

# THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

#STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES



Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

Designed by: Mohamed A. Daoud | Editor in Chief: Besan Jaawan

www.rfs.edu.ps



## Virtual Student Exhibits

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, two hundred RFS students were adding the last touches to their PYP and MYP final program projects when the Palestinian government announced school closure for one month due to COVID-19 outbreak.

Students continued working from their homes individually while teachers followed up with them online.

Unfortunately, both project exhibits had to be cancelled due to school closure. And that is why RFS has launched our first virtual exhibits on the school's [Facebook](#) page which include photos and videos of our students while working and presenting their projects.

Researching a variety of worldwide and Palestinian issues, students are being very creative and active in sharing their projects- [click here to visit the exhibit!](#) \*



Mohammad Yamen Maraqa in 5th grade while working on his PYP project about bullying.

## Together Our Community Will Survive COVID-19

Letter from Head of School

As I write to you our campuses enter the fourth week of school closure. As Head of School I do live on campus and it has been too quiet lately as students and teachers are the soul of any school. A school without its students and teachers is just a group of buildings.

Our seniors were taking their IB Mock exams when the closure was announced, and we had to think fast to decide what the next best steps would be for our community. Our leadership team, administrative and teaching staff never stopped working – each from their own home – to provide online materials and lessons to more than 1500 students in all grade levels (KG-11th) while our seniors continued their exams online.

Due to the dedication of our staff we were able to launch distance learning for the first time at RFS given limited resources.

Our goal is not only to minimize the disruption of the learning process, but also to keep us connected to our students and their families at such challenging times when we all need each other.

Teachers, administrators, principals, students and parents are all working hard together and that is how our community will survive.

The school like Palestine itself has held steadfast. We hold true to our mission and we have hope for the future.

Wishing you and your loved ones wellness and peace and good health,

Sincerely,  
Adrian Moody



The last group photo of RFS students, staff & volunteers before the closure as we were planning to bring back to life our campus landmark roundabout with a community landscape gardening plan.

#STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES

## RFS Launches Online Education in Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

By Besan Jaawan – Development & Communications Manager

Only a few days after announcement of school closure in Palestine for one month, the RFS administration decided to launch online education as the main approach to keep students engaged within the learning process during these challenging times.

As at least 1.5 billion children remain out of schools due to COVID-19 outbreak around the world, and the school's administration teams, staff and teachers are working tirelessly to keep an entire school of 1500 students connected.

While Upper School students are being offered a more rigorous schedule of daily online classes, take home exams and research assignments. Lower School students, in grades KG- 5th, are receiving worksheets in Maths, PYP, and Arabic and English languages, as well as links to interesting online videos in the teachers' efforts to make the learning process creative and fun. Students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> are now taking online lessons and biweekly Problem-Solving lessons to help morale.

Even Physical Education teachers joined the process of offering students daily athletic exercise videos to imitate, and simple sports challenges that students can try with their siblings at home. For Arts, Lower School students are receiving colorful assignments aimed at encouraging them to color and draw. Even our librarians are encouraging students to read more and record videos of their story telling.



Upper School teacher Juline Diabas while teaching 7th graders online via e-class.

As an International Baccalaureate World School, RFS joined a number of IB World Schools now implementing online education due to COVID-19 outbreak. The state of emergency in Palestine was announced by Palestinian Prime Minister on the eve of March 5th while RFS seniors had already begun taking their Mock Exams. Even though RFS administration decided to continue mocks online, the IB world organization made the decision to



RFS 4th grader Abed Abdelkarim Daoud prepares for his first e-class.

cancel all official IB examinations due to the pandemic.

The school had to cancel March events due to the closure. Events included 10th graders' MYP Personal Projects Exhibition and 5th graders' PYP Projects Exhibit and they are hands-on student-centered research projects. Students had worked for weeks on the projects and teachers are now communicating with students on an individual basis encouraging them to finish the projects. The 5th grade PYP Project Exhibit was transformed into a virtual exhibit on the school's Facebook page.

At RFS, Community has always been a core value and Quaker testimony cherished by all. And it is these values that are bringing all members of our community together as teachers, administrators, students and parents are all working very hard together, each from their own home, to get through such a difficult period of time.\*

## A Look at Our History

1991  
In 1991-92 a big snowstorm lasting for weeks hit the area and caused damage to school facilities and grounds.

1992  
Through support from the United Nations Development Programs, an addition to Whittier Hall at the Girls School was built, providing much needed classroom space. The new extension was named the Shaheen Building in honor of long-time school supporter, Aziz Shaheen.

Serving the Community  
As part of religion class, the Girls School students helped with the gardening at the school and visited institutions, such as homes for the elderly and the mentally disabled.

1993  
Following the Oslo agreements, a period locally known as "Oslo Years", the uneasy peace brought greater stability to the School with the emergence for the first time of a government in waiting that had a real interest in Palestinian education and many expatriates returning to establish businesses and enroll their children at RFS. The atmosphere was one of optimism.

In 1993-94, computer classes were introduced to 5th and 6th grades students. Art became a subject taught to all grades.

\*To know more about history of RFS please visit our website [www.rfs.edu.ps](#)

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL  
MEET RFS SENIORS  
CLASS OF 2020

FOLLOW THE RFS

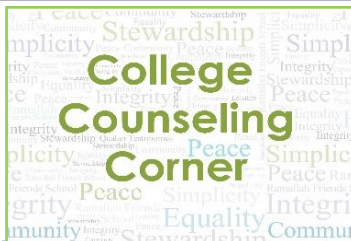
@



Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope



#STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME\_AND\_SAVE\_LIVES #STAY\_HOME



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

**Shout outs!**

\*The Class of 2020 has achieved enormous success despite the unprecedented difficulty of Covid 19.

We are still waiting to hear back from many competitive scholarship opportunities alongside an enormous list of waitlisted schools that include Ivy Leagues and Top-Ranked Research Universities around the world.

Currently the Class of 2020 has secured the following admissions data:

- Acceptances: 158
  - MIT
  - UBC
  - Swarthmore College
  - UCL
  - Kings College
  - Macalester College
  - Boston University
  - University of Amsterdam
  - Harvey Mudd College
  - UofT
  - Tufts University

- Institutions: 76
- More than \$4 million in total financial aid, with 16 full demonstrated need awards
- A record-breaking 15 countries, 6 medical, business, and law schools

**General:**

- Virtual Information Sessions: To Be Announced
- 11th Grade Meetings: 11th graders can sign up for a first meeting at [this link](#).
- Check out the [2019 Handbook](#)

## Lower School Counseling Team writes to the Community

By Khaled Abu AlSaber & Rene Tayeh – LS Counselors

In light of the current situation, and with our government declaring a state of emergency to limit the spread of the coronavirus, we, the counseling department at the Lower campus, have decided to send an advisory letter every week in Arabic and English, and we hope that everyone will stay safe.

We would like to share with you some guidelines for the psychological wellbeing of our students and provide them with ongoing health advice to cope with the changes happening around them, such as school closure, limited mobility and gatherings and exposure to fear and anxiety in the people around them.

Children of different ages all around the world are faced with shocking situations and painful experiences due to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and storms, or conflicts and wars, or sudden loss of a parent or being infected with incurable diseases. These could lead to various psychological disorders such as fear, anxiety, and depression, which affect their performance, behavior, activity, discipline, self-esteem and their relationships with others as well as their view of society, all of which hinder their path to future growth.

In this letter we would like to share with you psychological, physical, and familial effects that may come out as a result of the

current situation almost all children around the world are facing due to COVID-19 outbreak.

★ The psychological effects of the current situation: Feelings such as anxiety, overwhelmed-ness, guilt, loneliness, helplessness, excessive attachment, sadness, hypersensitivity, panic, agitation, unwillingness to play, excessive sensitivity to certain sounds, difficulty remembering, disturbing dreams, irrational thoughts, hallucinations, frustration, self-loathing, the tendency to cry easily, difficulty concentrating, inability to verbally express feelings of pain and suffering.

★ The physical effects of the current situation: Loss of appetite, overeating, fast heart rate, change of sleep patterns, excessive alertness, fatigue, lethargy, headache, feeling of dizziness or suffocation, difficulty breathing, sweating, headache, stomachache and weight loss.

★ The familial effects of the current situation: Dysfunctional families, isolation of individuals, and parents preventing their children from going out.

**How to deal with children if a family member is ill or quarantined:**

- Provide children with information in a reassuring manner about the reason for the absence of a family member.



#RFS 1<sup>st</sup> graders Sila & Kenzi Alami prepared these signs to help spread awareness regarding COVID-19.

- Give them the chance to express their feelings and fears, and allow them to ask questions and share what is on their minds.
- In the case of separation (for example, if a family member enters the hospital or quarantine), constant phone contact should be maintained.
- Provide clear information on how to reduce their risk of developing the disease using age-appropriate words.
- Try to keep children close to their parents and family.
- Give children more love and attention in these difficult times.
- Make time for play and relaxation.

We hope that our students and their families safely overcome this crisis, and that they make the best use of their time. In case of any inquiries please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).\*

When everything seems dark, consider you may be the light.  
*Quaker Proverb*

02.295.22.86 tel  
02.295.83.20 fax

[www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)  
[Subscribe to the Olive Press](#)

Editor in Chief:  
Besan Jaawan

Translation by Besan Jaawan & Silvia Mustaklem

Design, photos and graphics by Besan Jaawan and Mohamed A. Dawud.



## Upper School Counseling Team writes to the Community

By Jalal Odeh & Dana Nuseibeh – US Counselors

During emergency situations such as the current worldwide outbreak of COVID-19, some segments of society are more likely to suffer than other, such as children and senior citizens and individuals suffering from major physical or psychological sicknesses. While speaking about children, their reactions to dangerous situations come in different types:

- \*Most children are able to overcome bad situations if they find the proper support. To find out what stresses any child is feeling, you need to listen to what they say and monitor their behavior.
- \*Their reactions differ according to their age. Babies cry more than usual, and preschool children may start to act more like babies, and school children may lose the ability to concentrate, while teens may start acting more like adults.
- \*When thinking of how to help children at these times we need to help ourselves first because children are usually guided by our reactions as adults and mostly as parents. It is also important to try to stick to the routine as much as possible, and pamper our children and talk with them about what is happening, and try to find opportunities for our children to make a positive impact on what is happening to them.
- \*Special attention must be given to children with learning challenges whether they are developmental (attention, perception, memory, thinking, lingual) or academic (expression, reading, writing, math). They are more affected by psychological and social pressure and on different levels as it impedes their ability to deal with urgent daily life in comparison to other children who face these challenges. Therefore whatever the loss they face, they still have resources such as knowledge and skills and experience in dealing with it.
- \*That is why we should seek the help of specialists while caring for children in case of any of the following cases: increased activity, feelings of despair, permanent thoughts about urgent events, problems of smoking or alcohol or taking medications which include sedatives or analgesics without a doctor's prescription...

- As for speaking about older members of our families, reactions to urgent and dangerous events may include the following forms:
  - \*Summoning memories about the past and old friends and the want to contact them.
  - \*Increased dependence on family members, refusing help from nonfamily members, fear and worry of death and loss, and sometimes the desire of it among others, physiological responses, especially (sleep and appetite disorders for food), depression from the present and the future, relapse, and increased sensitivity to losses (personal material, dignity, hope for the future).
  - \*Confusion due to interruption of routine, difficulty concentrating and communication, resorting to denial as a natural defensive reaction, and direct response is fear, but it is followed by anger and frustration he not controlling a situation.

We should offer help to them in many forms which include: securing supportive familial relations, providing safe health care, talking to them about current events and giving them accurate information, restoring the routine to their lives as much as possible, reassuring them regarding normal reactions. And seeking professional help when needed.\*

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

Now you can subscribe to the Olive Press – [click here!](#)

Search Here ...	
CONTACT US	QUICK LINKS
Home > Awareness	<a href="#">AWARENESS/ CORONAVIRUS</a>
	<a href="#">150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS</a>
	<a href="#">OLIVE PRESS</a>
	<a href="#">SUBSCRIBE TO OLIVE PRESS</a>
Reading Corona for staff and s	<a href="#">RFS CALENDAR</a>
g the virus in P cation.	<a href="#">SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS</a>
	<a href="#">EDUCATION LOGIN</a>
	<a href="#">CAMPUS MAPS</a>
	<a href="#">SCHOOL BROCHURE</a>
are available on the school's	

**Click here to stay updated on COVID-19 procedures @ RFS!**

