

# THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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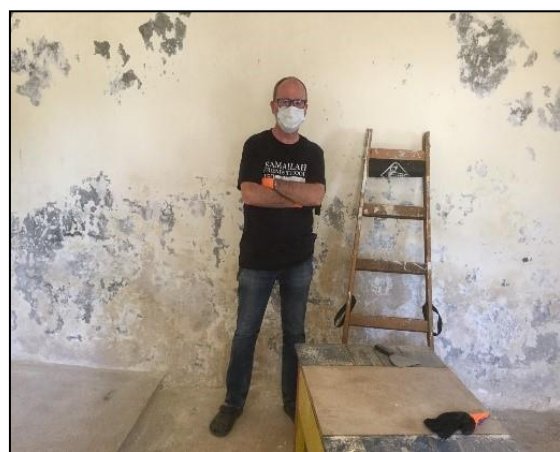


## Stewardship @ RFS' Kaykab Garden

Letter from Head of School

At Ramallah Friends School we believe in our Quaker value of stewardship through supporting our environment and sustainability. The Kaykab Garden has long been a center for environmental educational stewardship. Situated across the road from the upper campus the Kaykab is an open public garden. It is a green space planted with Palestinian native trees and plants. From 2002 to 2009 it was created and supported with help from Germany. However, once that wonderful project finished, leaving the Kaykab without funding, the garden was fell into a state of decline.

We are bringing Kaykab Garden back to life – this time with help from busy buzzy new friends. We have moved 6 bee hives into the Kaykab, housing them a safe distance from the main pathways of the garden, but still close enough to the blossoms loved by bees. The Kaykab Bee Keeping Project will give children of all ages in our school community the chance to do student-led learning. Under the watchful eyes of teachers, they will experience firsthand about sustainable environmental practices by studying the hives, learning about how bees pollinate while making honey, and understanding about our complex – and vulnerable – Palestinian ecosystem.



Our Kaykab Bee Keeping Project will give back to our community. By hosting a thriving bee community, we are doing our part to help reverse the drop in bee populations (and prevent the resulting environmental problems). Our bees will give back to us as well, by producing honey that we harvest sustainably, we will raise funds to help plant and care of our beautiful garden campus in the heart of Ramallah and Al Bireh cities.

As a Quaker school we are leaders in stewardship for a greener and more sustainable future for Palestine. \*

Adrian Moody - Head of School

## Alumni in the Spotlight – Meet Anthar Darwish

By Besan Jaawan – Development & Communications Manager

Meet Anthar Darwish, a member of RFS Class of 2004 and now a lecturer in the Department of Molecular Biology at Princeton University, USA.

*"It was during my time at RFS, that I discovered my passion for Biology. I was lucky to have a really great Biology teacher, Ms. Samar Ayed, she taught us how to think and question, not just memorize facts."*

Fascinated by Biomedical Science, she finished her Ph.D in the USA focused on Virology and Molecular Biology.

*"While I was a doctoral student at UCONN, I was fascinated with the study of viruses. I spent several years in the lab investigating how the Herpes Simplex Virus takes over the cell nucleus to assemble its replication compartments."*

In 2018, Anthar followed her lifelong dream to work and live in Central America and she spent two years working in Coast Rica teaching Environmental Science. Her time in Central America came to a sudden stop though, due to the Covid19 pandemic.

*"I also briefly volunteered at the Center of Tropical Disease at UCR to study the Zika virus, but ironically enough another virus got in the way and shut the world down. It is an interesting time to be a Virologist, we have a lot to learn from these emerging infections."*

Today, Anthar has fond memories of her time at RFS. Playing freeze tag with her friends on campus



and sitting under the old trees at the Upper Campus are some of the best moments she remembers. But she also remembers spending hours to reach school from her nearby home town, going into other villages to be able to reach Ramallah, due to the Israeli military closure of roads leading into Palestinian towns during the Second Intifada.

*"The uncertainty of how I was going to get to school or get home every day, plus the challenge and stress of IB, was a lot to handle at times. I think this was one of the defining periods of my life, and looking back at this experience, although it was negative at the time, it helped me to grow up to become a very resilient and determined person."*

To future RFS graduates, Anthar asks them to learn, question and challenge what you are learning, and learn not to be confined by what other people think and most importantly, to have fun! \*

## Environmental Stewardship @ Lower Campus

By the Lower Campus Environmental Committee

At RFS we are always care about preserving the environment at all times, and we promote student behavior in caring and protecting the environment from pollution.

We keep our environment clean and green at all times. We aim to raise a generation that embodies values, principles and self-confidence. In the hope that they can take steps similar to ours in keeping the environment clean and free of waste, and choose the proper behavior for them and their environment throughout their lives.

With the help and support of parents of our students in all activities we contribute together to our local community by offering help and support and we wish that our message can reach all of our communities.

We work together and that is the secret of our success over the years. Our motto is to maintain a campus that is healthy and friendly to the environment at all times.



A mural of Jerusalem students & Environmental Committee made using recycled materials hangs at the Lower Campus.

Even throughout the Covid19 pandemic we were able to protect our school. We clean and sanitize and stay dedicated to pre-cautious measures at all times. We taught our students how to social distance.

We are thankful towards our school community for their continued support and constant motivation to maintain a healthy behavior by our students. Your support for months, days and hours, has been a blessing to us in protecting the environment together over the years. \*

## Living Our Quaker Values

FRIENDS SCHOOLS PLACE A PRIORITY ON TEACHING THE VALUES felt necessary for leading a life of service in the community.

We seek to encourage our children to explore their individuality and their responsibility as school community members in the framework of a person of faith.

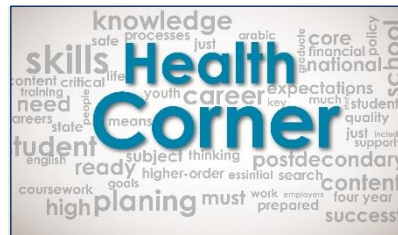
Friends School staff seek to permeate the whole of our school life in each classroom with these values. The school staff seek to reward those who enhance the life of our school community and to encourage better behavior from those whose actions or words are unacceptable to us.

One method we use to teach those values is through our [Ethics Program](#), which you can explore in more detail [here](#). Allied to the [Ethics Program](#) is the Community Service Program which aims at helping students to develop a strong sense of affiliation to their community.

As a child progresses through each school campus, he or she is encouraged to learn from and support those who are less fortunate than themselves and to expect to play a part in service to the community.

The International [Baccalaureate](#) program includes this element as a necessary component for the successful completion of the Certificate or Diploma.

For more details please visit our website [www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)



By Sawsan Hamarshah  
Lower School Nurse

### The Daily Rhythm of Life in Facing Viruses & Diseases

Social distancing and sanitization have become the front line in fighting viruses of all types, but other factors are also available to help protect our bodies such as: the daily rhythm or what we call “biological clock”, which are the daily practices of our bodily functions forming the base of good health. To keep this daily rhythm going well, we should maintain a daily routine and commit to it, in order to ensure that the rest of the body organs are functioning as supposed to. The irregularity of a routine for the human body leads to infiltration of the basic organs, and weakness in the immune system, therefore causing disturbance in the biological clock and a difficulty in fighting any emerging viruses.

That is why maintaining a healthy daily routine or rhythm by following some simple practices in important, such as: sleeping and eating time, light and darkness by being exposed to the light for at least 30 minutes a day, and dimming interior lighting when it is dark outside to help prepare for bedtime, as well as having the ability to manage stress and exhaustion and do physical exercise. My advice to you is not to let your daily routine break according to events that happen around you, but start planning and follow your plans so you can keep your bodies healthy and safe.\*

## A Successful School Semester Under Pressure

By Frieda Dahdah Khayat – Lower School Principal

This month we celebrated 100 days of teaching and learning. 100 days were full of challenges with the wide spread of the pandemic (COVID-19). Learning has changed from face-to-face to blended which required lots of professional development for teachers and upgrading of the Edunation application used by the school. In addition, humongous efforts were put to ensure safety of staff and students through strict health protocols and ongoing follow up to maintain the continuity of the learning process and the safety of our community. As lifelong learners and problem solvers, we have been working hard and have successfully achieved a lot with the cooperation and support of our parents and the PTA.

- Below is a list of our achievements this semester:
1. An online meeting was held for LKG parents at the beginning of the year to introduce them to the school’s academic program, mission and vision.
  2. An Online orientation meeting was held for fifth grade parents introducing them to PYP exhibition.
  3. An online orientation meeting for new LKG, UKG and first grade applicants was conducted.
  4. Five days of teaching weekly for all grades (LKG-5<sup>th</sup> grade). Four days face-to-face and one online.
  5. School was divided into bubbles and a special plan was set for entering and leaving school by students.
  6. A yard duty was designed with a special setting of playgrounds to ensure safety of students and staff to ensure social distancing.
  7. Face-to-face office hours changed to office hours via phone calls, Edunation and online.

8. Christmas performances were celebrated through online videos with the parents and the community.
  9. Parent/teacher conferences were held online and proved to be successful.
  10. The White Gifts Program (helping the needy families) continued in new creative ways and managed to help 135 families (NIS 300 per family).
  11. Working with the municipality on the environment continued and 29 fifth grade students won the Kahoot competition.
  12. Starting this year, the application process has changed to an online one.
  13. Online report cards were distributed on time.
  14. Academically, 3-4 units of inquiry were completed at each grade level as planned.
  15. Due to change of schedules, some standards have been achieved in a shorter period of time in comparison with the previous years.
  16. As usual, unit plans for all subjects were shared with parents on Edunation.
  17. Due to restrictions on movement for health issues, iPads were used in classrooms instead of desktops in the computer lab.
  18. All teachers were equipped with laptops to be prepared for online classes.
- Special thanks to our staff; counsellors, learning support team, IT support team and teachers who work day and night to continue supporting students especially those in quarantine. Our thanks to the nurse and the administrative team for their dedication. Heart to heart thanks go to you, parents for being transparent with us and supporting us. Together, we made it. \***

## Middle School Library Corner

By Carmen Abdul Hadi – Middle School Librarian

It’s February and it’s Library Lovers’ Month! Even if you can’t physically visit our library you can still enjoy what this month brings. So mark the dates:

**February 14<sup>th</sup>-20** Random Acts of Kindness Week – What can you do? Get inspired here <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/> ...and maybe...if you can...donate a book you love to our MS library!

**February 25<sup>th</sup>** – Do you know that digital learning has a day? Well... this is the day....and we are in the era of Digital learning! Would you like to send me a letter telling us what you love or you don’t about this era?! Much love your way! \*



## 100 Days of Perseverance

By Riyam Kafri AbuLaban – Upper School Principal

I pray you are safe and healthy. On Monday February 8th, 2021, we celebrated 100 days in school. That is, one-hundred days of persevering through the pandemic without any disconnect in learning. One-hundred days with the least number of Covid-19 cases amongst students and faculty members. One-hundred days of no outbreaks or transfer of virus amongst students on campus!

While we continue to face challenges, and while we continue to wish for a return to normal in all aspects of life, those 100 days are witness to the grit and determination of our community to keep moving on.

Learning has indeed changed, and that has made all of us step out of our comfort zones. The role of teachers, parents and students is undergoing a metamorphosis.



It is our humble opinion that learning and teaching has stepped into a new era worldwide. And we hope at RFS Upper School to continue to be part of this change.

To that end we are committed to lifelong learning through teachers’ professional development and continued self reflection. \*

## Community Service post-Covid19

By Riziq Armoush – IB CAS Coordinator

Service as action is an essential requirement component of the Middle Year Program (MYP). All MYP students must be involved in at least one volunteer activity for each academic year.

Prior to the pandemic, MYP levels 1-3 (grades 6,7 and 8) volunteered to cover the service as action on campus. MYP levels 4-5 (grades 9 and 10) were required to cover the volunteer work outside the school campus, this was managed with the association of Ramallah Municipality and local organizations.

Due to the pandemic and in alignment with the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Health (restriction in social distancing and gathering). A shift in the process of volunteering in the service as action led to students covering their service as action work individually.



*Ninth grade student Yara Farraj plants seeds near her house as part of her community service towards the community & the environment.*

The service as action during the pandemic focused on four main components:

- 1) Gardening
- 2) Students volunteered in their neighborhood in different activities.
- 3) Providing shelter and nutrition for stray animals
- 4) Distributing face masks and sanitizers at the entrance of buildings in the neighborhood.

\* Stay tuned our [Facebook](#) page for photos & videos of our students’ individual CAS experiences... \*

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

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