



SPRING ■ 2019

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# Newsletter



/FriendsRamallah



/RamallahFriendsSchool

OFFERING QUALITY QUAKER EDUCATION TO PALESTINIAN YOUTH SINCE 1869

## Letter from Head of School

Adrian Moody – RFS Head of School

During the month of March I was fortunate to spend some time with each of RFS' classes planting trees.

Each class in the school planted a tree which will be identified with that class and marked accordingly. We are planting 150 trees this year to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was effectively our first celebration to mark this occasion. But why are we planting trees? It is true that we want to create forests on our campuses, that we want to make our campuses greener and more environmentally inviting, and that we want to educate our students on the value and need for trees at a time when many trees in Palestine are being cut down. However, the action of coming together and participating in a whole school exercise I believe is part of being a community.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) tells us that while the Quaker faith is founded on the principle that every person can have a direct relationship with God, an equally central tenet lies in the power of the "gathered community." We believe that there is power in the recognition that we are a community.

Although we are individuals, it is when we act together that we can have the greatest affect. We come together in silent meeting to create unity and trust. We come together to plant and improve our environment.



Head of School and first graders planting their tree in the Lower Campus as part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary Forestation Campaign.

And we come together on Field Day recognizing that we are one school and that we work together as one.

The author Margaret Wheatley once said "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

This year we celebrate the community that is RFS.\*



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## Young Women Taking Big Steps

By Besan Jaawan – Development & Communications Manager

At RFS all students are encouraged to take part in as wide a variety of extracurricular activities as possible as we believe it as an opportunity for students to develop new interests and learn new skills. The School's Afterschool programs offer a large variety of activities. But, as a result of parents' dedication towards encouraging their children to join extracurricular programs off-campus as well, RFS students are now leading role models in many local and national sports teams.

Dana, Leila, Zeina, and Maya are only a few of RFS' young female students taking big steps towards accomplishing successes in Palestinian sports where women have not set foot before.

Zeina Madi, 9<sup>th</sup> grader, has become Palestine's first female boxer and has represented Palestine in many international boxing championships, winning a golden medal in Holland recently. Zeina says her ambitions are to represent Palestine in the Olympics someday and that even though she plays a sport that many see as inappropriate for girls, she receives tremendous support from her parents, family and coach.



RFS student Zeina Madi awarded in a local boxing championship. Photo courtesy Zeina Madi

Leila Malki, 10<sup>th</sup> grader, won FEI's (*Federation Equestre Internationale*) "Against All Odds" 2018 Award for her accomplishments as the youngest Palestinian female equestrian. Leila has represented Palestine and won in many international equestrian championships in Morocco, Colombia and other countries.



Photo courtesy FEI Awards



Maya Khalil, 5<sup>th</sup> grader, won this year's Palestinian National Swimming Championship for her age group by swiping all the golden medals in freestyle, back, butterfly, and breast swimming for 50 meters.

Photo courtesy Maya's parents.

Dana Bawatneh, 9<sup>th</sup> grader, joined the Palestinian National Women's Soccer Team last February and travels abroad with the team to play in international matches. Dana says it was challenging at first to keep up with her school work and the long training sessions, but she manages to play for the RFS Female Soccer Team as well!



Photo courtesy Dana Bawatneh

RFS female sports teams do not fall far from these accomplishments and successes. The female soccer team won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Kings' Academy Soccer Championship in Jordan last October with students Joud Zughayer and Joud Jamous awarded as best female players.

In spring, the girls' basketball team won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the central school tournament of Ramallah & El Bireh schools.

RFS is forever proud of all our students and their wonderful accomplishments. These young ladies are only a few of our amazing youth who accomplish a lot every day in classrooms and off campus.\*



# Teaching Problem Solving at the Lower School

By Lian Derini & Khaled AbuSaber – Counselors

Living in peace is the minimum for a decent life, and it is the right of every child to enjoy peace, whether domestically or in the surrounding environment. We work at the Friends School to promote the use of dialogue and logical discussion during the solution of daily problems through a strategy we seek to stabilize from first grade so it can grow with them gradually to deepen the students’ understanding and use during conflicts between each other. This strategy gives students the opportunity to express their feelings in conflicts and defend themselves accordingly.



Photo courtesy Daniel Kasztelan - FUM

And this leads them to internal peace resulting from the confession of emotions within a comfortable space where they receive compassion. We encourage space where they receive compassion. We encourage students to repeat this strategy three times to give an opportunity for the other person to think calmly and carefully. This enhances the value of patience and understanding of the emotional situations of others. If the students do not succeed in solving the problem, one can choose to report to a special book for each class called "Problem Solving Notebook". A student expresses his/her feelings in writing and sometimes through drawing to explain what happened. This gives students different ways to express themselves and always strive to solve problems. We discuss problems written in the notebook in the problem solving class. We start the problem solving class with a minute of silence, and we reflect on the feelings of each student during the week. We look for if they encounter problems and whether they succeeded in solving them or they did not have any problem or faced a problem but they could not solve it. In the case of students not solving a problem, the classroom teacher and/or the counselor try to solve the problems written on the notebook only to enhance the students’ demand for self-reliance first, and students are then asked to propose peaceful solutions to solve the conflict.\*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

- Lower School won the sustainability environmental award for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row.
- RFS recently installed a photovoltaic system on roofs of some buildings in both campuses to generate electricity and reduce use of energy.
- Upper School students expressed the school’s Quaker Testimonies in their Art lessons this year through their art work with creative ideas of word designs and posters, which were put on exhibit during Field Day.
- To ensure that students learn the Quaker Values by doing, students and staff managed again this year to collect around \$10,000 through the White Gifts program through bake sales and donations.
- RFS Radio Station operated for the 1<sup>st</sup> time with Saturday morning programs broadcast by the Multimedia lab and Student Council.



- The Upper School community of students, staff, administrators, teachers, and volunteers all came together around making 150+ origami cranes that are hung in the Middle School library.
- “Yalla Negra” the Arabic reading application initiated by the school in cooperation with Al-Naizak started phase two.
- The drama club performed “The Pied Piper of Hameli” play. Other students in different afterschool programs; Ballet, Karate, Modern Dance and Zumba performed in the 150<sup>th</sup> Field Day.
- Students visited charitable institutions through the Community Service Program.\*

# What Does it Really Mean?


By: Riyam Kafri-AbuLaban – Upper School Principal

Stewardship...What does it really mean to practice stewardship in an educational institution? Isn’t education a form of stewardship, be it academic or disciplinary? These are the kind of questions I contemplate regularly as I work with students and teachers on a daily basis. According to Quaker testimonies from the San Francisco Friends Council on Education, Stewardship is caring for the earth and its inhabitants. In a school setting this means that we care for students’ well beings, and the environments they live in, but we also teach them to care for themselves, their peers and the school environment. At the Upper School stewardship shows up in the most direct way, like the school environmental club hanging signs urging students to turn off the lights, and to wash their hands after using the bathroom and to throw paper towels in the trash. Or the planting of trees as we did in March 2019. Or putting up trash cans with lids so that littering is curbed. Other times stewardship shows up in the library as



Upper School students embodied RFS’ Quaker Testimonies in their Art lessons.

students offer each other support and help. It is the care and love we show each other on a daily basis to ensure that each and every one of us is enabled to realize their potential. Stewardship extends also beyond peers, the principal seeing students regularly, or counseling a teacher after a long day, making sure that they have everything they need to fulfill their responsibilities. There are many ways to practice stewardship, and at the Upper School, we are committed to get better at it every day.\*



**Participate in the future of Ramallah Friends School. With your tax-deductible gifts!**

**U.S \$ Gifts:** Tax-deductible gifts should be made payable to Friends United Meeting and sent to: Global Ministries, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374-1926, or online at [www.fum.org](http://www.fum.org).

**Sterling Gifts:** Should be made payable to Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET), noting “for Ramallah” on the back and saying if Gift Aid may be claimed, and sent to: QuIET, 5 Dene Terrace West, Wylam, Northumberland, NE41 8AZ or Averil Armstrong at QuIET, Tel: 01295 720019; e-mail: [averilarmstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:averilarmstrong@hotmail.com)

☐ Yes, I would like to contribute to the Ramallah Friends School:

☐ Scholarships and Child sponsorship\*

☐ General Award (any amount) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ ESJ Award (min. \$2,800) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Preferences (age, gender, other): \_\_\_\_\_

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**Support RFS through Online Giving!**

It is preferred that donations are received online. Donations made through our secure site are U.S tax-deductible and go through FUM; please visit our website [www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps) and click “Donate”. You will also find additional information about other donation options including Planned Giving. As always, we will never share your information with a third party.

\*Donate either to the General Award Fund (partial, any amount) or ESJ Award Fund (full). Tuition fees for 2018-19 range from U.S \$2,700 to \$4,120. For further information and inquiries, feel free to contact our office at [development@rfs.edu.ps](mailto:development@rfs.edu.ps) or Tel: +972-2-295-2286, [www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)



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RFS QUAKER  
TESTIMONIES

1.

SIMPLICITY

Friends believe that the most important things in life aren't things.
2.

PEACE

Friends believe that there is always a path that brings peace, justice, dignity and respect.
3.

INTEGRITY

Friends believe that our words and actions must reflect our truest selves.
4.

COMMUNITY

Friends believe that we need each other, since each and every one of us is precious to our community.
5.

EQUALITY

Friends believe that every person is equally beloved by God, no matter what.
6.

STEWARDSHIP

Friends believe that all God's gifts are entrusted to us for the sake of future generations.

## Lower School White Gifts Program

By: Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

We at the Ramallah Friends School and since the Palestinian catastrophe in 1948 started the White Gifts Program, which meets with the school and Quakers values and vision of giving and feeling with others. The program came as a correspondence to the Palestinian catastrophe where thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homes and lands, and left with nothing. It started from the idea of solidarity with



the refugees and to help them by collecting and giving them the aid needed. The white gifts program is now an annual program that we enjoy at both campuses.

As a student and a principal at RFS I enjoy this program with all its details, from paying part of our daily pocket money, along with bringing food and sweets for sale in school.

This idea has grown in terms of the values of tenderness and compassion, which are bound by love and peace, and these values have spread in the school's community and in our Palestinian society.

As a part of what we are brought up to, this program has become a role model and an example for many to follow and act on.

The program reflects the message of peace in our country, which the spirit of giving reaches in all its categories and spectrum.

Accordingly we continue working on the program with the school community including parents and students, in the process of selling and baking healthy food on campus. The aim of this is to collect a larger amount of money, in order to give to families in need. This year we collected (40,500) ILS which were distributed among 135 families in need.\*

## Environmental Clubs at RFS

By: Miraj Othman – US Teacher

The Environmental Club works at raising environmental and health awareness at the school. A small group of students established the club in 2010, with my support. This year, a group of members from the 7th to 9th grades are engaged.

The club encourages reclaiming agricultural lands, rationalizing water and energy use, recycling and awareness raising.

Our students reclaimed land by creating an organic garden in a neglected area of the school campus.

The garden allows our students to extend their learning beyond the classroom walls, as part of our MYP curriculum. Students reflect the MYP learner's profile as inquirers, communicators, principled, caring and knowledgeable.



They plant, water, weed and care for the garden, which now has over 12 different vegetables. Other activities include waste sorting, recycling of solid wastes, making deodorants out of environmentally friendly materials, and recycling plastic bags, plastic bottles, and tires as well. We look forward to keep our club active and unique!

# Donor Thanks

We would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to Ramallah Friends School:

- Aaron Charlop-Powers

Abdul Muhsen Al-Qattan

Abdeen Elite Home

Alexandra Fairfield and David Cheney

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We would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to Ramallah Friends School:

Lee Poleske	Patricia & Mark Erickson	Tempe Friends Meeting
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Morningside Monthly Meeting	Sabron & Robert Newton	Azeez N Malley – In memory of Nourideen Malley
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Nancy McDowell	Saleh Khalaf Co.	Gordon Meyer- In honor of Meg Body Meyer and Arthur Meyer Boyd
Nancy R. Holt	Sandy Rea	Jonathan Dale – In honor of Rowland Dale
Nancy S LaFountain	Sarah Bur and Gary Gillespie	Lincoln & Barbara Blake – In memory of Tony bing
New Association of Friends	Scott Henderson and Jennifer Perkins	Martin Sonkin – In honor of Tikkun Olam
Nicholas Abramson & Helaine Meisler	Southwest Friends Financial Development	Mary Given – In honor of Jarod Rischpater
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Oread Friends Meeting	Susan Liesel Dreisbach-Williams	Steven Pye – In honot of Ellen Pye
Otis McCrory Jernigan	Tallahassee Friends Meeting	M. Abu Ein Daughters Trading Co.
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Pamela Wood and Sharifa Elokdah	Ted and Mary Marshburn	
Pamela Young		

## 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENTS KICK OFF AT RFS!

By Besan Jaawan – Development  
& Communications Manager



Through its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events and activities, Ramallah Friends School (RFS) aims to celebrate the school’s past and set the vision for the next 150 years.

The objectives of the celebration are to: (1) Confirm the school’s core identity based in 150 years of Quaker education, Palestinian achievement, and continuing innovation and leadership. (2) Unify the school community consisting of students, teachers, staff, parents, graduates and attendees, and friends of RFS.

(3) Inspire the school and local community to embrace the identity of RFS. Proudly offering quality Quaker education to Palestinian youth since 1869, RFS aims to continue its mission to:

### Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

Celebratory events kicked off in March with RFS’ Forestation Campaign, aimed at creating forests on both campuses. In April, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Field Day brought together the whole community for the first time in recreating an old RFS tradition that was followed by the burial of the 150<sup>th</sup> Time Capsule & Opening of Ramallah Friends School Museum.

RFS’ Scholarship Fundraising Gala Dinner will be hosted on campus Friday December 6<sup>th</sup> aimed at fundraising for the school development fund including the student scholarship program.

Please visit our website for more details.\*

TO DONATE: PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.RFS.EDU.PS](http://WWW.RFS.EDU.PS) AND CLICK DONATE



**RAMALLAH  
FRIENDS SCHOOL**

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Palestine since 1869

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