

Longboarding For Peace In The Middle East

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Search-Spark-Stoke Tour 2012 Coming to Israel and the West Bank

June 25, 2012, 7:09 am -- /[EPR NETWORK](#)/ -- A unique peace building initiative will take place throughout the month of July, bringing the joys of longboard skateboarding to children and teens in Israel and the West Bank (Palestinian Authority).

The Search-Spark-Stoke Tour 2012, created by Michael Brooke, publisher of Concrete Wave Magazine, will teach as many as 200 children and teens in Israel and the West Bank how to longboard while establishing relationships between the Israeli and Palestinian participants. This initiative, which will include events held in both Israel and the West Bank, is being organized as part of the Surfing 4 Peace project with events hosted by Israel's premiere youth peacebuilding organization, the Peres Center For Peace.

The unique approach and programming of the Search-Spark-Stoke combines Michael Brooke's 37 years of skateboarding experience with the programmatic expertise of Explore Corps, the parent company of Surfing 4 Peace.

"Longboarding is exploding in popularity. It's fun and easy to learn" explains Brooke. "Not everyone lives near surf and learning to ride can be a challenge. Longboards are much easier to learn than regular street skateboards and you don't need to live by the sea to feel the thrill of the ride."

According to Surfing 4 Peace leader Arthur Rashkovan, "We have made great gains in building ties between surfers across political and cultural borders in the past few years. Expanding our programming to include longboarding was a natural progression. We can include more people, and longboard when there are no waves."

The Search-Spark-Stoke Tour 2012 will consist of four events in the cities of Jaffa, East Jerusalem, Jericho and Sderot. Instruction will be provided by Michael Brooke and a team of volunteers from Surfing 4 Peace. Each session will host 30-50 local youth participants selected by the Peres Center For Peace. At the events, youth will learn to longboard following a curriculum developed by Michael Brooke and Explore Corps. When Search-Spark-Stoke Tour 2012 concludes, 30 longboards and helmets will be donated to Explore Corps for use in future Surfing 4 Peace programming in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Schedule:

July 5: Jaffa

July 11: Sderot

July 12: East Jerusalem and Jericho

Dates and exact locations are subject to change. If you would like to attend please contact Matthew Olsen for details at m.olsen@explorecorps.org and (+1)202-631-0159.

About the Partners:

Michael Brooke has been skateboarding for 37 years and has been involved with longboard magazine publishing for 13 years. Concrete Wave Magazine has over 100,000 readers from ages 6 to over 65 and can be found in over 30 countries, including a newly -launched European edition. The magazine was based on the best selling (43,000+ copies) book "The Concrete Wave - the History of Skateboarding" that Brooke wrote in 1999. A 52 part television series was also created on the book. Brooke lives in Toronto with his wife and four children - all of whom love skateboarding! <http://www.concretewavemagazine.com/>

Surfing 4 Peace is a peacebuilding initiative founded in 2005 by Israeli pro surfer Arthur Rashkovan and American surfing ambassador Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz. Led today by Arthur Rashkovan, the Surfing 4 Peace project initiates and implements unique cooperative projects, events and campaigns based around surfing and beach culture with an emphasis on coexistence, cross-cultural dialogue and the shared surfing experience. Surfing 4 Peace is administered by Explore Corps. www.surfing4peace.org

Explore Corps, founded and directed by Matthew Olsen, is a U.S.-based 501c(3) nonprofit organization implementing unique, youth-

focused projects in outdoor education, recreation and the arts. Explore Corps programming provides an exceptional means of empowering youth with a sense of pride and accomplishment and allows them to explore personal growth and development on their own terms. Explore Corps founded and operates the Gaza Surf Club and administers the Surfing 4 Peace initiative. www.explore corps.org

The Peres Center for Peace is Israel's leading non-profit organization promoting peacebuilding between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and in particular between Israelis and Palestinians. Founded in 1996 by the President of Israel and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shimon Peres, the Peres Center conducts dozens of projects, involving thousands of Israelis and Palestinians, fostering socio-economic cooperation and people-to-people interaction. www.peres-center.org

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