

2 worlds, 2 stories, 1 hopeful feeling

By Utsav Gandhi
CAMPUS EDITOR

As our Editor-in-Chief had mentioned in an article he wrote a year ago on a guest lecture hosted by Students for Justice in Palestine, “engagement on social and political issues is not something often seen from student groups, though in recent years it has become increasingly prevalent. If the trend continues, IIT may become a serious place for reasoned discourse on current events.”

This past Thursday, there were two incredible opportunities for IIT students to acquaint themselves with two pressing issues affecting places many of us have just seen photographs of in tourism guides or in videos on news channels.

Public Education and Outreach Associate at The American Association for Palestinian Equal Rights, Participant and Fundraiser at the Gaza Freedom March and NYC Palestine Freedom Walk, and Head Organizer at American Association for Palestinian Equal Rights, Julia Hurley, was invited by Students for Justice in Palestine to make a presentation, as she does around the country: “Images of Hope – One woman’s journey to Palestine and back.” According to Hurley herself, “I believe that given the right tools and motivations, the opportunity exists to bring people together to create a better, more peaceful world. Everything I do is

to advance this belief.”

Inspired by Mads Gilbert, a Norwegian doctor & solidarity worker and by the documentary film *Occupation 101*, Julia helped raise \$17000 for the Gaza freedom march, but she feels a lot of work is to be done. In her talk, she spoke about the Wall of Bethlehem, thrice as high as the one pulled down in Berlin, that has effectively imprisoned the Palestinians in their own land – and the shocking part is, it is US taxpayers whose money has gone towards funding it. She spoke about the UNRWA and the 4.8 million refugees it supports, and a township called Dheishei which houses 13,000 people per square mile. She spoke about the 248,130 houses that, to date, have been bombed without reason. Powerful quotes from the event included “The phrase the Palestinian teacher kept repeating was the appalling irony that the American school in Gaza City was “built by USAID [& by U.S. tax dollars], & destroyed by the US Army,” and “You can run but you can’t hide. Make war, not peace. Gaza – here we are!”

So what can interested students do? Talk to our members of congress, volunteer, lobby, raise funds, adopt a school in Gaza, get involved with organizations such as PCR, LEAP, AAPER, www.fiveforpalestine.com, and email juliachurley@gmail.com with any questions or for more information.

Immediately after this, there was another presentation titled “Catastrophic Magnitude

- A Lifeline to Hope and Healing” organized by Life for the World and Engineers without Borders. Mike Fedele, founder of Life for the World, has worked in Haiti since 2002. Traveling with Fedele, the director of the short film, Calvin Standifer was able to meet Haitian residents with interesting stories to tell, and visit and film tent villages and other areas not captured by general media. According to the Life for the World website, “The average Haitian family lives on less than a dollar a day. The children are undernourished, under-educated and generally under-cared for. The heart of the Haitian parent is to care for their children, but they don’t have the means. In many cases, the parents give their children to other families hoping they’ll have a better life. But the reality is that the children become slaves.”

The film showed how, for example, the Haitians value the game of football so much – because in many cases, it is the only hope they have left of a normal life, a happy life. The film showed a video of one of the locals talking about how contented she was despite being poor, but the video focused on a hummingbird that was simply attracted to her voice and started flying around her – showing really how pure and clean at heart these people really are. The film showed how the Haitians love to dance and celebrate – showing their love and appreciation of the good things in their lives that they enjoy. One of the most striking images was one of a small baby staring into the

lens of the camera – unflinching, curious, innocent. And that’s where they left us – it’s not only about the bonds you make and the monetary or other aid and support that you provide – it’s about staring back at that baby, staring at that reality, reassuring and instilling hope, that yes, one day Haiti (and Palestine, for that matter) will be a better place for the baby to live.

After seeing first-hand nameless naked children begging for food, and speaking with the locals in Haiti, Mike made the decision to help those that he could. Gathering the children he had gotten to know, Mike began providing them with food and shelter from his own income. What began out of impulse quickly grew as Mike began the Maranatha Orphanage and Primary School. What began with 8 children has grown to 160 children today; they are clothed, fed, and educated at the orphanage. Today, Mike returns as often as possible to assist in the organization, by managing a small staff and running the day-to-day.

What emerged from both these stories was the undying quest for hope even amidst the darkest of despair, and it was infectious. Whether it was the child staring at the camera at a makeshift school in Haiti or a child beaming at a similar camera in front of a war-ravaged Palestine school, it showcased the human spirit of never giving up. Oh hoping, for a better world.

Entrepreneurship workshop grooms students for independence

By Harshita Iyer
TECHNEWS WRITER

As you might have seen from the posters all over campus, the Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour came to IIT on Wednesday, April 6. Did you know, for example, that 80% of the world’s millionaires are entrepreneurs? Only about a handful of people in the audience could guess that.

The moderator, Bert Gervais, with his easy style and funny anecdotes, made sure to keep the audience laughing throughout the program. “The Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour goes around the country, brings together the

top young entrepreneurs and goes to campuses (like these) to show the students that anybody can start a new business,” he said.

He spoke about Pat Cuarto, the world’s number one yoyo player, who made his millions just doing what he loved – yoyo-ing - and his story was one about how a college student once started a business on just 10 cents!

This introductory session was followed by a talk by David Gardner, who was still in college when he started his great business, Colorjar. Colorjar is a company that helps out young entrepreneurs who are just starting out on their own, in finding the right kind of support, strategy and capital to turn their dream

into reality.

He talked about all the negativity we see around us, and touched upon sites like failblog.com that highlight failures, making light of people’s mistakes.

We learned how this is especially bad for entrepreneurs, because entrepreneurship requires that people take the leap of faith towards what they want, and if they’re constantly afraid of being laughed at, or “failing,” they will never go forward with their dreams.

Gervais also stressed that networking should be about what you can do to help others, and not what they can do for you. This is a mistake that most people make, and due to

this, other people think of you as being selfish, and don’t think of you when an opportunity shows up.

What one took away from the whole experience was the more in-depth knowledge of what entrepreneurship really is, and the ways to channel it in a way that it does great things.

Students learned about the “that’s awesome” movement, where every time we see something really good, we exclaim “that’s awesome!” So go out there, and spread the word and make your dreams come true! It may seem difficult, but it is never impossible.

All-City Art Exhibition showcases award-winning youth art

