accusations." The actions of both Hamas and Israel have left thousands dead and wounded. The present humanitarian crisis led the Share the Plate team to discuss how we can support the needs of Israelis and Palestinians.

Muslim Aid USA's (MAUSA) mission statement states: To provide help to people who are victims of natural disasters or conflicts, or suffering from poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, homelessness, debt, unemployment, injustice, lack of skills or economic opportunity.

MAUSA has been operating in Palestine since 2006. They are responding to the crisis in Gaza by working alongside their partners on the ground. These partners include Doctors Without Borders, International Rescue Committee, and the Red Cross. MAUSA delivers medical aid and equipment to the main hospital in Gaza. They also provide food packages as well as hygiene kits to those in need. Muslim Aid helps in educating and providing mental health support to children. They report 9 out of 10 children suffer from some sort of trauma related to living in areas of conflict.

The other recipient for Share the Plate is Hadassah. Their mission statement states: Through education, advocacy, and youth development, and its support of medical care and research at Hadassah medical organizations, enhances the health and lives of people in Israel the U.S. and worldwide. It is the largest Jewish woman's organization in the U.S. and worldwide with 300,000 members.

Hadassah was founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold. She visited Israel where she observed Jews living in camps without proper plumbing or sanitation. Starvation and disease were also observable problems. These conditions encouraged MS Szold to establish Hadassah. Youth villages were built for the children who left Eastern Europe when Nazis invaded. Jerusalem now has two world class hospitals which together supply 65 percent of all critical care in Israel. In 2005 Hadassah Medical Organization earned a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for bringing medical care to all, regardless of race.

Barbara Beckwith (with guidance from Jean Bowen and Rev. Denis)