

0:01

Welcome to senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome everybody.

I'm your host, Don Hemingway, and we have a an important show today.

We're going to hear from 2 Canadians who think globally and act both globally and locally, I would say, about Gaza.

0:21

We have Doctor Deirdre Noonan, who is an orthopedic surgeon who just returned from working in the Nasser Hospital in Gaza, who's speaking about her experience treating families who've been bombed in their tents.

And people, men, women, children who are starving, who were shot while trying to get food.

0:41

All the things that we've been learning about and being very concerned about in terms of what's happening in Gaza.

Joining Doctor Noonan is her mom, Renee Noonan Reppard.

And I think Renee and I are probably about the same generation, I'm guessing.

1:00

And Renee, who is a retired nurse, is sharing her experience as a community activist and she's one of the founding members of the Saskatoon chapter of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

So I just want to say welcome to both of you.

1:17

Really appreciate you coming on Senior Moments and thank you so much.

And I, I think we'll start, we're going to start talking with Doctor Noonan and maybe I think our listeners would really appreciate hearing from you about how as an orthopedic surgeon did you happen to end up sharing your skills and, and being a surgeon located in Gaza and more than more than one time, I think on several occasions.

1:48

So do you want to just let people get a a bit of a sense of how you ended up doing that, Deirdre?

Sure, this was actually always the plan growing up.

When I was very young, I wanted to be a doctor, but I wanted to be a humanitarian Dr. working internationally.

2:05

And so when I got into Med school initially, that was what drove my decision to do my Med school at UBC in Prince George's Northern Medical Program.

Because I looked at that as a chance where I could get a different experience from some of the big city education a lot of Canadian medical students were getting.

2:24

And I thought that would help me as a stepping stone on the path to becoming a humanitarian Dr. And so it was.

It was actually in my years in Prince George where I shifted my career plans from being a very General practitioner kind of person to becoming an orthopedic surgeon because they gave me the drill one day and in the operating room, and I never looked back.

2:48

And so it was a bit of a longer path to becoming a surgeon than it would have been to becoming AGP.

But what stayed at the core of my of my career goals was that humanitarian medicine aspect.

And so that's what took me into various places around the world where there are people with severe musculoskeletal injuries that needs orthopedic surgeons, which was the case in Gaza in 2019 when I still when I went there first.

3:16

And very unfortunately, it is still the case in Gaza, even more so now in the past year.

Well, thanks very much for that.

Deirdre and I, I should have said at the beginning that Deirdre was here also aside from the medical school training was here earlier this year.

3:34

I'm trying to remember maybe in February somewhere earlier this year and we were able to have a quickly organized community meeting.

So some of our listeners have likely had the opportunity to hear from Deidre at that time, but much more has happened since then.

3:52

And I unfortunately, and like I said, I know you've been there a number of times and I'm, I'm wondering if you could share some of your experience on the time that you spent in Gaza most recently and just, yeah, your experience there, what you saw, what you had to do, your reflections on it.

4:13

And, and also I think our listeners would be interested in, in understanding, and I think I know the answer to this question.

Any differences between the earlier this year time that you were there and this recent time when you've just been back a matter of days?

4:31

Sure.

So I've been to Gaza 6 times in total.

I used to stay for much longer periods from six months to a year at a time, but this past year I have been three times for about shorter periods of time.

Two of those were in the time since I was in Prince George last.

4:48

And so I was there in February for seven weeks and then in the summer I was there for three weeks and I just got back just a little over a week ago.

I've been back in Canada and even though in the grand scheme of things, it's not such a long time between February and now, there were, there were so very many things that changed in Gaza in that time and, and changed drastically for the worst.

5:15

So when I arrived in February, there was still a ceasefire to some extent, but I was there at 2:00 AM on the 18th of March when Israel broke the ceasefire and we were woken up by air strikes all across the Gaza Strip.

5:33

And, and from that moment, my, my time in the operating room was spent dealing with some of the worst injuries that I have seen in my career, day in, day out.

And that was also the time during which, on the 2nd of March, the Israeli authorities declared that they were going to impose a complete siege on Gaza.

5:53

No more entry of any food, any medical equipment.

And and that stayed as a complete siege until I left Gaza at the in mid-april.

And I could see the dwindling stockpiles of food that people had.

6:10

I, I saw the, the disappearance of, of meat and chicken right away, but then gradually even the disappearance of canned and dried foods.

And there were days when I would see my colleagues eat nothing but rice.

And so you can imagine that if, if that's what I left in mid-april, how much worse the situation was when I got back at the start of July.

6:31

Something you don't even want to think about as we watch and see what's been happening.

But I, I would, it would be good if you could share with our listeners what you did see when you went back.

So what I what I saw was a continuation of these air strikes and other explosive attacks on families in their tents.

6:52

And so we would, we would see people like a three-year old boy who had shrapnel wounds all over his body and one leg that had had to be amputated because of the severity of his injuries.

A six year old boy just covered with wounds from shrapnel whose sister had been killed in that same attack.

7:12

And those were were horrifically reminiscent of what I was seeing in in March and April.

But when I went back, there was also something new that I had not seen before.

And this was people who were shocked while trying to get aid most often at these GHF or Gaza Humanitarian Foundation food distribution sites.

7:40

And it is it is the worst thing that that I have have seen in my career as a humanitarian to see a person who has in their desperation to feed themselves and their families gone to get food at a place that they know is is guarded by American contractors and Israeli soldiers who we've seen from, from video, from eyewitness reports, from whistleblowers.

8:07

They are shooting people that try to get aid and so the the first day I was in Gaza, one of my first patients was a little girl.

She was 12 years old and she was shot in the leg while she and her father were trying to get food and the staff told me that her father was killed.

8:27

One of the last patients I treated was a 16 year old boy who had gone to try to get flour when an aid truck had arrived.

And I asked him what happened and he said he was shot by a tank 16 massive hole in his leg.

8:43

I still, I, I, I've kept in touch with the doctors that are treating him.

I still don't know if they're going to have to amputate or not.

And and this is.

I've never seen this before.

Wow, this is just horrific.

I, I, you know, I, I think about, you know, the description of, of what's happening to the, the people in Gaza who are facing starvation and, and such desperation to be able to survive.

9:10

But I also wonder about the conditions within the hospital.

It must be extremely difficult to be able to do the things that you've spent all your training, you know, to get and know the, you know, the, the, the sort of miracles that that modern medicine can allow us to do it.

9:27

It must be quite a different situation.

I wonder if you could talk a bit about the hospital and, and how the, the, the lack of, of materials coming in, food, medicine, water, all the things that aren't coming, what impact it's having in terms of the hospital itself.

9:47

So when I was in Gaza in the spring, I was working at European Gaza Hospital, and already we were we were overcrowded, we were running out of materials.

But I couldn't go back to that hospital in the summer because European Gaza Hospital was attacked with Israeli air strikes in the middle of May.

10:05

And it was put out of Commission because they had no sewer, no water, no electricity.

And the facility was damaged.

And Israeli troops then moved in and set up a military base inside that hospital.

So I couldn't go back there.

I went to Nasser Hospital, and so did all my colleagues.

10:22

So did all of the patients, and so did everybody else who's been wounded since.

And so Nasser Hospital it is.

It's absolutely packed with patients.

And especially in the last week I was there, I could see it getting worse every single day.

10:38

Every day we had more people coming in than we were sending out because we couldn't treat them fast enough.

And so the last time that I rounded on patients with my colleagues, we were kneeling in the sand outside of the hospital treating patients who were just admitted on a blanket on the dirt.

10:59

We were putting bandages on in this environment and and I saw notes from my colleagues in the last couple of days.

They they have their and again, another 30 patients more than we did that day when we were already treating patients in a garden.

11:16

The infrastructure of the hospital, that hospital has been attacked multiple times.

And just as food and medicine are coming in, neither are supplies to do things like repair the sinks in the operating room.

So only half of them had running water on any given day.

11:31

And we were having to, to use pliers to make the, the taps turn on because the handles were broken in some cases.

We, we, we're always scrounging to see what, what could we use to, to get the job done.

11:48

Items of the wrong size of the wrong type, cobbling together different sets, using bandages.

You can't imagine how much time it takes to bandage somebody's entire body when they've been burnt in an air strike, when you've just got these little 4 inch bandages to use and tiny little gauzes that are that are woefully inadequate, but you've got nothing else.

12:11

Oh boy, it sounds like people that you're not able to use all the skills that you have and the potential that you have because you just simply don't have the, the means at your disposal to be able to do all the things that you might be able to do if you had all the supplies and services that you need to be able to perform the surgeries that are necessary.

12:35

Do you think people were like people were I, I, you know, I'm, I'm watching on TV like everybody else.

They're looking on the Internet and, and you see reports of people having amputations that probably didn't need to if they had, if you had everything available to you that you need.

12:53

I was noting you had an interview on CBCTV where you talked about the fact that there was an elevator that was down or something and you were facing the potential of having to carry people up four flights of stairs to an operating room.

13:08

Like these things that are so much potentially impacting the quality of care that you can give.

Yes, I, I often felt like the, the physical and mental energy that the whole team, the Palestinian team and the international staff team that all of us were expanding just to try to get through a day kind of logistically was energy that we couldn't spend thinking about how to treat our patients well and, and putting energy into doing the surgery because all of us know what we should do, but trying to get that done is very quickly completely impossible.

13:50

And so we're forced to work extremely hard to provide what we know is a substandard level of care.

And you were talking about those amputations.

And I, I lost count of the number of times when my vascular surgical colleagues repaired a blood vessel.

14:08

And then a day later, two days later, three days later, I'd see a patient coming into the operating room.

And I think I recognize that face.

And I'd look at the limb and I'd recognize the limb and we would be forced to cut it off because the had failed, the blood vessel had clotted off the the foot or the hand had turned black.

14:25

And this is, this is absolutely life changing for people.

This takes away their livelihood.

It takes away their, their, their whole normalcy of whatever life they might have looked forward to in the future.

And for some of them, it kills them because they're going back in for multiple procedures.

14:43

They're getting infections that we can't treat.

And those patients are malnourished because food is being withheld from them.

And so they can't heal from the wound or from the surgery.

And I was noticing as well in some of the, the pictures and I, I'm sure you, you would see it directly that it seems like, and I, you know, just my observation from some of the pictures that are out there, that there's a lot of people who are coming to the hospital with someone who's injured or dying, but they themselves have no place to go.

15:18

So it looks like, and I can't quite vision the envision the hospitals, but it looks like there's people kind of living around the hospital or is it part of the grounds of the hospital?

I mean, just to give our listeners a sense.

Yes, there there were people living both inside the hospital itself and and on the hospital ground.

15:39

So the hospital master medical complex is a few different buildings like you might have at a big hospital complex like Vancouver General Hospital.

And so I would come outside one building and into the next less than 100 meters walk.

And every evening I would see people sleeping on the concrete there, sometimes with not even a blanket between themselves and the ground, just the clothes on their back.

16:07

The people that had nowhere else to go, family members that would be sleeping on the floor beside the bed of an injured patient.

People that were sleeping at the at the bottom of an outside stairwell that that I could see from from the room where I slept in the hospital.

16:24

And you know that the the alternative for for many people, that many people are living in a tent, which is terribly difficult, but these people didn't even have so much of A tent to shelter them.

Well, we have been hearing that in terms of things coming in to to Gaza, that one of the things that is not coming in is tense or, or, or equipment that would allow people to have shelter.

16:53

And so with all the things that are going on, not a surprise that people don't have that.

And also not a surprise, my gosh, if people, your own family members are being injured and, and potentially dying that you would want to stay by or in the hospital to be able to be there.

17:10

It's just horrific.

We're going to take a quick break, Deirdre, and then we'll come back and talk a bit more and also bring in Renee to talk about some of the things that she's been engaged in as well.

Hey folks, I'm Moss Taylor.

17:29

Join him Friday nights on Jazz Blvd. a show so laid back and relaxing you can't help but stay tuned.

Perfect to recharge in time for the weekend and you might even hear something you love with a smooth voice host and smoother jazz.

17:48

Tune into Jazz Blvd.

Friday nights at 11 and let the music carry you away.

The Prince George Council of Seniors is always in need of volunteers.

Drivers are needed for their growing Meals on Wheels program.

Their Friendly phone Call program reaches out to give comfort to isolated or lonely seniors better at home.

18:08

Volunteers help with friendly visits, grocery shopping and delivery, and the Seniors Resource Center can always use use help at the front desk.

To find out more about these volunteer opportunities and others, call the Council of Seniors Resource Center at 250-5645, Triple 8.

18:26

Season 3 of the Community Arts Council and Trinity United Performing Arts Series has an exceptional lineup of acclaimed international and Canadian performers.

The first in the series is Becoming The Beatles, a captivating live musical documentary September 27th at Knox Performance Center.

18:42

Tickets are available through Knox Center dot C a, with discounted season packages also available.

More information and performing arts series details are available through Prince George playhouse.ca and Knock center.ca.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today, a mix of sun and cloud with a 30% chance of showers and the risk of a thunderstorm.

19:03

Wind for the West of 20K gusting to 40A high of 22 with a high UV index.

Tonight, partly cloudy fog patches developing after midnight.

A low of nine on Friday.

A mix of sun and cloud becoming cloudy late in the morning with wind for the West of 20 gusting to 40A.

19:19

High again of 22 with a high UV index.

This is senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back everybody.

I'm here talking with Doctor Deirdre Noonan, who did her undergrad medical training at the Northern Medical Program at UNBC and and after became a an orthopedic surgeon who has spent many tours in in Gaza and just returned.

19:46

And we've just been talking about the circumstances there.

And I before we bring in Renee, I just wondered if you could talk about the impact of starvation.

Not only, I mean, we can see the pictures are just horrific, but there must be also an impact on people who are trying to actually give service within the hospital.

20:09

And also, as you see people coming in, the impact of being so malnourished or facing starvation must be making recovery incredibly difficult.

Yes, And you can see how the entire population in Gaza is affected by the blockade on food.

20:27

So this is a collective punishment and nobody is free from this there.

There is nobody who has enough money to buy food that simply isn't there.

And so you see senior surgeons who I've known some of them for years, and I, I saw them in April and I saw them again now and I can see that they have lost weight, children that just seem impossibly thin, every little bone of their spine poking out and healthcare workers that are, are faint with hunger during their shift.

21:03

You know, I showed up with a, with a suitcase packed with food because I don't want to be a draw on this system.

I don't want to be too weak to do anything to help while I'm there.

And I got home and looked in the mirror and I've lost a significant amount of weight just in three weeks alone.

21:21

So it's the patients, but it's also the people that are trying to take care of those patients.

And they are doing hard long days of work on almost no calories.

And when they do have the chance to get a food, a bit of food, when I was sharing tower bars and coffee packs that I brought with me, people were usually taking it home and giving it to their children because they know that their children are even more vulnerable than they themselves are.

21:49

Yeah, that's such an important point that when we look at the children and the babies, the need to have that nutrition in order to be able to grow and to, to, to build your, your system up as you as you grow up.

It's just so heartbreaking to see what's happening and to know that this is perfectly solvable.

22:10

There just has to be the lifting of the blockade, the ending of the occupation and the opportunity for people to have a decent and normal life.

And it's, I think, you know, speaking for myself, so appreciate people who in very many different ways are trying to have their voice heard in opposition to what's happening and to speak for the right for Palestine to have its own country, its own way of, of having their own government, of being able to look after their own people.

22:49

And these questions I think are on the minds of so many people globally.

And you can see the resistance that is taking place and the concern that's being expressed in so many different ways in our country and in countries across the globe.

23:08

And I, I think with, with that sort of acknowledgement, I think maybe it would be good to, to bring in, well, it's your mom, but to bring in Renee, because I know as a retired nurse and I'm a retired social work professor, that the need to be an activist on this question is just unmistakable.

23:37

We have to do something.

And I know that, that Renee, you're now, I think I can say almost you're retired, but you're like a full time human rights activist and especially focused on Palestinian rights.

23:54

And as I said, you also happen, you happen to be Deirdre's mom as well.

And I appreciate that I had that kind of relationship with my mom too.

So really appreciate you coming on the show to talk about your engagement as well.

24:12

So I, I'm just wondering if there's probably Deirdre you may want to say more about as we introduce your mom.

But then then just to Renee to ask you to talk about how you did get involved with the Palestinian solidarity movement in Canada.

24:29

But Deirdre, jump in if you want to say a little bit about that history and and your relationship and how this works.

I think I have a sense of it, as I say, with my mom and with my daughter, actually.

Thanks Don, Really nice to be here and have this opportunity.

24:48

I'm 73 by the way.

Oh, you're younger than me, OK.

So good on you.

I became more seriously interested in Palestine in 2018, and that was the year when I spent two weeks in in Palestine, specifically the occupied West Bank and E Jerusalem, both militarily occupied by Israel.

25:09

And we picked olives by day on Palestinian farms and we attended lectures by night.

And once you've been to Palestine, you just cannot Unsee it.

It it's so clear.

You just can't come back and be the same.

25:25

And you can't come back and do nothing.

The apartheid was was so visible and the, the human rights violations were so obvious.

And in Canada, I became involved with the Palestinian solidarity movement in 2019 when I retired.

25:42

And those are good times.

So that's when we learned about Zoom, right?

Yes, we tried, right?

And the Zoom platform became really popular and allowed various scattered peace and justice groups all across the country to connect and organize together.

26:00

So I had to develop new skills like using Zoom and how to use social media, which I've never done before, and new knowledge was also required.

And fortunately, there were many groups like Just Peace Advocates, United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine.

Israel is an IJV or is independent Jewish versus Canada, World beyond war.

26:22

They all began presenting educational webinars on Palestine on Zoom.

So that gives me the the, the knowledge that I required to to go on.

And then locally in May 2021, during yet another Israeli assault on Gaza, there was a spontaneous protest outside City Hall in Saskatoon and that led to a few random people.

26:43

We had no connection before that, but we all wanted to do more.

So we got together and we had an outdoor meeting, socially distanced on somebody's deck, and we formed a group, Human Rights for All, which eventually morphed into the Saskatoon chapter of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

27:02

Well, thank you so much for sharing that.

And I, I have to say that this the question of Zoom during Kovid, actually, as much as I like to see people in person, being able to have that opportunity to organize in the face of not being able to be together really made a huge difference here as well.

27:23

We're going to take another quick break and then we'll be back to talk further with both Deirdre and Renee.

If English is not your first language and you would like to improve your conversation skills, your Friend Stores Public Library can help.

The library hosts English Conversation Corners every second Tuesday afternoon, giving you the chance to practice your English with community volunteers and other learners.

27:46

All levels are welcome at the Conversation Corners.

This is a free drop in event for adults.

The next English Conversation Corner will be Tuesday, August 12th from 2:00 to 3:00 at the Bob Harkins branch of your Public Library downtown.

Everybody has a stomach ache from time to time, but when you regularly experience abdominal pain, bloating, Constipation and or diarrhea, you might have IBS.

28:13

Go to badgut.org.

And take the 32nd IBS test to find out As many as 20% of British Columbians have irritable bowel syndrome.

Go to Bad Gut.

Go to badgut.org for good advice.

Prince George Council of Seniors Meals on Wheels program supports older adults 55 plus and Prince George who have difficulty preparing meals for themselves.

28:38

Meals on Wheels provides a fresh, nutritional and affordable lunch delivered weekdays between 11 and noon, excluding statutory holidays.

To register for the Meals on Wheels program or For more information, call Emily at the Council of Seniors Resource Center, 2505645888 or stop by the office at 13 35th Ave.

28:59

You're listening to Senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back, everyone.

As I said, we're here with Doctor Deirdre Noonan and Renee Noonan Ripard, both engaged in different ways in addressing the violence and occupation that's taking place right now in Palestine.

29:21

I'm thinking, Deirdre, as I said earlier that you may want to make a few comments just about, I don't know, I, I think maybe one could characterize it as, are you following in your mom's footsteps kind of it seems very similar.

29:37

And I appreciate that discussion within family and experience within family as I come, as I said, from a similar background.

Do you want to share a little bit about that with our listeners?

I can, I can definitely see where some of the values that my parents raised me with and seeing the example that they set volunteering and being engaged just in our hometown when I was younger, that that instilled in me, I think a sense of community engagement and, and responsibility.

30:11

And then in other ways, maybe I was just less conscious of it.

And, and it wasn't until later when I turned around and looked back and, and thought, you know, wow.

My mom just got invited as a, a guest presenter at a conference to talk about community engagement and, and movement building in communities that I think children underestimate their parents all too often.

30:35

And, and there were things that my mom was doing all along that that definitely shaped me and motivated me, even though I often didn't even know that that they were happening.

So in some ways it feels like we've kind of dovetailed a bit, but for different, different motivations and, and in different ways because we definitely play to our different strengths and we go about things in different ways.

30:59

And, and sometimes we have have debates about how, how we see different things and, and how we respond to them.

But I definitely people tell me the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree and and I can definitely see that in in our relationship.

31:17

I think I might have heard that myself.

So there's so many other things.

I, I'm just, I'm reflecting back.

I, I want to hear from Renee about, you know, her, why you know, why, how and why Palestine became so important to you, Renee, and the things that you're doing.

31:35

But I'm just reflecting back, Deirdre, as we were talking about your time in Gaza and, and one of the things you know that that from the the media, from the Internet, from other media, that you really get this picture of how horrific it is and how people must be just feeling so down about this, so downtrodden, so desperate and all these things.

32:04

And yet I know that you have also the experience of people having that sentiment that this is their, this is their nation, this is their, their culture, this is their life.

And that there's still that determination to have their own country, to have their own decision making, to be able to develop their, you know, their culture.

32:31

That all the things that seem to have been being destroyed in terms of schools and hospitals and libraries and universities and all these things that people still value and treasure and are determined to keep their culture.

And I, I, I just wonder if you could reflect on, you know, that kind of spirit that you see when you're, when you're in Gaza, which I, it must be extremely difficult to have that forward-looking just sentiment in the midst of such devastation and atrocities.

33:07

But I think it's important for our listeners to hear your observations on that.

You know what from from the most simple standpoint, the doctors and nurses keep showing up to work every day.

And so that alone to me is, is a sign of an incredible commitment to their society, to their profession, to their people.

33:32

The cleaners show up, the maintenance workers.

So people come every day to the hospital for very little pay, sometimes completely as volunteers.

It's only the people that stay for a full 24 hour shift that even get a little bit of food provided from the hospital or from an NGO.

33:52

And so people just keep coming because and they know that treating the wound is the right thing to do.

They know that without keeping on doing their work that all hope is lost.

And so I see that that very simple expression of hope just by showing up.

34:10

But then there there are these other moments that that will stick with me forever.

I had a chance encounter just outside the hospital entrance one day this summer, and I saw a teenage girl and her father who I had treated in the spring at a completely different hospital in a different neighborhood of Khan Yunis.

34:32

It was a totally chance encounter.

We were so happy to see each other.

Since I last saw this young girl, she had had to have her leg amputated.

I knew that that had happened and I asked how she was doing.

Her father asked her to show me how she was walking with crutches.

34:49

We were all really overjoyed to have had a chance to reunite, and he told me that he wanted to bring some of the rest of the family to see me.

So that evening, his niece came back with her own father.

She was another patient of mine in the spring.

35:06

She's nine years old, and she and the two dads walked for four kilometers to come see me.

And she brought me a little bracelet that she had beaded with our initials on it, separated by a heart.

And her uncle, who was the father that I had seen earlier that day, he brought me a gift from, from his daughter.

35:26

She hadn't come back, obviously, because another 4 kilometers in a wheelchair on crutches was not a good idea for her.

But she had picked a few sprigs of basil from the pot that she must have growing behind beside their tent.

And he put it in his pocket to bring for me.

35:42

So here I have these families that somehow when they escape from their house, they managed to take along a little bit of craft supplies for one daughter and some plants for the other daughter.

And I cannot think of anything more beautiful and more human and more hopeful and more something that I hope Canadians can relate to in, in thinking of those two dads, of the moms that weren't there with us and of those girls that are doing something that is so lovely and so normal and so generous to bring these things to me in the midst of forced starvation and continuing aerial attacks.

36:28

Boy, anyway, it gives me goosebumps.

Clearly people are are working and trying to create the situation where they have their territory back, where it's no longer occupied and where they can have a decent life.

36:46

And to have that just that that's, I don't know, that fire, that spark of life and and future it, it really, it is moving and really appreciate, really appreciate you sharing that.

Also would like to get back to talking with Renee maybe a bit more about, you know, just why you as an older Canadian like me, why this this cause of the Palestinians matters so much to you.

37:18

We're going to take a quick break and then come back and and talk a bit more to Renee about her involvement and also maybe about how people react to Deirdre being being your daughter.

Take a walk at the Dutchess Park Dog Park this summer and enjoy a story at the same time.

37:36

The Story Walk is presented by your Prince George Public Library and childcare resource referral.

This is a free drop in program for all ages, so make it a family event.

Simply start at the first sign on the path and follow along getting some exercise and reading a story at the same time.

37:53

The Story Walk at Dutchess Park Dog Park is available during public walking hours until October 31st.

Follow Amanika Arts on social media and stay in the loop on their special events, inspiring exhibition and hands on workshops.

You can also share your ideas for art related programs, workshops or anything you'd love to see at the gallery.

38:13

Amanika Arts is open to all art expressions.

Let's create, connect, and make Oh Manika an artistic haven together.

Spread the word, invite your friends, and let the creativity flow.

Oh Manika Arts Stay up to date on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

38:28

Big name productions are the order of the day for next season at Theatre Northwest.

Clue on Stage, The Odd Couple and Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express are on tap as Theatre Northwest brings some of the best plays ever produced to their Prince George stage.

38:44

Catch all three with a season pass now available online.

General and Open Call Edition details also available at theaternw.com, Clue on Stage, The Odd Couple and Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express next season at Theater Northwest.

39:00

Forecast from Environment Canada for today, a mix of sun and cloud with a 30% chance of showers and the risk of a thunderstorm.

Wind for the West AT20K, guesting to 40A high of 22 with a high UV index.

Tonight, partly cloudy.

Fog patch are developing after midnight.

39:15

A low of nine on Friday.

A mix of sun and cloud becoming cloudy late in the morning with wind for the West at 20, guesting to 40A.

High again of 22 with a high UV index.

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

39:31

Welcome back, everyone.

We're here with Doctor Deardre Noonan and Renee Noonan Ripard talking about the organizing around the situation in Gaza right now, and just going to turn back to Renee to talk about why this issue has become so important in her life and in relation to Canada.

39:56

Yeah, just backtracking a bit, the the debates that year we talked about she always win.

I never win.

Fair enough.

But but why Palestine?

You know, there's, there's Sudan, there's Yemen, there's Tigray, there's Congo, there's migrant rights, there's Canadian mining abuses in different countries.

40:16

But but Canada has such a big hand in Palestine.

It plays such a big, big role.

There are clear parallels with the settler colonial history of Canada.

And what has been done is still being done to our own Indigenous populations.

For instance, the the Canadian tactics of starvation and displacement, culturally appropriation of resources such as water, those are the same tactics that Israel has used on Palestinians since 1947.

40:46

And also Canada was involved from the start with Lester B Pearson, who helped to develop the United Nations partition plan that contributed to the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians.

Some of your listeners may have heard of the Nakba which is Arabic for the catastrophe when when 750,000 Palestinians were driven up their land and it was taken over by by Israeli.

41:13

The other reason is Palestine should matter to all of us because this is not just about Palestine.

What is happening in Palestine is a complete dismantling of the framework of international laws, the laws and conventions which were put in place after World War 2 to prevent another Holocaust.

41:34

And I do need to give an example.

Article 49 of the Geneva Convention, the 4th Geneva Convention, it prohibits the deportation or transfer of the occupied population out of that territory.

I was born in Holland, which was occupied by the Nazis in World War 2.

41:52

I grew up reading Anne Frank and hearing my mother's stories about the deportation of Jews and also others to the concentration camps in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Now it is a violation of international law to transfer people out of an occupied territory.

42:08

You can't do that anymore.

However, Israel has been doing this since 1967 in Palestine, transferring Palestinians, including children from the West Bank to prisons in Israel.

Some of some of you may have heard of the No Way to treat the Child campaign.

42:25

It was kind of died now, but it was quite active in some churches.

And the same thing is happening now with Palestinians in Gaza, including many health workers being taken out of Gaza, the occupied territory to Israeli prisons, the prisons of the occupier.

42:41

It's illegal.

You can't do that.

And by the way, many of those, some of those have been released and no charges have been laid.

And in spite of that, they come back with tales of torture, etcetera.

Israel has been violating international laws since its creation in 1948, and Canada and its other Western allies are doing nothing to stop it.

43:04

In fact, they're they're, they're helping, they're helping the occupation.

And this has global significance.

It's wrong on principle, but it's also not going to stop this Palestine.

If some of you go to rallies, you'll know that it's quite, quite often there's this rally cry.

43:21

We are all Palestinians.

And that's what that means.

You know what?

What happens this Palestine can happen anywhere.

Really important points that you're making about this, Renee, and I think the importance of recounting some of the history, at least in its highlights so that people who may not have thought about it in the context of the history now can reflect on that and look into it more themselves if they haven't.

43:49

I think one of these things in terms of the NACBA, the the international law violations, all the mechanisms that were put in place after the Second World War, the question of the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, all these things that have declared that on balance that what's happening is, is, is genocide And the need for the and the right of Palestinian people to have the, the food and, and life's, you know, giving supplies that are required to have a normal life.

44:32

That these things actually are in violation of the kinds of norms that were set after the end of World War 2.

And really, I think important that we all think about these things in the historical context and really appreciate you providing that that background for our listeners to either, you know, remember that they know this, but also, if not to look into things a bit more.

44:57

The other, I guess the other important question we want to make sure that we have time to get into is kind of sharing some of the key initiatives that you're focused on right now, Renee, in terms of your activism.

We're going to have to take another break in a couple of minutes, but maybe we could start on that and then carry on after the break with initiatives that people can get involved in.

45:22

And the other thing you made me think about, Renee, that we may want to also talk about is the question of what's happening with the Canadian government right now in terms of the steps it's taking or not taking in relation to Gaza and Palestine.

45:40

But maybe just a briefly talk about some of the key initiatives that you're involved in at the moment.

Right.

Thank you.

Just briefly, mostly focused on that.

45:57

This is Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East working towards a complete two way arms embargo between Canada and Israel and that means no buying, no selling.

In the spring of 2024, our Parliament agreed in principle to impose an arms embargo in Israel.

46:16

And that's when former Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Julie agreed to stop approving new permits.

And she said she had stopped 30 of the more than 100 currently active permits.

The other thing we're concentrating on is, of course, ending the siege on Gaza.

46:33

You know, we, we're really focused now on, on this genocide.

But.

But the fact remains that Palestine is occupied and the occupation is illegal.

Absolutely.

Yeah, we're we're.

Shall I write about?

Should I know about?

Airdrops or not.

46:49

I think airdrops is important just briefly before we go to the break and how ineffective and inappropriate they are, I think.

Yeah, the Canadian government is paying for food to be airdropped into Gaza, which is really dangerous for people on the ground.

People have been killed.

It's very undignified.

47:06

People are just running and scrambling for food.

Only the strong and fast get it.

It's incredibly expensive and extremely inefficient, and it's really only meant to be used after landslides or or or earthquakes.

47:22

It's a last, last resort, right?

With an area totally inaccessible, Gaza is accessible on all sides by sea and all we need is start to stop Israel from blocking state that is there.

And it could come through, it could come through you.

47:37

We can see the trucks every day when we look at the the pictures that are on various types of media.

We're going to take one last break and then we've got about 8 or 9 minutes to talk about some of the other questions and initiatives that are going on across Canada.

Learn about space, science, technology, and more at your Prince George Public Library's weekly Discovery Series.

47:59

Documentaries on a variety of subjects are screened at the ballpark and branch of your Public Library downtown Friday afternoons from three to four through the end of August.

The Discovery Series is designed for all ages and a schedule is available on the website at pgpl.ca.

48:14

The Discovery Series Friday from 3:00 to 4:00 at the downtown branch of your Public Library.

Please note that there will be no Discovery Series presentation on August 22nd due to the Touch A Truck event.

Good.

Morning, this is your wake up call.

48:30

But I didn't request that.

Your disease effects one in four Canadians.

It doesn't come with a warning.

It doesn't wait for the right moment.

It can happen to anyone at any time.

While liver disease may be part of your story, it doesn't define it.

Liver Canada is here for you before, during and after diagnosis.

48:48

Find resources.supportandhope@liver.ca Liver Canada by your side at every stage.

It's a Dungeons and Dragons program exclusively for adults, season adventurers and complete beginners alike.

Gather at the Downtown branch Every Prince George Public Library once a month for a fun session of dice rolling and role-playing.

49:08

Dice and Destiny is a drop in friendly event, but spaces are limited each time.

How well will your half work cleric work with your friends dwarven warrior?

There's only one way to find out.

The next session of Dice and Destiny is Wednesday, August 13th from 5:00 to 7:30 at the Bob Harkins Branch, Every Prince George Public Library downtown.

49:25

The Prince George Chamber of Commerce is turning our city into a playground for local love.

Each week this summer, they'll drop a new clue on their Instagram and Facebook stories that will lead you to one of their member businesses.

Be the first to crack it, head to the right spot and win a prize from that business.

49:42

Everyone who visits the location can also enter the end of summer grand prize draw, but don't forget to say the code.

I'm here for the chamber scavenger hunt.

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back everybody.

49:58

Following on your your last comments, Renee, I just wanted to highlight for people and maybe Deirdre, you may have a comment or or you may Renee on on the report that just came out.

You were talking about how Canada supposedly stopped giving doing military exports and there was a report that came out just on the 29th of July exposing Canadian military exports to Israel.

50:25

And this was some work that was done by a whole bunch of different organizations, arms embargo now the Palestinian Youth movement, World Beyond War and more showing precisely the opposite is taking taking place.

And in fact that there is ongoing shipments that are actually going to Gaza from Canada.

50:47

And the report itself, if people want to look it up, it contains very particular records about specific shipments of weapons and military components that have actually been shipped.

And so did either of you want to make a comment on that?

51:03

And also the question of of Canada saying that it has a conditional support for the recognition of Palestinian statehood, another question that I think needs to be talked about in terms of what that actually means.

51:21

So in, in terms of the, the report about weapons shipments, I'm absolutely appalled to see this, the, the arms embargo that was made by Canada was by no means a complete arms embargo.

It wasn't going nearly far enough.

51:37

But then when we see this report, it's, it's terrible for me to be a taxpaying voting member of a country where my elected officials are continuing to fund the slaughter of, of civilians to, to export weapons for use.

51:55

I talked with other Canadians who've been in Gaza for the last few months and you can imagine that we're sitting there wondering if the planes that we're hearing fly overhead and drop bombs in the surrounding area or the bullets that were pulling out of patients bodies were those in part provided by Canada, sold by my country, and, and were those sails lied about and, and hidden by my government who's supposed to represent me?

52:24

So I find it, it's incredibly disturbing as as somebody that has seen both of cause and effect.

And that's what keeps me going when I'm back home because I know when I go to Gaza, I'm just one set of hands treating people that were already wounded.

52:42

I'm coming too late if that's my only action.

And so that's what keeps me going when I'm back in Canada to try to educate people, to try to talk to my elective representatives, to try to to engage in advocacy to change how Canada is acting on an international scale, which honestly is just quite simply against the international law.

53:05

It's against the Genocide Convention even before the court determined that whether or not this is a genocide, it is up to countries to make sure that they are not participating in something that might be a genocide.

And then when it comes to these statements like like recognizing Palestinian statehood, it's confusing to me how the Canadian government has selected to focus on that because my Palestinian friends and colleagues, they say to me, we can't eat words.

53:34

So policies like this, it's important in the long term and the big picture.

But while we sit here and debate these more theoretical manners, people are being starved to death, people are being shot at food distribution sites, and people are being bombed in their tents.

53:50

So why on earth is that our focus and and I, I, I'm far from the only person that is confused and simultaneously enraged by this, but I hope that other people take those thoughts and express them particularly to the people that should be taking action on them.

54:07

That being Prime Minister Mark Carney, Foreign Minister and your elected representatives, your MPs closer to home.

Couldn't agree more.

Renee, do you have any final thoughts on what people should be doing now?

What can we do?

We can do a lot and the best way to go about that is to join a group because an established group already has the material that you need.

54:32

It has probably some, some strategy and tactics that you can join in on, whether it be out, being out in the street, calling your MP, phoning your MP, writing letters and learning to whom to to whom to address the letters.

54:55

So any, any group at all, a group like yours or CJPME or United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine, Israel, Independent Jewish Voices.

Learn from the work has already been done.

You don't need to invent, reinvent the wheel.

55:11

Thanks so much.

Really appreciate both of you coming on.

And I just want to make sure our listeners know that in terms of the involvement that Renee has, we will be putting a little piece of information along with the archived version of this show, if you'd like to share it with your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues, including a link to the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

55:41

So the link for that and all the other organizations that Renee's mentioned, I think also I want to highlight the fact for folks that are in Prince George, if you didn't know, there's an organization called Two Rivers for Palestine.

And every Sunday from 10:00 AM till noon at the corner of Hwy. 16 and 97 where we have the Mr. PG statue, there is a demonstration for Palestine for every, every Sunday, 11:50.

56:10

If you're able to drop by or if you drive by and honk to show your support, that's something very specific and concrete that you can do here in Prince George.

And I just, I want to thank you, you know, again, Deirdre and Renee and Deirdre, for coming here and sharing your experience and being such a strong advocate, both of you, that people should learn about what's going on.

56:37

We should stand with the Palestinian people.

And it's about right now ending the siege on Gaza and the right for the people of Gaza to have control their own destiny and for the occupation of their territories to end.

56:54

So really appreciate you coming on and ask people to please look at some of the opportunities that you have to learn more and then as you wish to have your voice, this is heard.

So thank you again to Deirdre and Renee, and we look forward to maybe having you back on in the coming weeks as hopefully things will change.

57:16

So thank you again.