

# THE OLIVE PRESS

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Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

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Designed by: Mohamed A. Daoud



## RFS Organizational Structure

As one entity both RFS campuses (Lower and Upper Schools) function within one organizational structure led by the Head of School, Adrian Moody, who chairs the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which comprises of Lower and Upper School Principals, Frieda Khayat and Riyam Kafri respectively, and senior staff. SLT meets regularly and attends to the operational needs of the whole school. The day to day educational functions on each campus are directed by the school principals within the framework of RFS.

The Board of Trustees of RFS provides regular oversight of the School and all the activities and projects associated with it in partnership with the Friends United Meeting (FUM) based in Indiana USA. FUM appoints the Head of School and is ultimately responsible for RFS. As a Quaker school decisions are made by consensus through an inclusive policy which embraces all members of the school community of parents, students, staff and even alumni. Based in Grant House on the Upper School Campus, Head of School Offices operate as several departments whose work is spread over both campuses; *Facilities and Projects Management Department* (Construction Projects Management, Security, Maintenance, Gardening, and Cleaning) *Finance and Human Resources Department* (Finance, Accounting, Human Resources), *Communications Department* (Communications, Alumni Relations, Developmental projects), *IT Department* (IT Support and Maintenance).\*

Besan Jaawan '01  
Development & Communications Manager

## One School Two Campuses

Letter from Head of School

RFS is one school in two locations. What does this mean? While we operate as two campuses we are a single school with a singular board and singular mission. Traditionally the Friends Girls School and the Friends Boys School operated as separate identities. However in 1990, the campus of the Girls School became a co-educational Elementary School and Kindergarten and the campus of the Boys School became a co-educational High School. Together we are Ramallah Friends School. We no longer officially identify as FBS and FGS and our communications and documentation reflect this now. You will notice that communications from either campus all identify us as Ramallah Friends School and they identify themselves as the lower school, or the middle and upper school. We are RFS with an Upper School Campus and a Lower School Campus. This is not simply a matter of terminology because being one school with two campuses means that principles and practices are united across each of the campuses. So issues such as student welfare, professional development, communication, staffing are dealt with on a

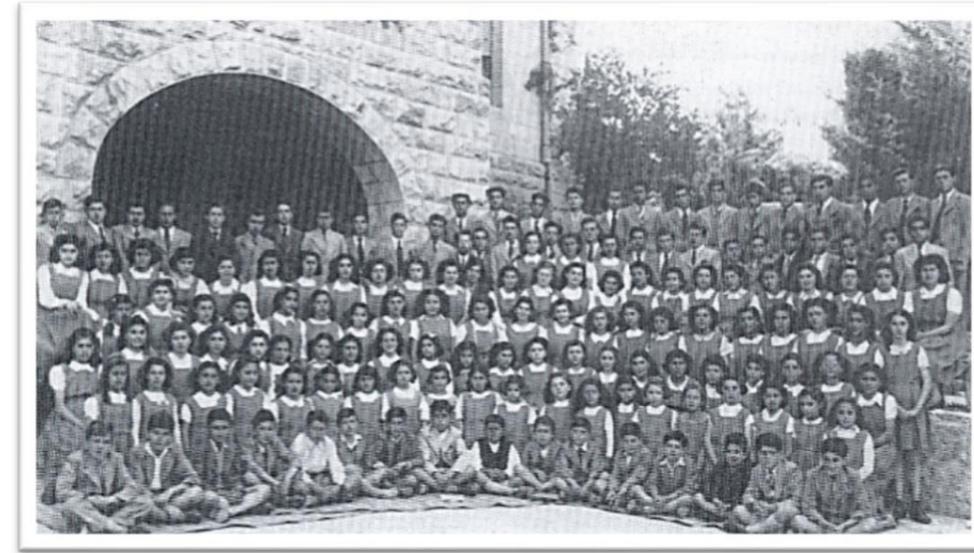
As part of the one school policy I would like to also let you know that I will be available on the Lower School Campus every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon. The room which the Finance Officer has been sharing with the IT Manager will now be available for me. The IT Manager will continue to use that room each morning but in the afternoon it is going to be a Conversation Room. So any parent or member of staff is welcome to come and see me. To ensure that I am available please make an appointment with my Administrative Assistant, Jumana Thalji, at [jumanathalji@rfs.edu.ps](mailto:jumanathalji@rfs.edu.ps). Otherwise you are welcome to pop by if I am available. I look forward to getting to know the Lower School community much more.\*

Adrian Moody  
Adrian Moody - Head of School

whole school basis. This is also true for administrative functions of the school. For instance, as of the beginning of March we have one Finance Office which is located in the Head of School Offices connected to Grant House on the Upper Campus. So any payments that parents need to make will be made at that one office and not at the upper and lower school offices. Being one school also affects the school in practical ways. Each campus next year will run on the same calendar so that holidays will be the same as will teacher only days for professional development. This calendar will be printed and made available to students and parents. You will also notice that we have implemented new security measures to create a safer environment for our students. The procedures are identical for each campus. Working as one school means that we will work more effectively and students will be able to transition between the campuses in a smooth manner. One other important feature of being one school will be the implementation of the school wide strategic plan. The strategic plan is one which will develop RFS as one entity into the future.

## RFS' Journey towards Coeducation

By Mohammed Salim – CAS Coordinator & Math Teacher



All RFS students in 1941 - photo was taken at the Upper Campus

For many years in Palestine education was confined to males while girls' education was limited to a few private schools which were available only in some Palestinian towns. At RFS we owe it to Ramallah native Mariam Karam, who later became a teacher at the Friends Girls School (now the Lower School), when she approached American Quaker Mrs. Sybil Jones while she was visiting Ramallah and asked her to open a school for girls, and the Jones' then promised her that they would. In 1869, Mariam's wish was granted when RFS was first founded under the name of "Girls Training Home" and in 1889 it became the Friends Girls School and is now known as RFS Lower School.

Co-education was never absent at RFS since its establishment in 1889. Students at the Kindergarten level and in early primary grades used to study side by side as boys and girls. And they would later be separated when reaching the Third Grade with the girls continuing in the girls' school and the boys moving to another school which was situated at the time in different Ramallah family residences including the homes of Harb,

Shahla, and Ajlouny families, until the Friends Boys School was built (now known as the Upper School) in 1901.

As for coeducation at RFS in the modern era, it goes back to the academic year of 1988/1989 after the First Intifada had broken out in 1987 and a wave of migration led a lot of students and their families to immigrate to the USA and other countries. This included high numbers of the school's English speaking students and caused a steep decline in overall student numbers in both schools. The number of students fell from 1100 to about 700 female and male students, while the number of teachers and staff stayed the same and that caused a large financial deficit.

Coeducation is a belief all Friends Schools around the world have shared historically. And the financial deficit RFS faced during the First Intifada accelerated the integration of the school's two campuses to begin offering coeducation for grades 9<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup>. Coeducation was then gradually expanded to include all grade levels on the school's Lower and Upper campuses.\*



## Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra – Alumni Relations

For this month, the OP interviewed RFS IB Physics teacher Ustaz Anan Bargouthi. Anan graduated from RFS in 1991, and he was one of the few who witnessed the school's great transition to become the co-educational institution it is today. *"The period between 1987 and 1991 was a hard time for the school as the First Intifada erupted and our nation went into political and social instability, and so RFS had to adjust and make changes."*

Anan told OP that during the First Intifada, the RFS transition came as a result of the hard situation the school and the country were going through. Anan said that even during the Intifada, RFS always felt safe for students. In addition, he emphasized the role the school played on students' personalities at the time, where he believes having an active Student Council and all the activities helped shape his personality. Talking about his school days Anan talked about how proud he is of the school, as a student, a teacher and a parent of three daughters studying now at RFS.

*"By talking to my daughters I keep acknowledging the difference the school is having on them, the quality of education and amount of information they have exceeds any of their other peers outside RFS."* When asked about coming back to work in the school, he answered that it's because of the feeling of belonging the school created in him, where a great part of school work is focused on structuring students' personalities and emphasizing the importance of the moral values. *"I can't forget Ethics classes with Jean Zaru, where she taught us what she used to call the Golden Rule; Treat people the way you want them to treat you, and until today I take it in mind."*

Ustaz Anan ended our interview with a piece of advice to future RFS alumni: *"It's rare that any RFS alumnus fails, so for the future you need the dedication and clear mission the school planted in you."\**

**RFS Head of School, Adrian Moody, will be available in the Head of School Conversation Room @ Lower School for casual conversation every Wednesday and Saturday at 12 pm.**

**All parents and teachers are welcome!**

**You are welcome to make an appointment or walk in @ Head of School Conversation Room in the Lower School's Administration Building (right in front of the Lower School Principal's office).**

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL  
LOWER SCHOOL

Conversation with Head of School Room



