

THE OLIVE PRESS

ISSUE 01 YEAR 2018/2019

Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

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The Olive Press

It is my pleasure to welcome you all back to school through the first issue of RFS' monthly newsletter, the Olive Press, for the academic year 2018-2019.

Aimed at reaching all members of our school community, the Olive Press will discuss a different theme every month. A new column, **Quaker Quotes**, has been added on page 4. We also reintroduce you to the school blog, "Ramallah Friends School Community Blog", which is a space for all of us – students, parents, teachers and staff, to share thoughts and concerns about our community.

At RFS Communications Department, we always welcome your suggestions and ideas. Please make sure to fill out the parent survey we will send this week regarding what you would like to learn about more at RFS during this academic year, through our social media pages. And do not forget to *follow/like* our social media pages: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#) [i](#) [y](#) [t](#) [u](#) [b](#) [e](#)

During the summer, our department was busy organizing and finishing a lot of projects which we hope will see the light soon; the school archive room is now available for researchers upon request, and the school's 2nd annual alumni reunion was a big success as we prepare for celebrating RFS' 150th anniversary together with our wonderful community.*

Besan Omary-Jaawan - Communications & Development Manager

Welcome Back to School!

Letter from Head of School

Welcome back to the new school year. One year ago I began at Ramallah Friends School (RFS). It has been one of the most powerful experiences in my life. This school stands as a witness to history. The story of RFS began in 1869 and is an unforgettable story of a relationship between extraordinary people which lead to the development of what is considered to be one of the most significant Quaker Schools in the world. Eli and Sybil Jones began a school which over time has changed the lives of thousands of Palestinians through education.

This year we celebrate 150 years of education in Palestine. From small beginnings we have come such a long way. The vision of Eli and Sybil was very much like the mustard seed. It is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than all the trees (Mark 4:26-29). An idea which begins from humble beginnings can grow into something that is not only unexpected but great. They planted a mustard seed - small, strong and steadfast enabling the inner light of all children to shine. This year we will be paying special attention to the Quaker testimonies.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) characterizes Quakers as reaching for the best in oneself and answering "that of God" in everyone. Quaker testimonies are expressions of the commitment to put those beliefs into practice.

The testimonies bear witness to the truth known through our relationship with God.



They do not exist in any rigid, written form; nor are they imposed in any way. Each Quaker searches for how the testimonies can best be expressed in his or her own life. At RFS we will also be spending this year looking at how the testimonies can be expressed in our community. It is important to spend time together discussing how we understand the testimonies in our time and in our context.

I welcome everyone back for a new year and we look forward to a good year together as the RFS community.*

Adrian Moody

Adrian Moody - Head of School

Meet RFS' New Upper School Deputy Principal Dr. Mark Bauman

Lama Murra – Communications Officer

Joining RFS community as the new Upper School Deputy Principal, OP welcomed Dr. Mark Bauman with a short introductory interview. Bauman joins us with over 20 years of experience in school administration and 30 years in teaching, a PhD in Education Administration and Supervision, Master of Arts in Comparative Religion and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Q. What made you decide to travel miles from home to join RFS Community:
"Coming to RFS was merging lots of my experience and tracks in life, as I was a school Administrator, Principal and a Quaker. This job is a blend of my research interest, administration experience and Quaker life path."

Mark shared with us what he's looking for through his future experience within RFS:
"I look forward to be in a school that honors Quaker values and philosophy, to learn more about the IB curriculum and work with a faculty that is primarily Palestinian, knowing and learning about the community and living in Palestine."

After the first few weeks in town, Mark said he loves being in a Mediterranean and busy city as Ramallah and he is looking forward to working with students and faculty.
Q. What are your main goals during the first year at RFS?
"I hope to learn the faculty's names, personalities, what



they teach and how they work. Secondly, meet students, get to know their personalities, their interests and what their weaknesses and strengths are. And thirdly, learn Arabic and become more familiar with Palestinian culture."

We ended our interview with a message from Mark to the school community:
"I have always valued community, so I would love to ask students, teachers and parents to have patience on each other and on me, so all problems can be solved as we all recognize we are in a community. Community needs to support each other and we need to stay positive."
We wish Mark the best of luck on his new journey here at RFS.*



Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra – Communications Officer

In this issue, we interviewed Class of 2012 alumnus – Fadi Maybar also known as Joseph Maybar. Fadi is now an artist and works in photography. Fadi joined RFS at age of 4 years and spent 14 years here until he graduated in 2012. When asked about his experience and how it affected his professional life now, he answered:

"The resources the school's campus had, played a significant role and created what started as a hobby and now became a profession; photography."

After graduating from RFS, Fadi continued his studies in Business Administration at Birzeit University, he then decided to follow his dream and try to make a profession from his talent, photography. He now works as a freelance photographer, and has already signed contracts with local and International companies and magazines.

"Ramallah Friends School gave me so much and stands as a constant reminder to allow myself to be me and not to be scared of that." – Fadi

Fadi insisted on ending the interview with a piece of advice to future RFS alumni:

"My advice to students is, never allow your fears to stand in your way. Fear can come in many shapes and forms, it is on you to acknowledge them and take them as a motivation, not as an obstacle, but as a driving engine towards making a change in the world by starting with your own community, your school.**"

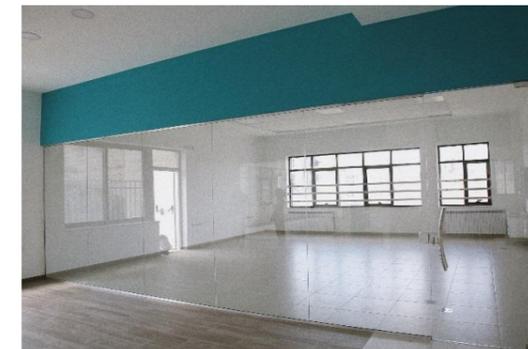
Construction and Maintenance Projects –Summer of 2018

Eng. Hilal Saba'neh – Facilities and Projects Department

Every summer, the facilities team works on many projects around both campuses as the long holiday for students constitutes a great opportunity for working on projects that could disrupt the educational process or cause danger on school attendants. Most of the projects we were working on during this summer are either finished or awaiting the last touches.

I would like to share with you a short summary on some of these projects which were implemented on both campuses. At the Upper School campus:

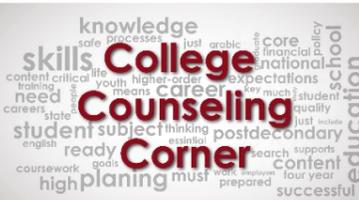
- Rehabilitation of school yards: the most important part of this project aims to improve the outer surface of the "rocky area" that connects campus buildings and fills an area of almost 2000 square meters. This landscape is formed of natural rock and with the passing of time it has come to have many gaps that could cause danger to student safety.
- Restructuring the arena above the basketball courts by paving it with a combination of concrete, natural rock and traditional stone.
- Pavement and expansion of the internal vehicle lane next to the Science Building.
- Supplementary works around the Middle School Building which included construction of pathways and agricultural basins. And the addition of a new parking lot for staff.
- Establishing a fiber optic network.
- Reinsulating of the campus apartments.
- Preparation and rehabilitation of the new uniform room.
- Completing the project of installing lighting on the basketball field.
- Establishing an irrigation network and planting natural grass on the grounds of the Quad and Outdoor Learning Center.



New 3rd Grade Classrooms at LS

At the Lower School campus we worked on different projects:

- Installation of a solar panel system above Whittier Building with a capacity of 22 kWh.
 - Completion of the finishing works and furnishing of the new third floor above the KG Building to be used for Third Grade classrooms. The internal design of this floor was derived from the theme behind the design of the Middle School building, which is based on open spacing and the flexibility of innovative learning approaches.
 - Complete maintenance on the isolation of the roof of Shaheen Building.
 - Painting works on the ground of the basketball field- this project is still in progress.
- And finally, maintenance works inside classrooms on both campuses included painting walls, fixing electricity, addition of sanitary parts, repairs of outside slides and swings, among others.*



Being Ramallah Friends School ...

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

"Friends believe that we need each other, since each and every one of us is precious to our community" We are each important to our community, and in order for us to find ourselves and truth we need each other. As a school, this value is lived through a variety of ways. RFS has and always will be committed to giving students the best educational opportunities there are. This year in particular, we will strive to have each student enabled to reach their fullest potential. However, this is not possible without the support and active participation of all of us together. We each have a role, and it will be up to us, the adults, to make sure that our children feel most enabled in the classroom, in the playground and at home, by meeting our obligations towards them.

In order to do that, I believe we need to agree on what a community looks like. A community sticks together, communicates



with each other in respectful manners and channels, a community is compassionate towards each other, and displays a certain level of empathy towards each other especially in times of crisis.

A community celebrates together their achievements and is not afraid to highlight those who burn the midnight oil to enable such achievements. A community does not trash bathrooms on the first day of school, and takes pride in its possessions as a whole. Together all those things enable all of us to become better at what we each do, teaching, parenting, learning, communicating...Being RFS. The question I wish to pose to all of us at the beginning of the year, how much are we acting like a community? And how can we get better at it? Something to reflect on as we embark on a new learning journey together. Wishing each and every member of our community a year full of learning.*

By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Kickoff to the 2018-19 Application Season!
Hello RFS parents and alumni! We have started our 2018-19 College Application Season this August! I am truly excited and inspired by the success by Class of 2018, and I know that Class of 2019 will do even better!

To recap, last year our 2018 seniors gained acceptances to and earned:
- 3 Ivy League institutions
- 42 "Top Colleges" around the world, including 23 liberal arts colleges ranked alongside Ivy League institutions.
- 19 different countries in 47 different fields, including medical and law school(s).
- Over \$7.7 million in scholarship across the world, with nearly 50% of those scholarships as part of "full-demonstrated need" packages
- 96% IB Diploma pass rate!

And while Class of 2018 ended strong, 2019 looks to be even stronger! To prepare, 12th grade students should:

- Submit their first draft college list by email to Chris by August 20th
Lists should include: 15+ colleges, all regions, ALL details available researched online before submitting.

- Look through the [College Counseling Handbook](#) online.

- Check their emails for upcoming meeting schedules (beginning in September 2018).

- Prepare to attend any upcoming events such as:

- * DAAD German Universities Information Session: *September TBD*
- * Personal Statement Workshop: *September TBD*
- * Common Application Workshop: *September TBD*
- * Large US University Tour: *October 21*
- * Earlham College International Admissions Visit: *November 19*
- * Fall RFS Alumni College Fair: *October/November TBD*
- * UCAS Application Workshop: *November/December TBD**

New Administrative Appointments for 2018/2019

In the Lower School some internal appointments were made this year. Raneem Khoury has been appointed as interim Head of KG. Raneem started working at RFS in 2005 as a KG Teacher and became the KG Head Assistant in 2016.



Raneem Khoury

On her hopes for the new school year Raneem Khoury said: *"Our aim at RFS kindergarten is to make each child ready and prepared for the world and not prepare the world for the child."*

Sandy Ziadeh has been appointed PYP Coordinator this year. Sandy started working at RFS as a Teacher Assistant in 2011, became a KG Teacher in 2013, and later also became Grade Level Leader for UKG. We wish them the very best in their new roles in the Lower School.

Mark Bauman joins RFS as Interim Deputy Principal of the High School, to know more about Mark's background please read OP's interview with him on 2nd page of this issue.*



Sandy Ziadeh & her UKG students

RFS – A Local Message and A World Vision Towards A Worldwide Horizon

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

Based on its Quaker principles, RFS has always offered the opportunity for an equal right to education for all, as well as supporting all of its individuals' needs by creating a loving and peaceful educational environment based on mutual respect represented by its staff, teachers, students and their families all standing side by side with the school's policy and values, creating a passionate and caring community. The relationship between stakeholders of the school community and the local community is at the core of Quaker ethos and one of its basic values. The School's community programs remain the first of their kind to instill a sense of solidarity, empathy and feeling with others between members of the school community and others.

Believing in equality between all human beings, RFS has always engaged in a more developmental vision and methodology. Students are offered internationally known educational opportunities such as the IB program, in its three levels beginning at KG level with the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP), and the Learner Profile Traits aimed at raising awareness to the identity of every individual as to what s/he can achieve. And developing students in terms of communication and making positive impact on others locally and globally.



In order for RFS to remain a role model in society, we keep our doors open for the benefit of the local community by sharing experiences between RFS staff and others as we always welcome school and university students from other educational institutions in the aim of training and development. We also connect and share with teachers of other schools within the Palestinian community. RFS not only encourages - but also facilitates the communication between its staff and members of the local community by participating in off-campus workshops and activities.

As RFS was destined to be located in such a significant corner of this world, we can proudly say that the message it was founded for, and after a century and a half of its foundation, is still on a lit up path that we hope will continue on for another hundred years and more, *"There are some who complain because roses have thorns, and there are some who are optimistic because on top of the thorn lays a rose".**

Upcoming Dates and Events

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

- Sept. 12th
Islamic New Year Holiday (tentative)
- Sept. 13th
LS - Back to School Party
- Sept. 15th
US – Back to School Bonfire
- Sept. 17th
US – Start of Student Council Campaign.
- Sept. 22nd
Tuition payments due (Plan C)
- Sept. 24th
US – Student Council Elections.
- Oct. 1st
White Gifts Program begins.
- Oct. 6th
Half-day for students due to Professional Development workshops for staff.

Please click below to view RFS Calendar 2018-19

SCHOOL

CALENDAR

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

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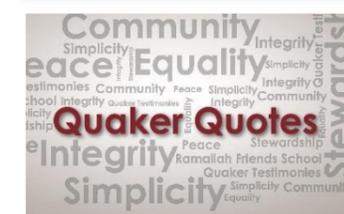
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THE OLD QUAKER WAS RIGHT: I EXPECT TO PASS THROUGH LIFE BUT ONCE. IF THERE IS ANY KINDNESS, OR ANY GOOD THING I CAN DO TO MY FELLOW BEINGS, LET ME DO IT NOW. I SHALL PASS THIS WAY BUT ONCE.

- W. C. GANNETT