

# THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

1. Letter from Head of School
2. Different Adventures @ KG 2020
3. LS Principal's Letter
4. A World of Harry Potter @ MS Library



Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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

[www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)



## Season of Change

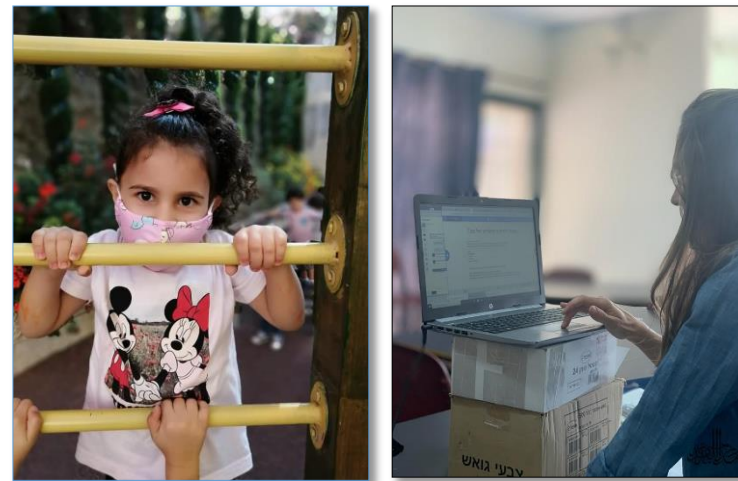
Letter from Head of School

As I am writing this I am looking out at a very cold and wet Ramallah. The heat from the summer has left us and we are now firmly and quickly heading into winter.

**This is a time for change and it makes me reflect on the changes we have seen in our school over the last six months which have been rapid and unavoidable.**

Our very way of operating has fundamentally changed and will probably never return to how things were before. For many this has been a challenge and a reason to be concerned. I think institutions are much like people and they change over time. We should not fear this change and there is nothing to fear as long as the essence of the institution, our school, remains the same.

Somerset Maugham wrote in his novel 'The Razor's Edge' that "Nothing in the world is permanent, and



*we're foolish when we ask anything to last, but surely we're still more foolish not to take delight in it while we have it. If change is of the essence of existence one would have thought it only sensible to make it the premise of our philosophy."*

What he is saying is that nothing ever stays the same and that's okay. Enjoy what we have now.\*

Adrian Moody - Head of School

## Alumni in the Spotlight – Meet Fawzi Zughayer

By Besan Jaawan – Development & Communications Manager

Meet Dr. Fawzi Zughayer, Class of 2014, now an internal medicine resident physician at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore Maryland, USA.

*"Throughout my medical studies, at Weill Cornell Medicine in Qatar, I realized that internal medicine was going to be my vocation ... RFS raised us on the values of selflessness, altruism, and giving without ever asking for return, traits that are of paramount importance in the field I am in today."*

Fawzi made the move from Qatar to the USA in the midst of the outbreak of COVID-19 last summer and joined his colleagues dealing with the immense stress medical staff is facing around the world to work under COVID-19 safety precautions and hardship.

*"I feel privileged to have graduated from the RFS. The education, guidance, coaching, and mentoring undoubtedly shaped a lot of the person I am today, and I feel a moral obligation to payback our Palestinian community for all the good the RFS instilled in me."*

Remembering the years he spent at RFS as a student, he and his classmates had gone through so much together that he feels they grew to become one unit.



And that, Fawzi says, "is the greatest treasure and go to in ups and downs! We have become family!"

Among the challenges he faced with his classmates and friends at RFS was losing his classmate and best friend Yousef Bajjali, may he rest in peace, due to a heartbreaking accident in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

*"February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Yousef Bajjali, my best friend, brother, and beloved classmate, left us along with his beautiful mother and cousin due to a tragic gas station explosion. His memory and legacy will forever live between us. We love you so much Yousef."*

Now, Fawzi says he has felt the great support of the network of RFS alumni where ever he went around the world. And he asks future RFS graduates to remain connected to their Palestinian roots, as they are Palestine' future. He leaves us with this quote:

*"Let's all "work for a cause and not for applause." Together, we shall be the change!" \**

## Different Adventures @ Kindergarten 2020

By Raneem Khoury – Head of the Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a joyful, exciting, and adventurous place for both children and teachers, but unfortunately this year it has become something different.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we knew that kindergarten would not resemble anything like before. In the Ramallah Friends Kindergarten, our Educational Philosophy is centered on expression, social participation, motor skills and creativity.

With Covid-19 disrupting our normality we all began to ask ourselves, how can these skills be taught properly to students at such a young age online. How are these children going to understand and learn when they aren't able to physically see and feel the school environment? School is not just a place to learn Arabic, English, and Math...etc., it's a place where children learn social and emotional skills, a place where they have access to mental health support.

It is a second home for children which is essential to their lives, a place that cannot be replaced with online classes.

We worked day and night to ensure that we were well prepared for two scenarios: face to face and online.

We were determined that no matter what we were going to reach our goals together; to learn together, and to push through all obstacles.\*



LKG students learn about pickling olives as part of our heritage at RFS KG!

## A Look at Our History

2006

The school celebrated its centennial graduation. Alumni, each representing a decade, participated in a 'passing of the torch' ceremony. The flame was passed from our alumni on the stage to the Class of 2006, beginning the Ramallah Friends School second century of graduates.

During the 2000s, school directors were Colin South and Joyce Ajlouny.



2007

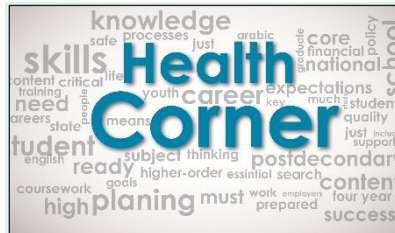
Lower School created and began implementing a Problem Solving curriculum. Educational topics included non-violent communication and conflict resolution.

"In Fair Palestine" – the Friends School film version of "Romeo and Juliet" was produced by 36 students in grade 12. The students tried in this movie to deliver a message to the world that the Palestinian people love life, despite all the crimes of the Occupation. The premier showing was attended by over 1000 people.

Environmental Stewardship

RFS' environmental stewardship program started inside our KG- classrooms using the motto "Reduce-Reuse-Recycle".The program was developed and piloted in our school and, after its initial success, teachers from other area schools were trained as well. The Ramallah Municipality later widened the program to become an annual event where the school healthiest and friendliest to the environment is granted "The Green School Award". RFS Lower School has won this award many times and has also been awarded the program's "Sustainability Award" for the school's continued efforts as a healthy campus that is friendly to the environment.

Some of RFS' current and future environment-friendly plans include installation of photovoltaic cells on the roofs of the buildings and parking spaces to generate electricity, as well as the creation of two outdoor learning spaces on the Upper campus. The Kaykab Gardens – a botanical green area opened to the public on the Swift House property, were restored and planted with indigenous plants from the Levant. \*



By Sawsan Hamarshah  
Lower School Nurse

### COVID-19: Living with the Virus

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our daily lives; it had and still has an obvious impact on various aspects of our lives whether personal, professional, cultural, or even social.

This impact may disappear completely or remain as it is after a vaccine is found to contain the virus.

The impact of COVID-19 on the different aspects of our daily lives has negative and positive effects joined together. Some people feel that it was not negative at all but instead positive such as working from home, visiting the doctor, shopping from grocery stores, staying connected, wearing face masks, using public transportation safely, and washing our hands continuously.

Since we do not know when a vaccine may be introduced, what we need to do now is try to adjust living with the virus by staying safe to help stop the spread of the virus in our communities.

Together, we can reduce the numbers of COVID-19 positive cases by following the necessary precautions which include: sterilization, wearing masks, social distancing, testing for the virus when needed, tracking and quarantine of positive testing individuals and their close contacts.

Prevention of the virus does not mean stopping to do things but it means changing how we do things.\*

## Lower School Principal's Letter- Challenges

By Frieda Dahdah Khayat – Lower School Principal

Challenges are part of life!  
**Challenge after challenge, Ramallah Friends School continues to stand tall!**

The COVID-19 pandemic challenges were not on the radar for the RFS community. Unfortunately, unanticipated obstacles created by COVID-19 overwhelmed the entire world including RFS.

The most prominent challenge for this school year was reducing the number of students in each class to meet mandatory distance requirements. Ramallah Friends School tactfully addressed the complex challenge by dividing many of the classes into two separate classrooms or by using spacious halls to accommodate our student community.



Consequently, this created the need for more physical classrooms, and it doubled the number of teachers needed accordingly!

With robust collaboration of staff members, the entire school space was strategically reorganized in the best interest of our students. Libraries, music rooms, school halls, and even teacher lounges were transformed into effective learning environments to uphold RFS's transformative educational standards.

With its withstanding history of successful victories, there is no doubt that RFS will overcome! We give it all we have, and we hope for the best! \*



## A World of Harry Potter @ the Middle School Library

By Carmen Abdul Hadi – Middle School Librarian

**Gracious fall, dear Friends!**  
*We've reached November... with ups and downs... but we're growing stronger!*

Life Goes on... with new rules... new adjustments... an entire planet is into this. Lessons are to be learnt... stories to be told... and stories to be read! I know our students can't visit the library but I still want to bring them some joy and normality so... there's Harry Potter-ish time in the MS library! Students are welcome to pass by (but make sure to coordinate with me first) and make memories as wizards!

Students are also welcome to search [the MS library virtual site](#) and check to see if we have the book(s) they desire. Send me an email, if available, books will come to you during homeroom and if you don't know what to read I can help!  
Happy fall-ing into a good book... and don't forget that I am only an email away! \*



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

02.295.22.86 tel  
02.295.83.20 fax

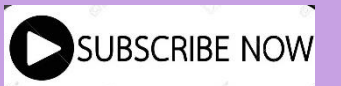
[www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)  
[Subscribe to the Olive Press](#)

Editor in Chief:  
Besan Jaawan

Translation by Besan Jaawan.

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

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



### Upcoming Dates

Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> End of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter holiday

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> Declaration of  
Independence Day

Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> Tuition payments due  
(plans B & C)