

# THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

1. Letter from Head of School
2. Alumni in the Spotlight
3. What is PYP?
4. Lower School Library Corner



Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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## IB @ RFS

In 1999, the School became accredited by the [International Baccalaureate Organization \(IBO\)](#), offering students in Palestine for the first time an [IB Diploma Program](#).

Today, after receiving the IB authorization of the [Middle Years Program \(MYP\)](#) in 2012 (for grades 6 through 10), and the [Primary Years Program \(PYP\)](#) in 2018 (for grades LKG through 5th), the Ramallah Friends School is a recognized [IB World School](#).



## New Year and New Applications

Letter from Head of School

As we move into the new year we are beginning our admissions process. This is a long process taking several months and we receive numerous applications – far more applications than places available. Parents hope to be able to put their children in our school.

RFS is a school which offers a high quality education. We are the only school in Palestine that offers the programs of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The IBO offers three programs – the Primary Years Program, the Middle Years Programs and the Diploma Program. The IBO programs are challenging and holistic. However, it is not only our curriculum which attracts parents to our school.

We are a Friends school and our admissions process is guided and defined by our Quaker values.

We are committed to being transparent. We are committed to creating a diverse student body that is reflective of both our history and the larger community. We are committed to creating an inclusive student body that is characterized by gender equity and we strive to create opportunities for children who may otherwise not be able to benefit from the education we provide.

We are committed to our community.



It is these commitments that define who we are and who we want our students to be.

We expect our students and their parents to be active members of our school community and to uphold our Quaker values.\*

## Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra – Alumni Relations & Communications Officer

Meet RFS alumna, Class of 2006, news reporter and programs producer on Ajyal Radio Network, and a member of the [Toastmasters International Organization for Teaching Public Speaking and Leadership](#), Najah Mussalam.

Najah has been working in the journalism field for twelve years now, and recently won first place on the Arab level for her film "Their Dreams are Real" in the second edition of the "One Minute Film" competition, which was launched by the Sawa Foundation under the title "Equal Despite the Difference". The film deals with the right of Autistic children in education.

Najah participated in the Fifth Screen Festival - Women's Cinema, and the Vienna Festival for the International Day of Solidarity with Palestine, with two films she directed titled "Jerusalem in Color" and "Hasbit Baladna" to highlight the daily life and challenges facing the Palestinians.

When asked about the influence the school had on her social, educational and professional life, she told the OP: "My experience at the Friends School was beautiful, in which I gained several friendships, including the ones that continue till today with my classmates and teachers, who left a mark in my life, especially mentioning my teachers Omar Assaf, Mohammad Habbas and Loay Awad, in addition to our English teacher at the time Don Hutchinson. The Friends School also strengthened my concepts of cooperation, giving and acceptance of the other, which helped refine my personality to become what I am today."

In addition to her work in the journalism field, Najah is appointed to the media committee organizing the [TEDx global platform](#). The global platform is mainly interested



in ideas that deserve publication in various fields including technology, design, entertainment and knowledge.

We asked Najah about her ambitions, and she said: "It's my ambition that I can give even a small portion of my experience in the media field to school students by empowering them with the tools of public speaking and the art of speech, in addition to developing and strengthening their leadership through practical steps."

Najah ended our interview with a few words for future alumni:

"Every achievement is only the beginning of something more beautiful, so enjoy and live the school life in every detail. It is the door to another journey that you guided."\*



## A Look at Our History

1985  
The Friends School Board of Trustees was established.

1987  
From 1987 to 1993, during the Palestinian uprising (Intifada), school life was politicized to a degree. Students would leave campus to participate in non-violent protest demonstrations. School enrollment again dropped by about 45%. Schools in Ramallah were forcibly shut down by Israeli occupation forces, and then gradually allowed to re-open for only a few hours a day.

During this time, RFS sold school property across from the Boys School to pay teacher salaries. House arrests were common and curfews were imposed. Travel was restricted.



1989  
The 1989-90 school year began in January and ended in June with only about 60 school days instead of 165 days. In response to school closure, home schooling sessions were organized as an alternative. This was one of the few effective forms of civil disobedience.

Ramallah Friends School established the Educational Network, a coalition with unions representing public and private non-governmental organizations and the UN Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA). The organization initially designed home teaching materials for use during the Intifada.\*



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming Deadline Dates:

-Mid-January-late February:

General Canadian deadlines

-Ongoing through Summer:

European deadlines, American

Universities in Europe, Regional

Universities.

Counseling shout outs!

\*Numbers below are current as of

January 28; we are still waiting to

hear back from the majority of US,

UK, and Canadian universities!

- Acceptances (28 students): 42

-Usable Financial Aid (1 scholarship

per student / 12 students):

\$1,630,932

-Number of "Full Demonstrated

Need" awards: 6

-Diversity of acceptances

13 Countries applied

7 Countries accepted

European admissions have grown

more than 200% from 2017-18

2 Medical, 3 Business and law, 2

Engineering schools

Upcoming Events:

o Macalaster College Visit:

February 8th

o Palestinian Universities Fair:

February (To Be Announced)

o Jacobs University in Germany

Visit: February (To Be Announced)

o 10th and 11th Grade RFS

Counseling Team Kickoff: February

or March (To Be Announced)

o US Universities Fair: March or

April (To Be Announced)

o PSAT 10: April (To Be

Announced)

o Harvard, Stanford, and

Wellesley Colleges Visit: April 29

o Upcoming SAT I dates for

11th graders:

· March 14 (Register by

February 14)

· May 2 (Register by April 3)

· 11th Grade Meetings: Starting

this February, all 11th graders will

have time for a first initial meeting

with Chris to begin their College

Counseling process. Contact Chris

with questions or requests

(cakel@rfs.edu.ps)\*

## What is the PYP?

By Frieda Dahdah Khayat – Lower School Principal

Our school has strived, over the years, to enroll in internationally accredited academic programs that constitute an integrated approach. The school started with implementing the [International Baccalaureate Program](#), followed by [Middle Years Program](#) and [Primary Years Program](#). These programs constitute an integrated approach.

The PYP program, which in its approach is consistent with the principles of our school as a Quaker School, was a result of a series of training and experiments over the past years, until it was adopted in our school by the International Baccalaureate Committee in 2018. RFS became the first school in Palestine to receive this accreditation, as the first to implement this program with its requirements.

Therefore, adopting this curriculum based on overcoming school subjects, in terms of its recognition of the diverse capabilities and energies of students, whether physical, social, intellectual, cultural or even aesthetic, was a firm choice for the school. We believe that education is a right for every individual.

Our education is based on five basic elements: knowledge, absorptions based on concepts, skills, nature, and work, where the six axes crossed for study materials form the starting point for research and questioning the issues raised by global thought and different features. The aim is for students of this program to become open, knowledgeable, thinkers, interested, connected, risk-takers, balanced and principled; to create a better and more peaceful world through understanding and respecting diverse cultures, let alone creating a generation of lifelong learner.



The program units are: "Who are we?" "Where are we in place and time?" "How we express ourselves?" "How the world works?" "How we organize ourselves?" and "We share the planet."

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of this program is the interdependent relationship that exists between the learner, learning and education, and the learning community.

The collaborative planning process is an essential feature of the program's features, as it contributes to continuous learning and education contemplation to improve students' outcomes, and the fact that the learners have the driving forces for their learning, as partners in the learning process and responsible for its learning as well. In addition, the learning community includes everyone who participates in school's life, including students, teachers, administrators, employees, parents, and everyone who is important in the lives of students, whether from the internal or external school environment.\*

## Lower School Library Corner

By Nadine Haj Abed – Lower School Librarian

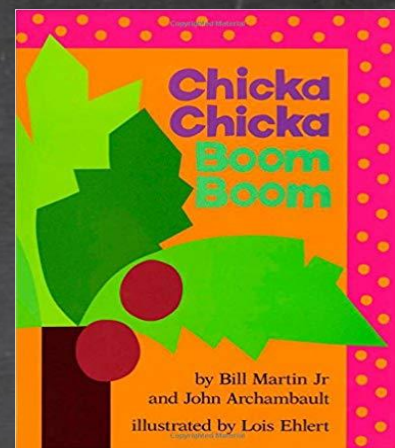
*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* is a bestselling American children's book written by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault, illustrated by Lois Ehlert.

The book presents alphabet rhymes such as "A" told "B", and "B" told "C", "I'll meet you at the top of the coconut tree.

In this lively alphabet rhyme, all the letters of the alphabet race each other up the coconut tree.

Will there be enough room? Oh, no - Chicka Chicka Boom! Boom!

The well-known authors of Barn Dance and Knots on a Counting Rope have created a rhythmic alphabet chant that rolls along on waves of fun. Lois Ehlert's rainbow of bright, bold, cheerful colors makes the merry parade of letters unforgettable.\*



## What is the MYP?

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

The [Middle Years Program](#) (MYP) is the IB program for grades 6-10. Contrary to popular belief, the MYP is not a prescriptive curriculum, but rather a pedagogical framework that spells out various approaches to teaching, learning and student assessment.

The MYP is meant to engage teachers and students in conceptual based learning. While it is still rooted in disciplines, it also encourages interdisciplinary collaborations between teachers.

One of the key features of MYP is that it aims to contextualize student learning by connecting what content to Global Contexts.



10th Grade MYP students experiment in the Biology lab

Often students ask, why do I need to know this? Why is physics important? I do not want to learn math; do I really have to?

Connecting content with context is key at making sense of the knowledge we acquire. In the MYP we do this through the Global Context. Those stem from the [PYP](#) transdisciplinary themes. Each unit is connected to one of them, and teachers as well as students must connect the inquiry, content and activities in the unit to the specified global context.

For a more detailed description of each one of the six contexts please visit [this link](#) and click Global Contexts.

The RFS Upper School has been working diligently at empowering interdisciplinary learning.

Every year during the spring semester several grade levels engage in interdisciplinary units. We will make sure to share with you their learning journeys when we implement them this year.\*

## Upcoming Dates & Events

January 30<sup>th</sup>  
Tuition Payments Due (Plans B & C)

February 1<sup>st</sup>  
LS Parent- Teacher Conference

February 5<sup>th</sup>  
Last day of accepting new student applications for grades LKG, UKG and 1<sup>st</sup>.

February 8<sup>th</sup>  
Start accepting Financial Aid applications

February 15<sup>th</sup>  
LS and US – Half day for students

\*\*\* LS – Lower School

\*\*\* US – Upper School



February 29<sup>th</sup>  
US – Last day for seniors (12IB)  
Financial Aid applications submission deadline  
Tuition Payments due (Plan C)

March 4<sup>th</sup>  
US - Start of IB Mock Exams

March 9<sup>th</sup>  
New student applications for Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

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

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