

THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

1. Letter from Head of School
2. I Know I Can Summer Academies 2019
3. Head of School Visit to USA
4. Upcoming Dates & Announcements



Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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School Mission

Guided by Quaker principles and values, enriched by being in Palestine, and strengthened by collaboration within the school community and with external partnerships, Ramallah Friends School (RFS) offers children and youth with an academically rigorous, balanced, engaging and inclusive learning environment of the highest quality standard, every day.

We inspire our students to become a living expression of a spiritual life, and be in constant search for God in all human situations. By doing so, we nurture confidence and intellectual curiosity through experiential learning and innovative application of knowledge and skills, enabling our students to become independent, adaptable but principled, socially responsible, and internationally-minded citizens.

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL strives to be a leading educational institution in the Palestinian community. The Lower and Upper Schools were founded in 1869 and 1901 respectively, for the purpose of offering Palestinian youth a rigorous program guided by Quaker principles.

Central to Quaker education is a vitality that comes from being a living expression of a religious life. A Friends School education seeks to promote a constant search for God to all human situations and to cultivate ethical, moral and spiritual values.*

www.rfs.edu.ps

Welcome Back to School

Letter from Head of School

Welcome to the new academic year. We are excited by what this year will bring. Last year we celebrated record IB results and the school's first perfect score of 45. We celebrated our 150th year and we will continue our celebrations with a Gala Dinner in December. So much has been achieved in the past year and we look forward to this coming year.

I am writing this from New England Yearly Meeting in Castleton, Vermont. New England Yearly Meeting gathered this summer for the 359th consecutive year. This year the theme of the meeting was "Provoke one another to Love," from an epistle written by Margaret Fell in 1656. Today we hear in this phrase the reminder that we do not travel on this journey alone, but that we need one another to fully hear God's desires for us. In the original epistle, this phrase is preceded by this advice: "Let Love the Eternal Light search you ...it will rip you up and lay you open" This is not an easy journey given to us.

I had the honor of meeting the Hussey family in Maine. The Hussey Plow Company was established in 1835 by William Hussey, a farmer and native of North Berwick. The Hussey family were part of the New England Yearly Meeting. RFS and the New England Yearly Meeting are deeply connected both spiritually and historically. Now nearly 200 years later, still in North Berwick, the Hussey Seating Company is known throughout the sports world.



First day of 2019/2020 school year at the Lower School

It was the Hussey family that was instrumental in the purchase and construction of the Al Bireh upper school campus.

RFS is a school situated in a difficult region. It provides an education unparalleled in Palestine. It is also a sanctuary – it is green, lush and gives the opportunity for our children to interact in the safety we provide. Our deep connections with our Quaker roots are a cause for celebration. Just as Margaret Fell wrote, we are called by our mission to provoke one another to love. Let this be our mission this year.

We are Ramallah Friends School. We Realize Potential Fulfill Dreams Share Hope

Adrian Moody - Head of School

RFS' "I Know I Can" Summer Academies 2019

By Mohit Mehta & IKIC K-5th Grades Team

210 students spent four weeks of exhilarating activities and critical learning at the 6th annual I Know I Can Summer Academy for K-2nd and 3rd-5th. The combined programs with a local and international staff guided students in thinking critically about identity, community and homeland through authentic children's literature in English.

Students read Sitti's Secrets by Palestinian-American author Naomi Shihab Nye. Naomi Shihab Nye and her brother were both students at the Friends School in the late 1960s. On July 30th, students and staff participated in an international video call with the author, who is now based in San Antonio, Texas, USA. Students read original poetry to the author, and Shihab Nye read to students from Sitti's Secrets. Students had a chance to ask the author a variety of questions.

Apart from building literacy skills, students participated in a wide range of recreational activities including dodgeball, soccer, basketball, kickball, painting, Karaoke, Zumba and photography. In the photography class, students learned about guidelines of taking good "selfies," composition, portraiture, color and lighting. In painting, students learned how to mix color, illustrate small details such as the seeds of a watermelon or the leaves of a pineapple.



The IKIC Summer Academy strives to provide a wide range of educational experience that build on the children's artistic, physical and academic talents. For the first time, the IKIC camp coordinated with Golden Goal to provide a day of recreational activities. Based on children and parent feedback, all enjoyed this memorable event. Each year, the staff aims to improve the camp offerings and is already busy planning for 2020!*

Glance @ Head of School's Visit to USA This Summer



Head of School Adrian Moody met with RFS alumni in New York City last July.



Head of School met with Director of Friends Education at Moses Brown School.



Head of School and RFS Director of Development Andy Albertini with the Hussey family in Maine.

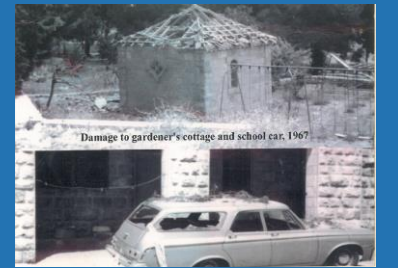


Head of School met with Friends United Meeting Director of Global Ministries Eden Grace.

A Look at Our History

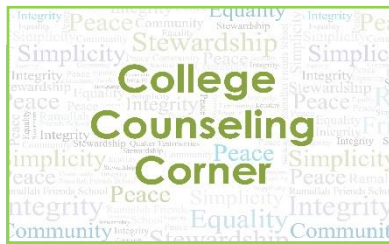


1966
Enrollment increased at the Boys School to a peak in 1966 of 320 students. Girls School enrollment in the same year numbered 233 students.



1967
In early June, 1967 the Six-Day War brought upheaval to Ramallah. The city became part of the Occupied Territory ruled by an Israeli military governor. Freedom of movement was restricted. During the war, dozens of Israeli military shells fell into the Boys School and Swift House area. Hundreds of windows were broken, trees were badly cut, the school car was hit, and a small outbuilding took a direct hit causing great damage. Fortunately, none of the major buildings were damaged badly. Nevertheless, one teacher reported, "There is a feeling of uncertainty, depression, and a deep longing for peace and security and justice."

The Friends Schools opened September 5th, 1967, with considerable tension, with some political opposition, reduced enrollment and subnormal attendance. The schools ceased to be boarding schools as families feared for the safety of their children and school officials did not want the responsibility of boarders during such dangerous times. Student enrollment plummeted.*



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming:

Meetings with Chris start when all students are back on campus - Fill in [this form](#) for a meeting time. - All official meetings are during a free class or previously scheduled period (45min-1hr). - Meeting during breaks is NOT scheduled in advance.

- AUGUST 20th : 1st COLLEGE COUNSELING DEADLINE ALL STUDENTS - Due date for the first [College List Draft](#) for all rising 12th graders.

- OCTOBER 15th : 1st APPLICATION DEADLINE OF 2019 - UK Medical School, Oxford or Cambridge. If you have planned on applying to this deadline, email Chris ASAP.

Events:

September (To Be Announced): Applying to the US Workshop. September (To Be Announced): Applying to the UK/Canada/Europe Workshop.

Resources:
2019-20 CC Handbook: The [College Counseling Handbook](#) has everything you need to know to apply to college and use the CC Office!

[College List Draft](#) (copy and make your own from this template)

Contact Chris and the CC Office: cakel@rfs.edu.ps

Coming Back to School

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

Not as any other wish we have, it's the wish of having a new academic year that with the smiles of our children at the Ramallah Friends School, with our continuous dream of a free Palestine, and with the hard work, we will be the light that protects our children's rights and their right of education.

To achieve this, we have worked hard with dedication to welcome the new school year with steady readiness and unwavering determination. First, we allowed and provided school staff with local and international courses, in order to enhance their abilities. Staff development comes in parallel with the progress of the primary years program (PYP), in order to rehabilitate the school community and enable it to keep pace with the modifications and developments adopted by the International Baccalaureate in its programs.

In addition, this year, the school has sought to attract all segments of the local community, including a hundred and ten new students, most of which are in the Lower KG. This addition came in the number of students, in order to ensure our community with many qualified individuals as possible, who will benefit from the school's programs and activities.

In addition, the school continues to maintain our school as a healthy and environmentally friendly school, especially as the title of the twenty-first century is based on the environment in all its components. It's the largest and most challenging title in the coming period.

Perhaps the first focal point of this school year, is to work together so that the school continues its educational and pedagogical journey, in full cooperation among all its members, to reach the goals of the school and its mission by the end of the year. To work together to set another stone in the building of this ancient edifice, and we have proven another wall of its walls with the community's affiliation.*

Welcome to the Upper Campus

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

Welcome back to another year! We hope that this year will be filled with achievements for our upper school community. As you begin the first week of school, take the time to set one or two goals you wish to achieve this year. You might want to do this as an individual, or with your family at home. To make your goal achievable, make sure it is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed (SMART) Goal.

I will share with you the goal I set for myself as a school leader and that is: improve instructional leadership at the school. The goal is specific, instructional leadership refers to the time spent with teachers working on their teaching techniques, approaches to learning, observing how different students learn so that different needs are met differently..etc. I am going to measure this by visiting classes, gathering student and teacher feedback throughout the year, and looking at improved instructional practices as an overall process (it is the journey that really matters). It is relevant, because let us face it, a school cannot develop without supporting the heart of what it does, and that is instruction, and this goal will be timed with several milestones that need to be reached throughout the year.

So there, that is my goal for the year, what is yours? Share it with me at rkafri@rfs.edu.ps and visit me in my office to discuss it.*

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

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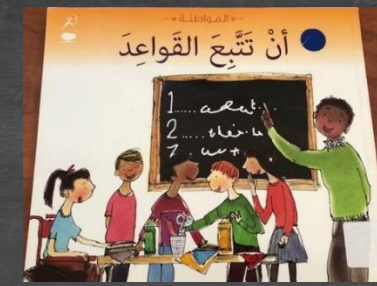
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Lower School Book of the Month - By Nadine Haj Abed



As the new academic year starts, students are being introduced to rules and ways of doing things the right way to achieve justice for all. Through the "Citizenship" book series students learn about the values that embody the concept of a good citizen. In this book "How to follow the rules", students are exposed to different situations explaining how to follow the rules. Fun and engaging graphics are used to reinforce these concepts.*

Alumni in the Spotlight

Meet RFS alumnus, Class of 1959 graduate Samir Abdul Hadi.

After graduating from RFS, Samir attended the American University of Beirut for his BA degree in Civil Engineering. He later moved to Dubai, where he worked for 40 years with one of the top 10 firms in the MENA region in the field of construction; Khatib & Alami (K&A). As Vice Chairman on the Board of K&A, he worked on tens of the largest construction projects in the region. Abdul Hadi is currently a member of Birzeit University's Board of Trustees and resides in Amman, Jordan.



To the left is a photo of Samir at RFS, courtesy of Samir Abdul Hadi. To the right a current photo.

The OP got the chance to speak with Abdul Hadi during the summer, and he said that RFS had a great impact on his life academically, socially and even on the physical level.

And he continued:

"The things we learned at the Friends School and experience we shared affected our lives on the long run, we were taught through activities and tasks that were appointed to us on the basis of equality, no matter of our backgrounds. You wouldn't feel the difference between the child of a minister, governor or a worker, we were all the same, and we all had to do the same tasks from cleaning, gardening and providing service in the dining room."

We asked Samir about the School's effect on his life, and he said: "Beyond the academics of the school, the social environment at Friends School taught us to respect the system and to be disciplined for a lifetime."

Samir ended our interview with a few words about the role RFS played in his life:

"Till this day the school affects my life details, the things we learned and the experience we shared. The school implanted many of personnel characteristics in us that we kept, we learned discipline, equality, commitment and dedication to our study with care to our physical activities. The Friends cultivated my personality in the different aspects."*

Upcoming Dates & Events

August 27th
Tuition payments due (Plans B & C)

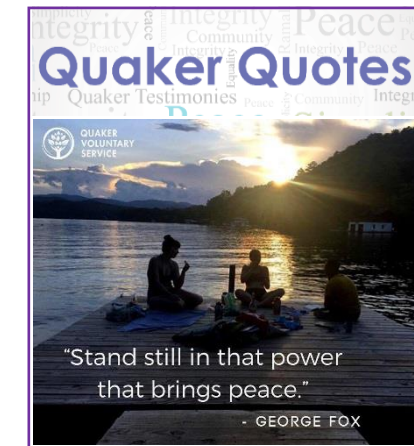
August 31st
Islamic New Year Holiday

September 12th
Lower School Back to School Party

September 14th
Upper School Back to School Bonfire

September 22nd
Tuition payments due (Plan C)

October 5th
Lower School half-day for students. Professional Development Workshop for teachers.



*** LS – Lower School
*** US – Upper School

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