

Nadine Fahoum – Bio

My name is Nadine Fahoum and I am a 21 year old Israeli Arab Muslim from Haifa. When I was 6 years old and it was time to enroll me in elementary school, my parents faced a very complex dilemma—whether to enroll me in the “Reali Hebrew School” or in an Arab school in Haifa. Eventually they made the decision to send me to the “Reali Hebrew School.” Today, I am very grateful for that decision. Until my third year in school, when my brother enrolled in the school as well, I was the only Arab kid in school. My mother felt that this needed to be changed and together with the school principal, we arranged a meeting between kids from our school and kids from Arab schools in Haifa. The coexistence program of getting Jewish and Arab kids together was very successful and was received beautifully in both communities.

I started playing tennis when I was 9 at the Haifa tennis center which was 15 minutes from my house. My first coach built the foundation and he is responsible for my unlimited love of tennis. With his help and a lot of determination, I won my first national tournament when I was 12. I was Ranked number one in the country every year until I turned 18. My biggest highlight was representing Israel in European and World Championships. **I became the First Arab athlete to represent Israel in the Youth Olympic Games in 2006.**

I would love to share with you some of my career highlights. In January of 2008 I joined the Old Dominion University tennis team. I started off playing number four for the team, but quickly capture the number one spot. At the end of my freshman season I received the MVP award for my team and NCAA conference rookie of the year. My sophomore season I was consistently playing at number one position on my team for both singles and doubles, and made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament in doubles. My junior season was even better and I beat the number one girl in the nation, from Northwestern and climbed to the number 15 spot in the nation. That year I participated in the NCAA in singles and doubles; I also became the first tennis female player to win athlete of the year award at Old Dominion University after receiving NCAA conference player of the year and team MVP for the third consecutive year. During my time at Old Dominion I also made it to the dean's list twice and received many athletic and academic awards. **After my junior season I transferred to Duke University where I had the honor to play in the number 1 position for the third ranked women's tennis team in the nation.** My doubles partner, Ellah Nze, and I reached the semifinal of the All American tournament and became the number 4 doubles team in the country. That year my team and I reached the quarter finals of the NCAA tournament and participated in both singles and doubles as well.

This amazing opportunity of coming to the United States and getting a full scholarship to play at these fabulous schools all started back in the days where I was part of the coexistence program at the Haifa Tennis Center. This program is so close to my heart and gave me the foundation to understand that education is what will

change my future. I would like to give you some of my thoughts about the program that is definitely making a huge impact on so many kids in Israel.

The Israel Tennis Centers established a program where tennis coaches from the Centers visited Arab schools and invited youngsters to join the Israel Tennis Centers' family. More and more Arab youngsters started coming to the Tennis Centers all over Israel. The program became so successful and my mother, who is a big believer in the coexistence program, together with the manager of the Tennis Center in Haifa arranged a tournament for Jewish kids and Arab kids. It was amazing to see how the kids interacted and respected one another and enjoyed the special atmosphere. It was much more than just competing on court. We all understood that this is a great lesson for life. I was so proud to be part of this program and to be an ambassador for Israel and the Tennis Centers. The Tennis Center was a place for all of us where we could forget our daily challenges and just be kids and have fun.

At the Tennis Center we all learned not just to speak about coexistence, but simply live it and enjoy it. I became a better person and a lot of doors opened for me and I am extremely grateful that I have been given the opportunity to be part of the Tennis Centers family. **Without the Israeli Tennis Centers, I would not be at the place I am today.**

I am looking forward to seeing you at our exhibitions and I am so excited to be part of the team. Shalom my friends, Nadine.