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Colleagues International will host eight women Palestinian leaders in West Michigan under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, and managed nationally by the Academy for Educational Development.

The group from the West Bank will be in West Michigan from September 29-October 3. The delegates will receive dinner hospitality at the homes of local families in Kalamazoo and visit several businesses and individuals including the Mayor of Kalamazoo Hannah McKinney, League of Women Voters, the Kalamazoo Gazette, and the Women's Education Coalition. During a visit to South Haven, the group will participate in a women's leadership round-table discussion with South Haven Mayor Dorothy Appleyard, South Haven Community Hospital President Joanne Urbanski, Greater South Haven Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Rachel Vochaska and Lake Michigan College at South Haven Executive Dean Janice Varney.

Colleagues International, an international-education nonprofit organization based in Kalamazoo, hosts between 75 and 125 international visitors annually for the U.S. State Department, U.S. Library of Congress, Council of International Programs USA and other citizen exchange organizations.

This project seeks to advance the development of democratic political institutions in the West Bank. The participants are women who work in leadership roles at various levels within Palestinian ministries. They represent the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and Ministry of National Economy.

The project will expose the participants to various historical and contemporary issues of women in government, politics, and leadership in the United States. In addition to Kalamazoo and South Haven, the group will visit Washington D.C., Tampa, FL and Reno, NV during their three-week program.

Colleagues International promotes international understanding and facilitates global business, professional development and cultural exchanges. Colleagues International has hosted more than 900 exchange visitors from around the world since 1971.

For more information about Colleagues International, call (269) 341-9494 or visit the website at www.colleaguesinternational.org.

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