From: Melissa Shepgard
To: Paul Caraday; Amanda Linehan; Ryan O'Malley; Ari Taylor; Stephen Winslow; Chris Simonelli; Jedeanne Sisk; Craig Spadafora; Karen Colón Hayes; Carey McDonald; Mayor Christenson; Lisa M. Caputo; Carol Ann Donohoe; Lisa M. Caputo
Subject: Support for Malden City Council Ceasefire Resolution 271-24
Date: Friday, May 31, 2024 6:53:36 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

For those whom I've not yet met, my name is Melissa Hinojosa, and I'm a Ward 6 resident at 136 Elwell St, as well as a parent and teacher. I'd like to share two recent experiences which highlight why passing a ceasefire resolution is a positive step for our community and beyond.

With two young children, I spend many an afternoon at the Linden STEAM playground. A few weeks ago, I was sitting on a bench beside a young girl I've known since last year, who was in my son's kindergarten class. My little one came up with a piece of paper he found, and on it someone had colored the flag of Palestine, and written "Free Palestine". I said, "Oh! The flag of Palestine," to which the young girl replied, "Falastine!", and I said, "Oh yes, Falastine". She then asked me if I knew what was happening there. I told her I did. She told me her understanding of the situation, and I course corrected a bit as needed, in a developmentally age appropriate way, and I assured her there were people all over the world, working in all sorts of ways, to help make it stop. To help make things better. I told her every child, and their families, should be safe and cared for. After, she told me she no longer wanted me to call her by the name I knew, and instead invited me to call her by the nickname her family uses. A name which was connected to her grandmother. May all children feel seen, heard, and valued, and know the adults in their world are working to help make things better.

Last week, while playing chandes with a group of young children, my first grader heard some of the girls speaking to each other. "Are they speaking a different language", he asked, to which I replied, "Yes, I think it's Arabic". Smiling, the girls confirmed it was, and I told them what a beautiful language Arabic is. How lovely it is to hear. And then I saw the headband of one of the young girls. A beautiful red band, embroidered with the name Palestine. I told her I loved her Palestine headband, and, while she smiled quietly, her older sister's eyes went wide and she whispered excitedly to her sister, "She said Palestine!" May the children in our community know we actively care about them, and their culture and experiences. That we work to help keep their families and friends safe, in whatever ways we can. That we care about the wellbeing of others in tangible ways.

It should be easy to say Genocide is bad, and I want to help make it stop. I implore you to pass this ceasefire resolution not just because we have community members directly affected, not just because our taxpayer money is better spent investing in communities than on war toys, but because it's the right thing to do. Trying to help stop genocide, in whatever ways we can, is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,
Melissa

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