

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ISSUE 31 YEAR 2020/2021

THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

1. Letter from Head of School

3. Health Corner

2. Social Media Safety

4. Childhood & the Digital World





Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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

Giving Thanks...

Letter from Head of School

Giving thanks.

I am writing to you today from a quiet campus. Although it is a Saturday the school and Ramallah is once again in lockdown in the attempt to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

These are the times we live in and the stresses and strains in having to adjust to different methods of teaching and learning will continue until a vaccination is available throughout the world.

People from the US have just celebrated Thanksgiving and it must be incredibly challenging for many people to find things to be grateful for during 2020. This is why many of us look towards the holiday season and the celebration of Christmas.

Christmas is normally a time for family and friends to come together and for many this is not going to be possible. But Christmas is more than that. It is a time for us to celebrate and reflect on the moment when God entered human history through the birth of Jesus Christ.



It is for that reason that Christmas remains a time for hope and a time to be thankful.

We have a lot to be thankful for - family. friends, for the people that care for us, and for our health. If 2020 has taught us anything it is that we are all in this together.

We wish you a happy and safe Christmas.*

Adrian Moody - Head of School

Alumni in the Spotlight – Meet Adla Khalaf

By Besan Jaawan – Development & Communications Manager

Meet Adla Khalaf, Class of 1994. After graduating from RFS, she completed her BA degree in Civil Engineering from Birzeit University and studied for her MA degree in Remote Sending in France. During her studies, she received training at the French Space Agency in image processing and remote sensing applications and highresolution satellite images.

"I was awarded a full scholarship to complete my PhD studies in remote sensing applications in water resources management. During my last year of study, I received a call from Dubai offering me a job as a remote sensing scientist "

In the UAE, Adla worked on several projects including a joint project with American NASA Goddard Space Flight Center which aimed at developing climate change downscaled scenarios in the MENA region and using them in modeling the impacts on water resources and agriculture in the Arab countries.



"Being a graduate of RFS is a great achievement and honor that comes with areat pride. I consider RFS as one of the most critical determinants of my success both at the personal level and career wise. RFS adaptive education system has led me to many positive outcomes other than gains in cognitive abilities and attributed to gains in knowledge and skills such as independent thinking, critical reasoning, and developed intelligence."



When asked about her memories at RFS, Adla said she fondly remembers being selected to lead the Environment Day activities and Chapel Program, which led her to realize then her passion towards Earth Science.

Adla also remembers RFS back when the neighboring bus station was a military base.

"Once in class, we started hearing gunshots and we noticed that the Israeli soldiers were pointing and aiming at our class. Immediately, we moved away from their sight and evacuated class. No one was hurt but we were extremely terrified and couldn't continue the discussion. I still keep three rubber bullets I located in class and in the yard as a memory of that day."

Ending her interview with us, Adla's advice to future RFS graduates is to continue their education, be open to change, and to follow their passion whatever it may be. *

2009

2008

Upper School continued its scholarship exchange program with George School (PA), Westtown School (PA), Sidwell Friends School (DC), and Penn Charter School (PA). Each year one RFS student is selected to spend an academic year at each of these very reputable Quaker schools in the US.

A Look at Our History

The Friends United Meeting annual summer work camp continued to take place on the school grounds with the leadership of Max and Jane Carter of North Carolina. A student financial aid fund was established serving between 15% - 23% of the student body.



First phase of the Middle School Building was completed in 2010

2010

New facilities at the Upper School were erected to accommodate more students thanks to support from USAID/ASHA; namely, a new Multipurpose Hall and the new Middle School Building which first opened its doors in 2010 (Middle School building was constructed under two phases).

*To know more about history of RFS please visit our website www.rfs.edu.ps

Social Media Safety

By Adele Jaraiseh Eid – Lower School Deputy Principal



has affected all levels of our lives. With the school closures and the enforced lockdowns, most children and young people will often spend more time online using social

The COVID-19 virus

Staving connected online is extremely important for us as well as for our children. It provides our kids with valuable opportunities to learn, play, socialize with friends and peers and access information and support. Spending time online, however, is not always favorable. It may come with dangers, such as online sexual harassment, cyberbullying, online risk-taking behavior and potentially harmful content, so the privacy of children could also be at a greater risk.

Not only do these risks come from outsiders, but also from individuals they already know online or

As parents, we must stay involved in the digital world of our children to support and safeguard them. It is crucial to build an open, trustworthy relationship, help them to protect their privacy, teach them to be alert to signs of unwanted communications, establish security standards for meeting 'mates' online, speak to them without being judgmental or mad if anything goes wrong and get them assistance and support if needed.

So, we can't just say social media is good, or social media is bad...It's all about how we use it!*

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By Anwaar Khoury Upper School Nurse

COVID-19: Prevention Checklist

- 1. In a situation like this it is normal to feel sad. worried, confused, scared or angry. Know that you are not alone and talk to someone you trust, like your parents, teachers or the school nurse so that you can help keep yourself and your school safe and
- * Ask questions, educate yourself and get information from reliable sources.
- 2. Protect yourself and others
- * Wash your hands frequently, always with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- * Remember to not touch your face. * Do not share cups, eating utensils.
- food or drinks with others.
- 3. Be a leader in keeping yourself, your school, family and community healthy.
- * Share what you learn about preventing the virus with your family and friends
- * Model good practices such as sneezing or coughing into your elbow and washing your hands.
- 4. Don't tease anyone about being sick; remember that the virus doesn't follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age or ability or gender.
- 5. Tell your parents, another family member, or a school nurse if you feel sick, and ask to stay home.

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

The Safe Use of Social Media Networks

By Khaled AbuSaber and Rene Tayeh – LS Counseling Team

Social Media networks have become an important part of our daily lives, but they also became a big problem to some people (who are addicted to social media), "I browse social media pages before and after I sleep, while I eat, in the car, in the street..."

Social networking does have positive effects on the lives of students when used moderately. It helps us communicate with family and friends, and it is an entertainment platform for all. Also, students can stay updated with news and events happening around the world. And it helps them in the learning process and improvement of their skills as it facilitates their search for information

As for its negatives effects on students due to excessive use; social networking can cause health issues, a decline in academic achievement.



waste of time, as well as isolation and withdrawal from the family.

Social networks can also be easily misused by students, by sharing or spreading pornography and inappropriate messaging, and committing crime and invading the privacy of others, violence and cyberbullying, and affects the student's emotions and feelings of panic and low self-esteem.

Students and parents need to be aware of organizing their time when using social media and making sure they are protecting their devices by downloading security programs and updating them continuously, as well as securing their accounts with strong passwords.

Students also need to be aware when accepting new friendships online, and they should choose friends they do know who have obvious and precise personal information on their profiles. Staying away from strangers and blocking any individuals who send them inappropriate content. As for links received. they should be deemed safe before opening and suspicious links should not be opened even if received from a close friend.*

Childhood and the Digital World

By Jalal Odeh and Dana Nusseibeh – US Counseling Team

With humanity entering the crisis of Covid-19, it became obvious that technology is one of the main factors which play a vital role in changing the rules of the game in this century we are living in, and it is possible for it to present a major change for children who are mostly deprived in their daily and academic lives, and it can help them grow and learn and realize their potential.

At a time where children spend more and more time dealing with digital devices, more parents and educators and child advocates are becoming worried and confused due to the lack of consensus between specialists and experts about the advantages and risks of electronic communication. Today, many parents are suffering due to the conflicting messages urging them to "control" their children's screen time on one hand, and acquire the latest devices so that their children can stay updated with the latest technologies on the other hand.

This technology no longer relies solely on educational curricula, but rather exploits the learning and teaching process on a wider life scale to be used for longer periods of time constantly. That is why we have to be cooperative with our children to ensure their optimal use of it while also committing ourselves to protect their privacy in order to spare them many challenges and dangers that could come their way in this virtual world



Therefore, what we are thinking of and planning for as the Upper School's Counseling Program and RFS's Communications Department, and in cooperation with the IT Department, as advised by the administration, is for us all to contribute together along with the parents in strengthening and improving our students' collective and individual awareness towards their use of the virtual world and social media. Our goal is to ensure our children are protected and supported at all

Our plan is to raise our and our children's awareness by participating together in a series of open dialogue this year titled "Children and the Virtual World" to discuss what is new in this world *

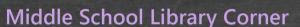












Carmen Abdul Hadi – Middle School Librarian

2020 is about to end....What a year!!!

It looked like when the Grinch wanted to steal Christmas, taking away gifts, gatherings, joy...but in the end...a big heart grew...and the holidays were even merrier... People got together stronger than before....and understood what really mattered in life.

We've been through challenges of all kinds... but we've learned a lot...cared a lot..

I missed your beautiful faces...but I got to know your eyes... The library had no "shhshsh" anymore...Books were tidy on the shelves...But I know you'll be back when all this crisis will be over...and we'll enjoy even more the time spent together.

Happy Holidays....and don't forget to check the library's virtual site from time to time...Nice things are listed there!

Let's keep our spirits high and hope for a magnificent (not masknificent!) 2021! *



Upper Campus classroom doors were decorated by students for the Christmas Door Competition, this is the MS library's door. To see the other decorated doors, click here







PAGE 3 THE OLIVE PRESS