

THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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Sponsor a tree Forestation Project



LS students planting last year

As we welcome spring after a long cold winter, RFS Project & Facilities Management team prepares to relaunch the [150th Anniversary's Forestation Project](#).

Last year, more than 150 trees were planted on both campuses by students and staff in an effort to make our campuses greener.

As the project is continued, RFS hopes to plant at least 150 more trees during the coming few years. And we invite you as parents, students, staff and graduates to become a part of that.

To sponsor a tree and participate in planting the new trees please send an email to communications@rfs.edu.ps *

This Time of Year...

Letter from Head of School

I am writing having just returned from Melbourne where I put my daughter into university. It is a proud moment watching as your only child enters into the next stage of life – studying a course that she loves and moving into a residential college to make new friends and bonding relationships.

It is the apogee of over thirteen years of study, assignments, assessments, learning to relate to others and above all parental worry. Now she is on her own making her way and creating her future.

As teacher and an administrator for over 30 years I have seen other parents' children make the same move as they transition from their final year of school to the next college, university or position. I estimate that is over 2,000 students. Some of these graduated from classes as small as five and as large as 130.

It is a timely reminder to me about what we are about because ultimately we are here – as teachers and as parents - to prepare our students to leave, to go to that next stage in life, to prepare them for their future.

Our own students have started their mock examinations and soon will be sitting their final exams and then graduating from school. We wish them the very best and I also wish our parents great joy as they experience what I have now experienced.*



Senior chapel was hosted by Class of 2020 before IB Mock exams began.

Alumni in the Spotlight – Amanda Rukab-Khalaf

By Lama Murra – Alumni Relations & Communications Officer

Meet RFS alumna, Class of 2001, RFS Kindergarten teacher Amanda Rukab - Khalaf. After graduation Amanda completed her Bachelor's Degree at the Ohio State University and obtained a Master's in Education from the University of South Florida. Amanda has been teaching at RFS since 2010.

When asked about her experience working at RFS, she told the OP: "My experience at RFS has been fulfilling and it is what inspired me to further my education and pursue a Master's degree in education. It is the teaching experience which I gained here that was an added benefit to obtaining my master's degree. Experiencing teaching simultaneously while studying for my master's was enlightening and helped enhance my teaching skills as well as implementing teaching strategies in the classroom that would provide my students with the quality education that they deserve.



I have become aware of the diverse skill sets of my students and to differentiate education to accommodate their academic needs to establish and enhance their English language skills."

When asked about the influence studying at RFS had on her social, educational and professional life, Amanda told the OP: "You are part of a community and culture that becomes embedded deep within you.

There is a connection built between you and your peers and you and your teachers which lasts a lifetime whether you are near or far, you will always be part of that Friend's community no matter where you are. I am still really close with my friends from high school both locally and abroad.

It is RFS that provided me with the opportunity where I began my career in teaching and eventually realized that this was my calling and that I was meant to be an educator. Being a graduate of RFS gives a special understanding of the values and culture that I want to model to my students and instill in them."

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

"Make the best out of your experience here at RFS, both socially and academically because each day here at RFS will shape the exceptional human being that you were meant to be." *



The Experience of Gardening my School

By Taima Shoabi – RFS student

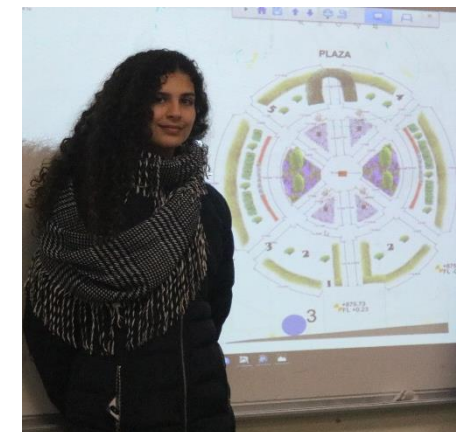
I have always favored the gardens in my school, the trees, the flowers, the grass, I never got sick of hanging around these areas.

And when I heard that there was a project for replanting the entire school, I didn't hesitate to join in. I wanted to help students create memories with this school just like I did but with an even better view!

After I joined this project, I started going to meetings and investing the current situation of the school's plants and how we could improve it. I met new people who either had a big passion for planting and gardening or came looking for that passion with us. It was fun and I enjoyed the discussions and ideas that were brought up, but it was a bit difficult.

Planning your idea and researching about it was not as easy as I thought it would be. But the hardest thing was getting the approval of your teammates, you need to seem sure and self-confident.

I worked and invested in the project with a lot of energy specially that I was the youngest in the group, so I was teased by high school students from time to time.



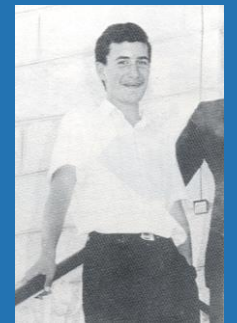
But they liked most of my ideas and they are going to put it on their plan so I didn't mind the teasing.

I haven't finished my work yet, but I enjoy it so far and I am really looking forward for the final result.*

A Look at Our History

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.

On August 16th of 1989, RFS student Amjed Jibril was killed outside his home in El-Bireh by Israeli soldiers.



100th Anniversary
In 1989, the Girls School celebrated its 100th year. The celebration was kept low profile due to the unrest and the bad political turmoil that the country was under. A centennial book that included names and group photos of all graduates of the school was published.

1990
Boys School and the Girls School merged and the schools became completely coeducational. The Girls School, now the Lower School, served students from Kindergarten through 7th grade and the Boys School, now the Upper School, served students from grades 8th through 12th. *



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming Deadlines:
Ongoing through Spring/Summer:
European deadlines, American Universities in Europe, Regional Universities
Late applications: While many university deadlines have passed, students may still submit late applications to most regions. However, there are no specific rules or guidelines for late applications; each university will make its own decision about acceptances.
Summer 2020: IB Results Released

Class of 2020 University Admissions News/ until Feb:
- Acceptances (47 students): 109 to institutions around the world
- Financial Aid (1 scholarship per student / 12 students): \$2,828,443.98
- 10 Full Scholarships
- Diversity of acceptances: 12 countries
- European admissions have grown more than 250% since 2017-18!
- 3 Medical, 3 Business and law, 2 Engineering schools, and multiple other specialized schools in art, psychology, and humanities

College Counseling General:
Mar. 12: Canadian Universities Visit 10th and 11th Grade RFS Counseling Team Kickoff: March (To Be Announced)
April 27: PSAT 10th graders
April 29 Harvard, Stanford, and Wellesley Colleges Visit.

Upcoming SAT I dates for 11th graders:
March 14 (Register by February 14)
May 2 (Register by April 3)
11th Grade Meetings: All 11th graders will have a time for a first meeting with Chris to begin their College Counseling process. To schedule, please contact Chris (cakel@rfs.edu.ps).
*** [Check out the 2019 Handbook](#)

Taking Preventive Measures Against Corona-virus

By Frieda Dahdah Khayyat – Lower School Principal

RFS is a healthy school that is friendly to the environment, and that is obvious in the School's maintaining raising the level of awareness within the school community every year. Our school always implements preventive measures towards reducing the outbreak of all viruses and diseases throughout the school year, as well as making sure healthy eating is a daily routine for all of our community members.

With the current outbreak of the Corona-virus, the school has already begun taking a number of preventive measures towards spreading awareness and taking actual steps to ensure the safety of our students and staff, all in accordance to the instructions of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. The school is also actively seeking information about the virus from official channels and resources in the aim to spread awareness.

Some of the preventive measures the Lower School is currently implementing include organizing awareness sessions for staff, publishing reminders about preventive measures through the School website, organizing awareness sessions for students in all grade levels, distribution of relevant publications in all classrooms, clarifications regarding information and procedures which

prevent Corona in accordance to the available publications on the website pages of the Ministries of Health and Education.

As well as reaffirming the healthy behaviors in regards to sneezing, washing of hands, correct usage of Kleenex, etc. And ensuring the school environment is clean and hygienic which includes student desks and all health facilities through daily sterilization and for many times during the day.

And also providing quantities of soap and paper napkins in all areas of hand washing on campus while ensuring bottles of cleaning liquid are available inside classrooms.

Parents will also be asked to keep any students suffering from health issues at home (such as high fever, coughing, difficulty breathing and others).

Our school remains active and up to date specifically on this issue, in the hope that everybody here and around the world will unite together to fight this virus with all we can. *



Middle School Library Corner

By Carmen Abdul Hadi – Middle School Librarian

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all." What a wonderful thing to love reading! Reading is a powerful key to open the doors to compassion, exploration and learning. February was the "Love of Reading" month in the MS Library. As a part of the ongoing process for promoting a love of reading, "Boovie" challenge was launched. "Boovie" (from "book" and "movie") is a digital storytelling activity for students after they finish reading a book. Students need to take the key ideas from the book to create a short video that persuades people to check out a book they have read. A detailed guide about "how to make your own Boovie" was provided to all students. 15 participants will present their "Boovie" in front of a jury by the end of April. Stay tuned! Other interesting things are on the way!

Stewardship @ Upper Campus

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

Stewardship...What does it really mean to practice stewardship in an educational institution?

Isn't education a form of stewardship, be it academic or disciplinary? These are the kinds of questions I contemplate regularly as I work with students and teachers on a daily basis. According to Quaker testimonies from the San Francisco Friends Council on Education, Stewardship is caring for the earth and its inhabitants.

In light of the Coronavirus outbreak, and the sense of alarm tipping on the verge of panic, this is the time that educators practice stewardship. This is why at the upper school we have chosen an educational approach to raising awareness among faculty and students.

It is important that we raise a generation that understands the risks of a viral pandemic but does not descend into panic.



Upper School staff meeting to discuss approach to raising awareness.

Offering children and parents sound scientific knowledge is caring for their mental and physical wellbeing.

Virus outbreaks are bound to happen, it is how we deal with them, and care for those who are affected. Education and awareness are the best ways to do that, and in that we are stewards in our smaller community and the world at large. *

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

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Upcoming Dates & Events

March 9th – 16th
New student applications for grades 2nd -11th

March 21st
LS: Fifth Grade PYP Exhibition

March 22nd (tentative)
Isra' & Miraj Holiday

March 24th
End of 3rd Quarter

March 25th
Fourth quarter begins
Registration for current students for the school year 2020-2021 begins.

March 28th
End of quarter holiday – no school

March 31st
Tuition payments due (Plan C)

April 1st
US: Report cards distribution

April 4th
US: Parent-Teacher conference.

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



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