Dear Friends of Pal Craftaid,

Welcome to the final report of Pal Craftaid. In May 2017, the Board made the decision to close by the end of June 2019. This was not an easy decision but one that had been coming on for several years. With that said, Pal Craftaid has just completed its 26th year of operation and there is much for which to be proud and to share.

As said in our 2015 report, Pal Craftaid was an organization in transition. We continued to have many consignment sales in churches across the country, primarily during the fall and Advent, and to be present at the major events of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for sales and interpretation. However, there were several key factors that led us to make the decision to close. They included the following:

- Difficulty securing new leaders to serve on the Board allowing others to rotate off;
- Difficulty getting into online marketing even though we upgraded our web page and had a consultant helping us with social media and other issues;
- Difficulty securing sales outside the Presbyterian family and a perception that our market had been saturated by previous sales and the readily available pop-up shops in malls during the Christmas season;
- Difficulty reaching millennial shoppers.

As we close, we will be leaving our web page ([www.palcraftaid.org](http://www.palcraftaid.org)) in a static position for the next three (3) years; this is intended to allow those who come to our page to learn about our partner organizations and artisan vendors so they might communicate with them directly for donations or purchases.

A part of the closing process was to dispose of all inventory. Nothing could be given to Board members or any other individuals; everything must be sold or given to another non-profit organization. After selling as much inventory as possible, at greatly reduced prices, we were asked by the organization Partners for Just Trade (PJT) to consider giving them our remaining inventory. We were very gratified at this option with a partner organization and, in the end, negotiated giving our remaining inventory to PJT; as a part of the negotiation, PJT promised to send 25% of their sales income from Pal Craftaid inventory to our partner Rawdat El-Zuhur School on an annual basis. In late April, the remaining two boxes (medium/large boxes) of inventory were sent to PJT. Those coming to the Pal Craftaid web page in the next three years will find information about Partners for Just Trade and how to be in touch with them at [www.partnersforjusttrade.org](http://www.partnersforjusttrade.org). A small box of embroidered t-shirts of varying sizes that did not sell well was given to Alternatives for Girls in Detroit.
As we close, I give thanks to the following group of incredible and dedicated women who have served with me on the Pal Craftaid Board in the eleven (11) years since the Board was formed:

Sheron Antczak (Bulverde, TX)                      KT Ockels (Louisville, KY)
Ervin Bullock (St. Augustine, FL)                 Virginia Priest (Tacoma, WA)
Karen Bullock (Birmingham, AL)                    Mary Robinson-Mohr (Bellingham, WA)
Harriet (Babbie) Cameron (Sedona, AZ)            Gerry Shawa (Mexico)
Malak Fakhoury (Ocala, FL)                        Alexa Smith (Lonaconing, MD)
Jean Henderson (Cranberry Township, PA)          Corita Swanson (Maryville, TN)
Sarah Humphrey (Tucker, GA)                      Mary (Toppy) Witherspoon (Huntsville, AL)
Jenny Kim (Oakland, CA)                          Madison VanVeelen (Indianapolis, IN)
Linda Kjeldgaard (Great Cacapon, WV)            Connie DePond (Indianola, IA) – Emeriti
                                                   Elizabeth (Liz) Knott (Indianola, IA) – Founder

Through the years, several others were instrumental in helping us take care of our business efficiently and appropriately and we give them thanks. These talented people are:

Kim Coulter (Des Moines, IA) – Newsletter and data base
Kirsten Johnston (South Lyon, MI) – Distribution Coordinator
Marta Kramer (Grosse Ile, MI) – Brochure formatting and communications
Timothy Stafford (Apopka, FL) – Web page/social media consultant

Many individuals/couples and a few churches were generous donors through the years. Their gifts to Pal Craftaid were added to our annual sales proceeds and then shared with our partner organizations and artisan vendor groups. Many thanks to each of them for their monetary support and prayers for our work in helping Palestinians.

In the spring of 2016 and 2019, Pal Craftaid sent small delegations to Palestine to visit with our partner organizations and artisan vendors. This is required to happen on a regular basis by the IRS but these visits were far more than obligatory. Over the years, these regular visits have been like visiting friends and visits on which we were happy to go and share. We will continue to be in solidarity and to be advocates for and with these good friends even as Pal Craftaid has closed. More about these trips will be shared further on in this report.

In April 2018, the Board held its annual face-to-face meeting in Indianola, IA where our founders, Liz Knott and Connie DePond live. This was our 25th anniversary celebration and it seemed more than appropriate that we be with our founders to celebrate. Several former Board members joined us in Iowa for this time of celebration. On Sunday, we celebrated at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines and honored Liz and Connie during worship and a special cake during the coffee hour following worship. It was a wonderful celebration for all of us!
As I close, it is time to give thanks for this opportunity to serve Pal Craftaid since 2008; it has been a very special journey with incredible colleagues. Our sales and fund raisers have made a difference in the lives of Palestinians on the ground through our partner organizations. Pal Craftaid was started in 1993 and was very much a mom and pop organization with incomplete financial information. From 1999 and since the board was formed in 2008, the record keeping has been much more complete. When all of the books were closed and the funds shared with our partners, Pal Craftaid has returned over $1,578,000 to the Palestinian economy through our purchases of inventory and return of proceeds to our partner organizations since 1999. Thanks be to God!!!

Grace and Peace,

Carol Hylkema, President
Westland, MI

www.Palcraftaid.org
Pal Craftaid, Inc., was founded by the Rev. Elizabeth B. Knott in 1993, operates as a 501(c)(3) organization and is related to the Presbyterian Church (USA). Pal Craftaid is a member of the Fair Trade Federation. Gifts are tax deductible.
Pal Craftaid and the Fair Trade Federation

Pal Craftaid has been a proud member of the Fair Trade Federation. This means that we followed the fair trade guidelines for our purchases of our inventory in regards to paying artisans fairly, paying promptly and supporting artisans through opportunities for upgrading their skills and learning business practices.

Pal Craftaid Partner Organizations

Over the years, Pal Craftaid has established strong relationships with several helping organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These are important relationships which we cherish and through which we direct our annual fundraising efforts and profits from our sales.

The YWCA of Palestine (www.ywca-palestine.org) at its four sites in the Occupied Territories – Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho – empowers women through vocational training and access to employment opportunities, promotes women’s rights, and provides youth leadership training and civic engagement. The YWCA operates businesses which provide needed income and develop confidence and skills for women. In refugee camps, they provide educational programs for women and children which stress creative learning, critical thinking, identity strengthening, and recreation. They host youth leadership training events, youth exchange programs, and youth cultural and sports programs. In cooperation with the YMCA, they plant olive trees, through the Keep Hope Alive program, where orchards have been bulldozed by Israeli settlers.

The YWCA of Palestine inaugurated a couple of artisan projects which particularly attracted Pal Craftaid to make the YWCA another of our artisan partners as well as an organizational partner. These projects included “The Fabric of our Lives” in which needlework coops in refugee camps stitched clothing representative of five of the nearly 500 villages “lost” since 1948; the clothing was put on live wood bodies. They also stitched bracelets representing these five villages. Recently, they developed the nativity shown here.

Rawdat El-Zuhur (www.Rawdat.org), a secular elementary and kindergarten school in East Jerusalem, is based on Christian moral principles with Christian leadership. Pal Craftaid funds are used to enrich the holistic and character-building curriculum with French, drama, music, art, and dance classes. This is particularly important for the students and teachers who endure the daily stress of getting to and from school, made difficult and time-consuming by the Wall that divides East Jerusalem from the West Bank and by harassment from Israeli Defense Force soldiers at checkpoints.

Funding this school is very difficult under the current Palestinian circumstances. A US 501(c)(3) was formed in the last couple years to promote the school and to raise funds here in this country. Donations can be made through Embrace the Children of Palestine, Inc. (www.etcpalestine.com).

“As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.”
Matthew 25:40
Aid to the Aged (ATTA) serves the elderly in the Old City of Jerusalem and in the West Bank. Many older people are isolated from their families due to the Wall and travel restrictions for Palestinians. With a small staff and a trained corps of volunteers of all ages, ATTA provides for hot meals, medications, transportation for medical appointments and errands, socialization, spiritual comfort and even house cleaning services. Pal Craftaid has helped fund this work plus many home repairs and improvements in the Old City. In all these ways, ATTA ministers to vulnerable and isolated older people. (Contact Nora Kort at nkort1@bezeqint.net)

ATTA also works with women’s groups which are organizing for the purpose of empowering each other. These are groups which are learning craft skills together and planning to earn money from the skills.

The Arab Orthodox Society (AOS) is a Christian women’s organization. Through AOS, Pal Craftaid has provided financial support for medicine and clothing, food for individuals and families.

The Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, Gaza (www.Atfaluna.net) serves families with deaf children. It continues to provide education and training for children and their parents in the midst of bombings, death and destruction that have happened all too regularly in Gaza. Religious partners and secular partners larger than Pal Craftaid and governmental agencies from around the world have continued to provide funding for food assistance to families, small business and vocational training.

With generous love, Atfaluna teaches children and adults academic and social skills, helping to break their sense of isolations. Craft programs staffed by the deaf and their families provide income for 72 women on site and 300 women working from their homes. Creating beautiful needlework, woodworking, and ceramics provides income which helps families survive the economic blockade imposed by Israel. It has been many years since anyone from Pal Craftaid has been able to visit Atfaluna and they often have much difficult shipping their products and getting new supplies.

Pal Craftaid Artisan Organizations

The Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (www.Atfaluna.net) in Gaza is not only a partner organization but is one of our suppliers for our beautiful needlework. Through the school’s craft programs, women are taught the traditional Palestinian needlework art and then their work is available for sale through the school. The women work in their homes and in groups to build community and to make a living for their families.

The Arab Orthodox Society (AOS) sponsors several women’s needlework coops throughout the West Bank and E. Jerusalem. The work of these women is brought together for sale at the Melia Shop in Old City of Jerusalem. Because it is difficult for these women to get their needlework supplies and to turn in their completed projects, representatives of AOS go to the villages to collect the finished projects and deliver new supplies.

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Matthew 25:40
The Arab Women’s Union ([www.bethawu.org](http://www.bethawu.org)) has a shop in Bethlehem. This shop brings together the creations of needle workers from all over the area. Pal Craftaid has worked with this group for many years and are happy to have their exquisite work in our inventory. The Arab Women’s Union has a small museum of Palestinian history of needlework in their shop.

The Il Bambino Shop ([www.ilbambino.org](http://www.ilbambino.org)) located in Manger Square in Bethlehem supplies Pal Craftaid with our olive wood sculptures. This is a family-owned business of many generations. In the past many workers were employed to produce the creations of the artists; however, in recent years due to the massive reduction of tourists, it is mostly members of the extended Giacamen family who produce all of the work.

The Cave Shop ([www.annadwa.org/cave/giftshop.htm](http://www.annadwa.org/cave/giftshop.htm)) located at the International Center in Bethlehem was a fairly new Pal Craftaid partner. The Cave Shop sells the creative artwork of students at Dar Al-Kalima College who learn skills in needlework, stained glass, silver jewelry, ceramics and more.

**Visiting our Partners – 2016 and 2019**

As mentioned earlier, Pal Craftaid made the commitment to visit our partner organizations and artisan vendors at least every three years. Each of these trips reaffirms to Board members exactly why they have invested a considerable amount of time, energy and money into these efforts. Despite the very difficult, and always increasingly difficult, circumstances under which they live, our Palestinian partners welcome us warmly and we have the opportunity to see the results of our work through the programming of these organizations. Who cannot be energized by smiling, dancing, singing students at the Rawdat El-Zuhur School? Whose heart is not touched by the elderly folks served by the Aid to the Aged program with caregivers and health care in apartments provided by ATTA? Whose heart is not warmed by the thought of women working together to learn a craft skill which they hope will lead them to earning a living that will support a family? In the spring of 2016 and 2019, small Pal Craftaid delegations carried out these visits as we visited friends and colleagues; these are people with whom we have worked for years and they are no longer strangers. Headquartering ourselves in an apartment in Bethlehem for the last several trips, we have made our way on foot, via cab, public bus, van with a guide and through Israeli checkpoints to visit our partners. For the most part, each visit takes up the bulk of a day and then it is time for dinner and for chatting/debriefing around the kitchen table in the apartment.

The 2016 trip was made a year before our decision to close so we concentrated on learning more about possible new products for our sales or about new programs that could be supported. The 2019 trip was made just prior to our official closing date; our primary goal of this trip was one last visit with these partners in order to have a time of solidarity and closure with them.

“**As you did it to one of the least of these…you did it to me.”**

Matthew 25:40
During the 2016 trip, we were privileged to have time to not only review some new inventory items but to visit with the artisans and to know a little about them and their families. Looking at new inventory possibilities is always interesting as we see what the partners have designed since the last visit and to have our own input on what might be popular in the American sales scene. This is particularly true in the realm of needlework products. Traditional needlework has been a Palestinian skill passed on from generation to generation for hundreds of years. Many Palestinian women learn this skill at a very young age and continue on through their years. Most of the needlework is done on black fabric which requires a good deal of light to be able to work; at times, Palestinians experience regular power outages by Israeli authorities making it very difficult to work on the needlework in the dark.

Most of the needle artisans work in coops; this means that they teach each other the stitching skills and often work together in homes or a community center. They take their finished products to a shop, sometimes as a group, and then take back new fabric and thread to make more products. In recent years, it has sometimes been difficult to get the good fabrics and good quality threads as Israel limits what can come into the country.

Over the last few visits with our artisan vendors, the majority of the needlework artisans have been younger women. Some are going to college with aspirations for other careers and others are raising and supporting families with their needlework. They are anxious to have new products on which to work and are excited to see new suggestions.

During the 2016 trip, we learned that the sewing machine used by one young woman at the Arab Women’s Union (AWU) in Bethlehem to finish products was not working well. Pal Craftaid was happy to provide the funds for a new sewing machine that Maha now uses in her home but which belongs to the AWU. During the 2019 trip, we met again with Maha and received her thanks and her smiles for being able to use a good machine.

A visit to the Cave Shop at the International Center in Bethlehem is an opportunity to see a wide variety of artistic skills. Artisans are/were students at the Dar Al-Kalima College learning skills in ceramics, silver jewelry, stained glass, and more. Again, most of the artisans are young women learning skills to support their families. They are always eager to share their work and to talk about their families. In both 2016 and 2019, we were invited to the home of an artisan in the Aida Refugee Camp. Even during the Holy Month of Ramadan (2019), we were served a snack while the family fasted and it was clear that the family did not have much in the way of funds to spare for guests; the ultimate of hospitality.

The Il Bambino Shop in Manger Square in Bethlehem (provider of our olive wood sculptures) has been a Pal Craftaid partner since the beginning in 1993. During these 26 years, relationships have been formed that make us feel like family. Every time we visit, the extended Giacamen family invites us to share a meal around the large dining room table in the oldest son, Ibrahim’s, apartment in the family compound. What a feast, it always is accompanied by wonderful conversation. In 2019, we were invited to the wedding of Ibrahim’s nephew at the St. Catherine’s Church next to the Church of the Nativity; we were so honored to share in this family event and to enjoy a wonderful meal and learn some about Palestinian wedding traditions. Yes, we do feel like family.

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Matthew 25:40
A visit to the Rawdat El-Zuhur School in E. Jerusalem is always an inspiring time. We have had the opportunity to visit classrooms and hear the children sing or recite, go to the multi-purpose room and watch a group of students dance the Debke and to meet with the principal and several board members. Rawdat is a private Christian-operated school founded more than 50 years ago. It has always served children from pre-k through sixth grade no matter the child’s religion. There is always a demand for more students than the school can hold. Rawdat prides itself on not only a wonderful staff teaching the Palestinian curricula but enhancing opportunities with computers, dance, music and other arts. This school is an oasis for all of the students; they are always sad when they have finished sixth grade and need to move into the public school system. Our visit to the school in May 2019 was, as always, a very special opportunity. We have always felt privileged to be able to give the Rawdat School a significant portion of our annual distributions.

Visiting one of the many programs of the YWCA of Palestine is an energizing time whether it is to an elementary school in a refugee camp near Jericho, the pastry education shop in Jericho, a women’s support group/craft group and a pre-school in the Jalazone refugee camp near Ramallah or the main office in Jerusalem. Mira Rizeq has been the YWCA General Secretary for some years. She is a strong advocate for women and children through all kinds of programming in many places throughout the West Bank. Pal Craftaid has partnered with the YWCA for many years and we have been very happy to give the YWCA another significant portion of our annual distributions.

During the 2019 trip, we met Mira at the YWCA office in Ramallah and then went to the Jalazone refugee camp, a short drive away, which has been in place since 1948. The original camp had 2000 residents and now there are over 16,000 on the same amount of property and represents more than five generations. This camp is very close to the Apartheid wall which “protects” the settlements on the hills above the camp. The experiences nearly daily incursions by settlers coming down to harass and terrorize the camp residents.

We walked through the crowded streets to a YWCA building that housed a pre-school on the lower level and a community center in the rest of the building. We met with a group of women who are learning quilting skills in preparation for selling their creations. While the women were excited to be learning new skills, it seemed as if their being together and being a support group for each other was as much or more important. The women found the space to be very safe and a place that relieved the pressures and stress from the daily terrorism and fear for their children’s safety. Many of the women had children who were currently in Israeli jails or had been; there was a great need for family counseling as those who had been in jail returned as different people and many totally unstable. The women had named their group Empowered Women for when they began to meet together they did not believe they could do anything and now they believe and have hope!

The 2016 visit with the Aid to the Aged (ATTA) program was in Ramallah where we spent time with several of the elderly clients who had been provided with very small apartments, daily caregivers and health care. At each stop, we were overwhelmed by the love, respect and interaction between the clients and the staff; it was obvious that these visits were the highlight of each day. It was amazing and

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Matthew 25:40
beautiful to observe. ATTA was started by Nora Kort many years ago. Nora is an Orthodox Christian but she has long assured that the care is the same for each client regardless of their religion.

In 2019, our time with ATTA was a visit to the small village of Baita near Nablus where we met with a group of women at the Women’s Development Society (2002 – 2019); ATTA was one of several organizations that helped the society to get started as a social service agency. The organization provides hot meals, health care and breast cancer awareness to older women in the community, training for traditional handcrafts, training for gardening skills for younger women and an occasional outing to Hebron. The programming has generated much energy from women of all ages in the area; they each volunteer their time to help each other and to support each other. Their success has spawned similar programs across the West Bank.

For many years, Pal Craftaid used the services of Wi’am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center (www.alaslak.org) for our tour guide. Each time we visited Palestine, we visited the center and had very informative visits with Zoughbi Alzoughbi, founder and director, and some of the other staff. Our time in 2019 was no different than previous visits. However, as we prepared to close Pal Craftaid, we realized that Wi’am had become a partner organization and we were very happy to share a significant contribution with Zoughbi and the staff as we sat in the shade of the walnut tree on the patio at the end of a wonderful visit. Tears abounded from everyone around the table as we realized how our gifts would help forward the work of Wi’am in Bethlehem and around the West Bank.

Wi’am has a wide variety of programming for Palestinians of all ages plus offering educational and cultural tours for visitors. Located next to the Separation Wall in Bethlehem, Wi’am conducts programming within its building and on the large shaded patio. Throughout the day and into the evening, programming goes on at Wi’am. During the summer school break there are many activities for children and youth, including opportunities to travel outside Palestine for a small group each year. There is a small shop within the building that sells the handcrafts of some of the folks who learn skills during the daily programming. The staff are trained in mediation skills and lead workshops on mediation and also offer peer mediation.

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We are very grateful for the Pal Craftaid friends who have donated to our ministry since our last report in 2015. Each year was a special campaign and some of those listed below gave to each campaign. However, this listing is all of those who contributed to any campaign since 2015. Many thanks to these individuals and congregations.

Ajuni, Jeanette (New Smyrna Beach, FL)
Barnes-Vandekoppel, Carole (Littleton, CO)
Bennett, Wilma & Fred (Louisville, KY)
Brener, Linda (Rochester, NY)
Brown, Carol S. (Reading, PA)
Bullock, Ervin & James (St. Augustine, FL)
Cloney, Sharon & Patrick (Dearborn, MI)
Compton, Alice & Marilyn (St. Augustine, FL)
DePond, Connie (Indianola, IA)
Dickson, Glenn (Gainesville, FL)
Dutter, Kenneth (Atlanta, GA)
Eix, Lawrence & Maybelle (Dearborn, MI)
Fleig, Cindi
Framke, Noushin & Greg (Rumson, NJ)
Gepford, Barbara (Charlotte, NC)
Gordon, Nahida & Donald (Wooster, OH)
Graham, Thomas & Toby (Sewickley, PA)
Griffin, Jacqueline L. (Washington DC)
Guendler, Herbert & Lois (Huntsville, AL)
Heatherly, Shirley M. (Maryville, TN)
Henderson, Jean & David (Cranberry Twp., PA)
Hess, Nancy & Victor (Livonia, MI)
Hoff, William & Peggy (Jacksonville, FL)
Houston, Carol & Joe (Decatur, IL)
Humphrey, Sarah (Tucker, GA)
Hylkema, Carol & Ben (Westland, MI)
Jackson, Thomas & Janet (Pittsburgh, PA)
Johnson, David & Polly (Louisville, KY)
Jones, William & Rebecca (Madison, AL)
Jones, Haskins & Ann (Birmingham, AL)
Kaboth, Kurt/Cunningham, Katherine (Asbury Park, NJ)
Kim, Jenny (Oakland, CA)
Knott, Elizabeth (Indianola, IA)
Lawson, Patricia (Canton, MI)

Lee, Dorothy & William (Tallahassee, FL)
Mackey, Sally (Burien, WA)
Matthews, Alexander
McGee, Kay (St. Augustine, FL)
Moiso, Lea & James (Portland, OR)
Moore, Pamela (Farmington, MI)
Morrison, Helen (Grosse Ile, MI)
Nietering, Emily & Kenneth (Dearborn, MI)
Ockels, KT (Louisville, KY)
Priest, Virginia & Coy (Tacoma, WA)
Reynolds, Deborah & Michael (Grosse Ile, MI)
Salib, Anis & Rhonda (Huntsville, AL)
Schmidt, Alyce Ann & Walter (Fremont, OH)
Shigley, Forest & Demaris (Belmont, CA)
Smith, Barbara (Crossville, TN)
Stockton, Jane & Ronald (Dearborn, MI)
Swanson, Corita (Maryville, TN)
Tate, Carolyn (Honey Brook, PA)
Waldron, Ernest (Indianola, IA)
Winkler, Carol & Paul (Dayton, KY)
Winters, Monica
Witherspoon, Mary & Newell (Huntsville, AL)
Witherspoon-Norris, Joan & Samuel (Mountain Brook, AL)

“As you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me.”
Matthew 25:40

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**NOTE:** Other mission giving included funds for a variety of things, including food, clothing, medicine, one-time education/tuition assistance, and numerous other items needed to assist in sustaining families experiencing stressful and debilitating circumstances.

In addition to the mission giving detailed above, craft purchases totaling $882,386.97 for the same period have helped to support and sustain numerous artisans and their families. Mission giving and artisan support together total $1,578,015.85.

Total revenues from July 1999 through June 2019 were $1,989,174.04 – of which $1,578,015.85 was returned to the Palestinian economy via craft purchases from artisans and gifts to various organizations and ministries to provide support services to Palestinians. That’s 79% of our revenues going back into the Palestinian economy.
THANKS BE TO GOD!

Virginia Priest
Treasurer (1999-2017)
Bookkeeper (2017-2019)