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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2008

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**LOCAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN LIVE VIDEOCONFERENCE
WITH PALESTINIAN STUDENTS ON THE WEST BANK**

Seattle, WA. March 10, 2008. Students at Nathan Hale High school are preparing to participate in a live videoconference on March 12 with Palestinian teens living on the West Bank as part of a yearlong face-to-face learning partnership aided by 21st century communication tools. The class, along with West Bank partner [Ibdaa Cultural Center](#), a grassroots initiative of Dheisheh Refugee Camp that provides a safe learning environment for the camp's children and youth, is using email, electronic slide presentations and web videos to promote cross cultural understanding.

Joining the Nathan Hale students at [Meadowbrook Teen Center](#) for the 45-minute videoconference will be students from [United World College](#) from Jordan, Ireland, Palestine and Israel. Sponsored by Seattle-based [Bridges to Understanding](#), an international organization that promotes cross-cultural understanding by connecting classrooms around the world, the UWC students are visiting Seattle for one week with two teachers from their New Mexico campus as part of a curriculum program titled "The Constructive Engagement of Conflict."

"Ibdaa and Nathan Hale High School are two of our partners in facilitating face-to-face exchanges between students from different backgrounds and cultures," says Greg Tuke, executive director of Bridges to Understanding. "The purpose is to create greater understanding and compassion between youth who often don't have the opportunity to get to know teens from other countries."

"Through their involvement with this unique exchange program, our students are learning as much about themselves as they are about their Palestinian partners. It is one of the best learning opportunities they could have," notes Ted Lockery, a Nathan Hale teacher.

The live video conference, hosted by Meadowbrook Teen Center as a service to the local youth community, is just one of several cross-cultural exchange events scheduled throughout March and April by Bridges to Understanding. A total of 16 students and three teachers from Bridges' partner schools in South Africa, Guatemala and the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, India, will be in Seattle for three weeks to attend classes at local partner schools, participate in a Digital Storytelling Workshop with Bridges' founder and internationally renowned photographer, [Phil Borges](#), and attend a five-day gathering sponsored by [SEEDS of Compassion](#) and led by the Dalai Lama to celebrate and explore the relationships, programs and tools that nurture and empower children, families and communities to be compassionate members of society. During the April 11-15 event, Bridges students will produce a digital story for sharing with youth around the world on the Bridges website and present handmade compassion boxes to the Dalai Lama.

Bridges to Understanding is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization founded by internationally renowned humanitarian photographer Phil Borges. Bridges engages students worldwide in direct, interactive learning and storytelling to build cross-cultural understanding. Through programs in schools, students connect in meaningful exchanges with their peers around the world, refine digital photography and media skills, and build critical thinking and empathy skills. For more information, visit www.bridgesweb.org.

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MEDIA ALERT

WHAT: A cross-cultural exchange via live videoconference between students from Seattle's Nathan Hale High School and Palestinian students in the West Bank as part of a yearlong face-to-face learning curriculum aided by 21st century communication tools to create greater understanding, kindness and compassion between youth of different cultures throughout the world.

WHO:

- Nathan Hale High School students.
- Students from [Ibdaa Cultural Center](#), a grassroots initiative of Dheisheh Refugee Camp on the West Bank providing a safe learning environment for the camp's children, youth and women to develop a range of skills, creatively express themselves, and build leadership through cultural, educational, and social activities. Ibdaa strives to empower participants with the confidence and knowledge to face their difficult future, while educating the international community about Palestinian refugees.
- Students from [United World College](#), the only global educational movement that brings together students from all over the world, selected on personal merit, irrespective of race, religion, politics and the ability to pay, with the explicit aim of fostering peace and international understanding.
- [Bridges to Understanding](#), a Seattle-based nonprofit organization founded by internationally renowned humanitarian photographer and Mercer Island resident, Phil Borges, to engage students worldwide in direct, interactive learning and storytelling to build cross-cultural understanding.

WHEN: Wednesday, March 12
8:30am - 9:15am

WHERE: Meadowbrook Teen Center
10750 30th Ave NE
Seattle, WA 9812
Meadowbrook is hosting the videoconference as a service to the local youth community.

WHY: To create greater understanding and compassion between youth through the opportunity to get to know teens from other countries in face-to-face exchanges.