



Quaker Education in Palestine since 1869

Engaging Parents in Interdisciplinary Learning: *How we express ourselves*

By Duha Masri, PYP Coordinator and Head of Kindergarten



After years of dedicated work on the implementation of the Primary Years Program (PYP) at the Lower School, we are about to make a quantum leap in the field of Palestinian education. Now we are knocking down classroom walls physically and metaphorically.

We believe that each student's home, school, community, and environment shape her/his learning experience. Through collaborative planning, our teachers are preparing the grounds for inquiry-based learning, where our students actively participate at the center of the learning process.

Our vision at RFS stems from the belief that learning occurs best when connected to life and reality, not when imposed on students, and where adults are facilitators rather than lecturers. It is this vision that led us through the transdisciplinary theme *How we express ourselves* this semester, as third-grade students and their facilitators engaged in addressing the central idea that "people can create and manipulate messages to influence audiences."

continued on page 2

Friends School Newsletter

Spring 2017



Lower School Accomplishment in IT

We introduced the *Coding Club* for fourth-graders, in cooperation with a Palestinian communications company, allowing students to develop problem-solving skills and logic. Following our Quaker commitment to developing the whole person for all the members of our school community, this club enhances each child's creativity and imagination.

Read more Lower School news briefs on pages 2–3.



Ramallah Friends School

Quaker Education in Palestine
since 1869

P.O. Box 66

Ramallah, Palestine

Tel: +970.2.295.2286

Fax: +970.2.295.8320

Web: www.rfs.edu.ps

Joyce Ajlouny, Friends School Director
Jumana Thalji, Assistant to Director
Newsletter Editors: Jumana Thalji
and Besan Omary-Jaawan

*Photo on the cover: Christmas celebrations
at the Lower School*

Ramallah Friends School is a
ministry of Friends United Meeting



Engaging Parents in Interdisciplinary Learning

continued from page 1

This unit of enquiry was planned specifically to involve parent participation. Our teachers/facilitators invited parents who are media experts to engage with our students and introduce them to persuasive writing. Students learned how images and text are used to influence the behavior of targeted audiences. They also got to experience how to inquire about critical evaluation of messages presented in the media and how audiences respond to them.

The expertise of these participating parents added to our implementation of this unit, supporting our teachers and students in reaching a higher level of understanding of the world around them.

As these third-graders leap into the fourth grade, my hope is that they now have a better and wider understanding of both how they can express themselves and how they can understand what is being presented to them through the media.

Lower School News in Brief

By Frieda Khayat, Lower School Principal

Annual White Gifts Program and the Christmas Concert

- December was a very exciting month at the Lower School. Before starting winter break, we distributed \$11,100 in donations to 141 needy families in Ramallah and El-Bireh. As every year, the White Gifts program continues to serve our community and reflect the Quaker value of empathy. In a joint effort, our students, parents, and faculty succeeded, again, in collecting donations and organizing weekly bake sales.

At our Christmas concert, all of our 700 students, grades pre-k through fifth, performed wonderful Western and Eastern Christmas carols to a large audience of enthusiastic parents. This year, some students also played musical instruments alongside their peers, while a few grades performed choreographed dances.

Our teaching staff spent weeks training all classes and preparing individual costumes for our students, while decorations were mostly hand-made by students and teachers from recycled materials.

Activities leading students into our library

- The library committee kept busy this semester, organizing Movie Nights for first-graders in December, and sixth-graders in May, aimed at raising money for library activities.
- As part of our PYP (IB Primary Years Program), a number of well-known Palestinian story-tellers were invited to introduce our students to the beautiful art of oral storytelling. To strengthen parent involvement, we were glad to have parents and grandparents join this activity as well!

IT Accomplishments

- We finally made the transition to our new student portal, *Edu-nation*, in the aim to develop better communications between teachers and parents regarding all school issues: announcements, home assignments, study materials, activities, grades, attendance, conduct, and many other issues.

continued on page 3

Announcing the Establishment of the Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan Scholarship Fund

By Besan Omary-Jaawan, Development and Communications Associate



We are pleased to announce the establishment of the **Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan Endowed Scholarship** thanks to the support of our longtime friend and generous supporter, **Mr. Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan**, in loving memory of his wife and former RFS student Mrs. Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan (1934–2015).

A keen supporter of the most vulnerable and a strong believer in the transformative power of education, **Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan** (pictured above) often expressed her affinity and support to RFS, which she attended in her early years.

The **Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan Scholarship** will safeguard the opportunity for exceptional students from economically disadvantaged Palestinian families to join our community. This endeavor clearly helps us in answering our mission of providing life-transforming equal opportunities to disadvantaged students, and in increasing diversity within our student body. The fund will also support preparing students for enrollment in our academically rigorous bilingual program. One year prior

to enrollment, students will be supported through private English-language tutoring. In addition, at least two of the fund's recipients in any given year will be students with identified special needs who will enroll in our renowned Learning Support Program. It is expected that the scholarship fund will support around ten students at a time and will continue as long as the school remains in existence.

The endowment fund, totaling one million U.S. dollars, will be invested and the distributions will support disadvantaged Palestinian students recruited mainly from public and UNRWA schools. Our first student recipients will enroll in the academic year 2018–2019.

Additionally, in honor of both Mrs Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan's and Mr. Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan's long-standing support of RFS and their contribution to the development of culture and education in Palestine, the RFS Board of Trustees made a decision to name the Science and Arts Building on the Upper School Campus **The Leila and Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan Science and Arts Building**.

Lower School News in Brief (continued from page 2)

Professional Development

- Some weekly and monthly workshops were carried out for all our teaching staff on-campus. In February, we held a full-day workshop on how to "Teach like a Champion"—a follow up to last year's workshop on classroom management and methods that support the educational process. Twenty-one teachers and administrators attended a two-day workshop on "Making PYP Happen in the Classroom" that was instructed by an IBO-certified trainer. In December, myself and the Head of Kindergarten traveled to Amman, Jordan, to attend a three-day teacher skills conference.

Educational Resources

- We purchased a number of new educational resources this year aimed at ensuring differentiation in learning and enhancing inquiry-based learning.

Other Activities

- In February, the PTA organized a joint parent-student activity, "Family e-Bingo"—and I am proud to say it was the first of its kind in Palestine!



Parents engaging in school activities with their kids at the Lower School.

“I Am a Proud Quaker School Student”

By Nadine Bahour, RFS Tenth-Grader

I have been and always will be a proud Quaker school student, as it is quite an honor to attend the only Quaker school in Palestine. We, as students, sometimes forget the meaning and impact of this opportunity.

Constant reminders of how blessed we are surround us every day. Although we may not discuss it often or publicly speak about it, we were raised with Quaker values since entering RFS’ pre-kindergarten at the Lower School. These values have become an innate part of who I am, and not just merely an idea I was taught.

At the core of Quaker values lie simplicity, equality, discipline, service, and creativity. Some readers may wonder how this is different from another schooling system. The simplest and most meaningful explanation I have is that it takes education beyond the classroom.

Most schools will teach you languages, social studies, sciences, mathematics, and perhaps discipline. A Quaker school, like Ramallah Friends School, teaches you these fundamental subjects inside the classroom, but it does not stop there. The extra step of going above and beyond to understand what it means to be an active and effective individual in society is what makes an education at a Quaker school so special.

The global connection that Quaker schools are part of is also fascinating, opening the door to many valuable experiences and opportunities. This semester, we had the honor of meeting yet another group of seniors from Westtown School,



Westtown Friends School students sit in on a Lower School class.

who flew all the way from Pennsylvania, USA, to visit our country and learn more about our daily lives under military occupation. What brought us all together? Our Quaker connection.

Exchanging ideas and cultures is one of the many Quaker school advantages that we have the privilege of enjoying. Such simple experiences have a direct and indirect impact on how we grow as students and individuals—which is why I am a proud Quaker student, and why you should be as well!

Upper School News in Brief

By Riyam Kafri, Upper School Principal

MYP Evaluation Report

- I am proud to announce that the Upper School received a positive report from the International Baccalaureate Organization in The Hague, regarding the Middle Years Program (MYP) evaluation that is administered every five years. IB World schools undergo this evaluation process periodically to ensure that all standards and practices are implemented.

PalMUN 2017 Conference

- In January, we hosted the seventh annual Palestinian Model United Nations Conference under the theme “Unification Through Negotiation.” The conference saw six hundred students from fifteen Palestinian schools visit our campus and engage in diplomatic discourse for three days. Unfortunately, our Gazan participants were not allowed entry into the West Bank by the Israeli army.

Athletic Activities

- In March, we hosted a national “Land Day” soccer tournament that included the participation of more than twenty schools on a sunny day that was full of cheering! Our female and male basketball teams participated in tournaments in Jordan, and managed to come home with some medals.

Drama Club

- In April, the Drama Club performed this year’s play to an audience of more than 700 people. Our students truly outdid themselves, showing that they are risk-takers and critical thinkers. The Upper School’s Modern Dance Troupe also participated in the performance, as did our junior actors from sixth and seventh grades who went onstage—anxiously—for the first time.

continued on page 5

“Tell Me and I Forget”

By Jaffal Zahran, Upper School science teacher

When I think of the Da Vinci studio in RFS’ new Middle School building, the first thing that comes to my mind is that it is a place where students lead their own learning process through inquiry.

Over the past two hundred years, the world has witnessed exponential development in various fields to meet the needs of human beings. Teaching and learning, however, seem to have undergone the least of that change.

The Da Vinci Studio comes as a form of educational reform: a space designed for the use of the arts and sciences merged together. As a teacher, the Da Vinci studio turned my world upside down. It gave me and my students the opportunity to be creative inquirers, thinkers, and risk takers. My students finally got the opportunity to seek knowledge for themselves, and my role was transformed from *teacher* to *facilitator*.

As facilitator, my goal was to offer a more creative, inquiry-based approach to subjects that have always been offered traditionally. For me, the Da Vinci studio allows me to implement the highest ideals of the IB Middle Years Program by focusing on interdisciplinary hands-on and project-based approaches to learning.

We felt great triumph when discussing how different metals vary in their reactivity. Instead of presenting these reactivity series for students to memorize, they were required to investigate reactivity by performing different reactions on unknown metals and noting the variation in each metal type’s reactivity. Students then discussed their observations with each other as groups, and were finally able to deduce their own reactivity series.

The Da Vinci studio gave learning and teaching a new meaning. The student becomes a scientist and an artist. It is a place where ingenuity, creativity, and innovation are born.



*“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”*

—Benjamin Franklin

Upper School News in Brief (continued from page 4)

The drama, titled “I Will Betray My Country,” was adapted from a famous Arab book that, in the 1980s, many Arab regimes would not allow to be published on account of its discussion of various social and political issues. Our production was the nourishing result of a group effort that included input from our art, media, and drama teachers, among others.

Middle Years Program Personal Project Exhibition

- Our second annual Personal Project Exhibition was full of student-designed projects presenting various interesting topics, such as contemporary home decor, poetry, folkloric story writing, recycling, child labor, and others.

Caring for the Environment

- As spring appeared, students started revisiting our on-campus organic garden, planting various vegetables, caring for them, and finally, picking their own organic crops. Recycling worn-out house appliances, school computers—and even old uniforms—were also part of our Environmental program this year. With the help of their IT teachers, students redesigned old computer hardware into new usable house artifacts.



Upper School students helping clean the city during a cleaning day event held with Ramallah Municipality and other schools.

Donor Thanks

We would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to Ramallah Friends School:

Abigail Jeavons
 Alexandra Shea and Aaron Colin
 Amesbury Friends Meeting
 Anita Louisa Beck Hatanaka
 Ann Dodd-Collins
 Ann Hardt
 Anne and Bedford McIntosh
 Anne W. Wells and Robert L. Wells
 Annette Herskovits & Peter Solomon
 Anonymous
 Anthony Manousos and Jill Shook
 Ashraf and Fahima Khalaf
 Association of Writers
 Barton M. Burstein and Leslie G. White
 Bayan Alihassan
 Ben and Jody Richmond
 Bertha May Nicholson
 Besan Omary
 Bismarck Friends Meeting
 Brad and Susan Hathaway
 Bradley Bellows
 Brownsville Christian Church
 Bruce and Ruth Hawkins
 Burlington Monthly Meeting
 Carl and Joyanne A. Elkinton-Walker
 Caroline Lanker
 Catherine Shields & Carl Stromsness
 Charles and Cathy Miles Grant
 Charles and Rita Harb
 Chip Poston
 Christine Holden
 Christopher & Maia Hallward
 Christopher and Jean McCandless
 Cleveland Rea
 Conservative Friends
 Courtney B Cazden
 Dan and Betsy Crofts
 Dave and Lynn Chakoian
 David and Anne Kendall
 David and Rochelle Bridges
 David Grimland and Kathleen Ralph
 DK Mertz
 Donald and Marion Lathrop
 Donald and Nancy Nagler
 Dover Friends
 Dr Jon and Ruthi Tippin
 Eddy Crouch
 Eden and James Grace
 Eleanor Ferris Beach & Robert Haak
 Elizabeth and Richard Morse
 Elizabeth Gilmore
 Elizabeth Solbert-Sheldon
 Eric W Kristensen
 Farouk Shami
 Ferris Anthony
 Fran Brokaw
 Frank and Raquel Wood
 Fred and Carolyn Bogott
 Fred and Nancy Edinger
 G Robert Elmendorf
 Gail Thompson and Seth Frazier
 Gene Hillman
 George and Rebecca Way Bergus
 German Quakers (Quakerhilfe)
 Ghassan and Slawomira Salameh
 Grass Lake Medical Center

Greensboro First Friends
 Gwendolyn Gosney Erickson
 Hadara
 Hamid Balamane
 Haneen and Hanna Danfoura
 Hani Ghazi
 Hanover Friends Meeting
 Helen Swetland
 Honey Creek-New Providence Friends
 Hugh Hanlin and Rhonda Impink
 Hugh MacArthur and Rhea McKay
 Husam Abdel Al
 Ian Denny
 Imad Hanna & Sheela Herr-Hanna
 Indianapolis First Friends
 Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative
 Irish Quakers Faith in Action
 J Hogue E Rodley
 J Stuart Lemle
 Jawwal Company
 Jean Berggren
 Jean Wilson
 Jo Sandra and Wayne Howdeshell
 John and Kathy Shepherd
 John and Ruth Hancock
 John and Shannon Chamberlin
 John Drotos
 John H Lamb
 Jon Shafer
 Joseph and Mary Louise Bates
 Joy and Robert Hilden
 Joyce Ajlouny and Ziad Khalaf
 Joyce McKelvey Rawitscher
 Kenneth Sutton
 Ladah Foundation
 Laura Kurlle
 Lee Poleske
 Leonard and Mary Ann Cadwallader
 Lesley and John Higgins-Biddle
 Lewis and Anne Kendall
 Lincoln and Barbara Blake
 Lindsay Dearborn
 Little Rock Meeting
 Live Oak Friends Meeting
 Lois Jordan
 Lu and Kenn Harper
 MADA
 Malcolm and Nancy Bell
 Mami Nishimune and Russell Sirman
 Mamoru Hitomi
 Margaret Hawthorne
 Marguerite Brennan
 Marian Beane
 Marilyn Fant
 Marilyn J. Carlisle
 Mark P Dodson
 Martha E Mangelsdorf
 Mary and A John Chivers
 Mary Given
 Mary Jo Robertiello
 Mary Lou Peck
 Maurine King
 Maury River Friends Meeting
 Max and Jane Carter
 Meg Given and Ray Rischapter
 Melissa Meyer and Edward Edgerton
 Michael and Elizabeth Grunko

Michael Spath
 Miriam Joscelyn
 Morningside Monthly Meeting
 Munzer A and Ruth Afifi
 Nancy and Stephen Houston
 New Association of Friends
 Nicholas Abramson and Helaine Meisler
 North Carolina Yearly Meeting
 Norval and Ann Reece
 Old Chatham Monthly Meeting
 Otis McCrory Jernigan
 Oxford Friends Meeting
 Palestine for Development
 Paltel
 Paul Seaver
 Peggy Dyson-Cobb and Bill King
 Penelope Mitchell
 Peter Belmont and Mary Zulack
 Peter Bien
 Philip Mayer
 Pilgrims of Ibillin
 Pioneer Nablus
 Quaker International Education and Trust (QUIET)
 Rahway & Plainfield Friends Meeting
 Ralph and Coralie Bryant
 Rasha & AbdelWahab & Omar Khatib
 Ray and Martha Bostian
 Raymond M Lane and Laura A Jacobi
 Rhonda and George Kreitem
 Richard and Karen Herreid
 Richmond First Friends
 Richmond Friends Meeting
 Rick Boyce and Martha Viehmann
 Roanoke Friends Meeting
 Robert and Beverly Houghton
 Robert Drysdale & Patricia Higgins
 Robert Gowin and Laura Cisar
 Robert Praetorius
 Roger and Margit Cook
 Russ Litchfield
 Ruth Bourns
 Sabron and Robert Newton
 Salam Mir and Sidney Mir
 Samir and Eva Kaibni
 San Francisco Friends Meeting
 Sandy Rea
 Santa Barbara Friends Meeting
 Scott Henderson & Jennifer Perkins
 Southeastern Yearly Meeting
 Southwest Friends Financial Dev Corp
 Stephanie Koenig
 Stephen and Ingrid Miles
 Steven Pye
 Stratton C Jaquette
 Susan and Michael Murphy
 Suzanne Gastineau
 Takeo and Linda Nishioka
 Tallahassee Monthly Meeting
 Ted and Deborah First
 Teresa Harden Shaheen & Frank Shaheen
 Thomas and Ursula Roberts

Thomas Baskett
 Thomas MacNair
 Timothy and Mary Yeane
 Timothy J. McCosker and Phebe McCosker
 Tom Costello
 Ulrike Forinton
 United Church of Christ
 USFW First Friends of Whittier
 USFW International
 Valley Friends Meeting
 Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting
 Walid Shtayyeh
 Whittier First Friends
 Wilbur and Sandra Wright
 Wilderness Friends Meeting
 William Mitchell
 William Vaughan
 Wooster Friends Meeting

In honor of their grandchildren:
 Keith and Judy Kendall

In memory of Deborah Misty Gerner:
 Philip Schrodt

In memory of Esther Nelson:
 Christine Cradler and Lawrence Ferguson

In memory of Flora McKinney:
 Ruth and Mike Podolin

In memory of Joyce Rawitscher:
 June Salamy and Henry Krishch
 Jacqueline Janes
 Ali and Fatma Antar
 Williams Living Trust
 Doris Lake
 Octavia and Stephen Taylor
 Lou Ann Villani and Stanley Heller

In memory of Khalil Mahshi:
 Jim Harb

In memory of Marion Jones Kelsey:
 Margaret and Gilmer Schmidt

In memory of Suad & Farhat Ziadeh:
 George and Rhonda Salem
 Bilal and Deena Ziadeh Ayyub
 Salem A Salem
 Susan Ziadeh
 Shireen and Albert Abed
 Reema Ziadeh
 Ramsey and Sally Salem
 Edward B Salem
 Ronald and Nancy Salem

In memory of Wadad Cadora Anthony:
 Ferris Anthony

Donations received 1 November 2016–30 March 2017

Participate in the future of the Friends School, with your tax-deductible gifts!



- ☐ Yes, I would like to contribute to the Ramallah Friends School:
- ☐ Scholarships and Child sponsorship*
- ☐ General Award (any amount) \$ _____
- ☐ ESJ Award (min. \$2,800) \$ _____
- ☐ Preferences (age, gender, other): _____
- ☐ Where most needed \$ _____
- ☐ Enclosed is my total contribution of U.S.\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

U.S. \$ Gifts: Tax-deductible gifts should be made payable to Friends United Meeting and sent to: **Global Ministries, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374-1926, or online at www.fum.org.**

Sterling (£) Gifts: should be made payable to the Quaker International Educational Trust (QulET), noting "for Ramallah" on the back and saying if Gift Aid may be claimed, and sent to: QulET, 5 Dene Terrace West, Wylam, Northumberland, NE41 8AZ or Averil Armstrong at QulET, Tel: 01295 720019; e-mail: averilarmstrong@hotmail.com.

*Donate either to the General Award Fund (partial, any amount) or ESJ Award Fund (full). Tuition fees for 2016-17 range from U.S. \$2,600 to \$4,020.

For further information and inquiries, feel free to contact our office at development@rfs.edu.ps or Tel: +972-2-295-2286, www.rfs.edu.ps.

Support RFS through Online Giving!

It is preferred that donations are received online. Donations made through our secure site are U.S. tax-deductible and go through FUM; please visit our web page www.rfs.edu.ps and click "Donate." You will also find additional information about other donation options including Planned Giving. As always, we will never share your information with a third party.

Friends United Meeting offers its warmest congratulations to Joyce Ajlouny on her appointment as the next General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Joyce has served as the Director of Ramallah Friends School since 2004, and in that capacity has shepherded the school through a period of exceptional growth. She and FUM had been anticipating that she would move into a role of Advancement and Alumni Relations at some point during 2017, once a new Head of School for RFS had been identified. However, the opportunity to serve through AFSC arose as a clear call for Joyce, and FUM is graciously releasing her for that new ministry. Joyce will remain committed to the work of Ramallah Friends School—as an alumnus, as a parent of alumnae, and as a member of the Ramallah Friends Meeting.

FUM invites all Friends to join in celebrating Joyce's new direction and praying for her ministry to thrive at AFSC. We also invite you to pray for FUM as we search for a new Head of School to take over from Joyce, and as we adjust our plans for the Advancement and Alumni Relations work.





Ramallah Friends School
c/o Friends United Meeting
101 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond IN 47374-1926

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Richmond IN
Permit No. 747



Above: Upper School students perform the play, "I Will Betray My Country."

Left: The Christmas celebrations at the Lower School.

Right: Upper School art class.



Friends School Newsletter

