

# A Day to Remember

The Masar Ibrahim al Khalil / Abraham Path celebrates the launch of the Charter for Compassion with a unique expression of friendship and hospitality in Jordan



This week the Abraham Path team joined thousands of organizations and individuals around the world in lending our voice to the Charter for Compassion – a visionary initiative, founded by the writer and activist Karen Armstrong, which aims to create a lasting statement of ethics grounded in the spiritual traditions of all humanity. The Charter, which was drafted by a council of elders from around the world and unveiled in Washington DC on November 12th, reminds us that the world’s different cultural and ethical systems already share the core value of compassion, and calls for this universal principal to be expressed through practical acts of kindness and solidarity with others.

“The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions,” the Charter begins, “calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.” Within hours of the launch, the Charter had been affirmed by more than 10,000 people including the Dalai Lama, Egypt’s Grand Mufti Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the Palestinian activist Jean Zaru, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and H.M. Queen Rania al Abdullah of Jordan.

To celebrate the launch, the Charter’s partners staged more than 175 actions in 32 different countries on every populated continent on earth. Among them was a youth walk on the Abraham Path in Jordan, hosted by the families of Al Ayoun and joined by the students and staff of the International Academy - Amman. The walk took the group through the orchards and oak forests of the Ajloun mountains,

culminating at the Byzantine ruins of Tel Mar Elyas – the hilltop where Saint Elyas or Elijah is said to have been born.

But this was something more than just a hike through one of the most beautiful corners of the Kingdom. The students spent the afternoon working alongside local families on the olive harvest – a simple act of friendship which transformed an ordinary walk into a memorable example of volunteer service and social solidarity. “We’ve always said that the *Masar* offers a platform for the energy and idealism of young people” said Ramez Habash, the project’s director in Jordan. “The kind of events we’re enjoying today – fun and learning, social engagement, volunteer service – go right to the heart of the Path’s mission and values, as well as reflecting the spirit of the Charter for Compassion.”



*IAA students preparing the olives to take home to their families*

The students were the latest of some 2000 people who have visited the Al Ayoun area since the first section of the hiking trail opened just over a year ago, bringing much-needed income into one of the poorest regions of the Kingdom. By offering traditional hospitality in the form of local food and home stays to guests, the villagers are finding sustainable tourism to be an important addition to the rural economy. “These trips are very important for the people here,” said Eisa Dweikat, a local man who now works as a guide on the path, “the people here are very kind, very welcoming, and they want more people to visit.”

This generosity was much in evidence during the course of the day. The students were treated to a wonderful lunch, taught how to harvest and prepare the olives, and each given a jar of the freshly-picked fruit to take home to their families. “These are the days these kids will remember, when they look back on their years in school,” said Dr. Yunus Sola, principal of the school. “Among all the tests and exams, it is days like this that will stand out.”

See [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org) to read the full text of the Charter and to explore other acts of compassion which are taking place around the world



*Hospitality - staff and students are welcomed by the people of Orjan village along the Masar*



*Walking the Al Ayoun trail up towards Tel Mer Elyas*