

24 July 2014

A Message from Drew Dennis

We've heard concerns from members of our community about an advertisement that appears in the 2014 Festival guide. We are grateful to those who took time to express their view that this advertisement may not be in alignment with the broader social justice mandate of the organization. We want to be clear that by accepting this ad, it was not intentional for the Vancouver Queer Film Festival to take a position on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

The feedback we've heard loud and clear has highlighted for me that VQFF does not currently have an advertising policy equipped to deal with the complexities of this issue. Having listened to these concerns, we have decided to donate the funds received from this advertisement to Just Vision. This innovative organization uses film, multimedia tools and public education to highlight the power and potential of Palestinians and Israelis working to end the occupation and build a future of freedom, dignity, equality and human security using nonviolent means. You can learn more about Just Vision's important work at justvision.org.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a deeply personal and political issue for many, and we've heard a wide range of viewpoints. There is a diversity of perspectives within our organization and within our communities; it's necessary to take the time to address the matter in a thoughtful, considered manner that enables open, honest, and constructive conversations as we move forward together.

VQFF is a community-based festival. We strive to create safe, respectful spaces for dialogue and the free exchange of viewpoints and ideas. We do not shy away from difficult conversations.

We take these concerns very seriously, and are committed to listening and furthering this conversation. Our Board of Directors and senior leadership team are taking action, and have launched a review of our internal policies to ensure our advertising and programming honour our mandate: to celebrate queer lives through film. Much of this policy work will occur in the fall as we focus on presenting this year's Queer Film Festival.

Respectfully,



Drew Dennis
Executive Director