

**May 3, 2013**

**From: Eliza Norris**

**To: Boulder City Council**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Eliza Norris and I was born and raised in Boulder, Colorado where my family lives. I am currently in college studying international relations and Arabic. Presently I am living in Cairo where I have studied MENA politics and Arabic for the past four months. My time in Cairo has impacted me largely and the way I see and understand relations between the U.S. and the MENA region. My interest in the Middle East arose after my freshman year of high school when I had the privilege to join my father on the first walk of the Abraham Path in the West Bank that brings together people of all faiths and backgrounds to walk through the historic and beautiful land of Palestine. This inspired me to go back to the West Bank after my junior year of high school in 2010 where I spent a month working at the Tomorrow's Youth Organization in Nablus.

Over the course of the month I was deeply moved by the people of Nablus and the story of their city. Working with Nabulsi people I gained an understanding of their struggle since the 1948 war that has profoundly impacted the city and the people. That I was a young American high school student with very limited Arabic was not a factor for the Nabulsi people who kindly worked with me on my Arabic and invited me in to their homes, taking care to make me feel at home and connected to the community in Nablus. No time in my life has impacted me more.

I am writing to ask to you to consider making Nablus a sister city with Boulder. Living under military occupation is very difficult for Palestinians not only for political, military, and economic reasons, but because it prevents Palestinians from interacting with the rest of the world in the way that they would be able to otherwise through travel, education, trade, tourism, etc. The second intifada from 2000-2005