

Dear friends of the rainbow!

As I know the group which came together today to celebrate the opening of the rainbow is composed of a variety of people. So I would like to assume everyone of You as a friend of the rainbow and as a friend of the thoughts that are combined with this wooden symbol. I hope You agree with me: when I address my greetings to You as a group instead of mentioning everyone I do this in order to point out what was happening during the last weeks. In this current time and situation it is not normal to have groups which stick together even when the people around are fighting each other.

I am proud to be the "patron" of the rainbowproject this year in Israel. When we planned it nobody thought that it will find place in times of fights and war. It was not an easy decision to keep the project running when we heard about the troubles the peoples living here are in. Especially the parents from the German members had a lot of fear and worries about their children travelling to Israel. But what would be the sense of a peace project that is cancelled when the first signs of fights arise. What would be the impact if we would have said: Well we would really like to run the rainbowproject in Israel but we will wait until the fights are ended?

We were quite sure that we had to deal with both: the fear of parents and participants and as well with our aim to bring together young people from different countries and ethnic groups even though other members of these groups are fighting against each other.

So I am deeply impressed and I like to say thank you very much to the members coming from Germany. I am quite sure that you did a great support to your new friends you met here in the "Bustan". Your courage to travel into a country which is regarded in the german news as very unsecure is an important step on the stony way to peace. Thank you very much for your participation.

And the same respect I feel for the participants coming from jewish and from arab families. When I heard that there are members of the young generation in Israel who have such a strong wish for peace that they leave their friends and families for the project time it touched my heart deeply. You came here not only to come together with germans and southafricans but to come together also with jewish and arab israelis. I think you are doing quite well trying to know each other better, talking together, sharing emotions and opinions with each other, building together, eating together and quit a lot more activities. Your courage is impressive that you try to overcome the struggle and You are talking instead of fighting. I really would like to see the responsible politicians talking to find a solution. All the sorrow we can see daily in the news makes me feel very sad. I am proud to look at the aims you have reached.

You built up a rainbow as a very impressive sign for peace. Looking at the rainbow gives me the hope that peace is possible. Thanks to everyone who helped to build it up: Amiram Goldin who developed the idea of the shared landscape, Klaus and Claudia Gust who are the donators for the project and not enough with being the sponsor, they came personally to build it up and to join the group.

And thanks to all the others supporting the project in different ways like kitchen, transport and so on.

I have a great respect for all that you have done and reached together. And I know quite well that the playground is not the only thing that you all can be proud of. You worked together in kitchen groups, in public groups, in culture groups and nevertheless in the working groups. You and your community can be an example to the world. I admire your strength in fighting for peace and I pray to my God to give you everything you need to go on. And I beg you precious participants of the rainbow-project when you are leaving this bustan and your friends now: Stay strong and brave to go on with peace work.

God bless you.

Bishop Kirsten Fehrs

