

THE OLIVE PRESS

ISSUE 07 YEAR 2017/2018

Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Environmental Stewardship 01

The School is Going Green 02

RFS' Environmental Clubs 03

Upcoming Dates and Events 04



Designed by: Mohamed A. Daoud



Environmental Stewardship @ RFS

Letter from Head of School

The theme for this issue of the Olive Press is environmental stewardship. This is most appropriate as stewardship is one of the Quaker testimonies. What is stewardship? It is the care for the Earth and its inhabitants. We believe that God has given us all gifts and it is our responsibility to use these gifts wisely. For Friends these gifts include not only our talents but also our possessions and our natural environment. These gifts are not ours alone and good stewardship means taking care of what has been given, not just for ourselves, but for the people around us and for future generations as well. At RFS we are attentive to conserving energy, recycling, and reducing waste. We are installing photovoltaic cells to not only reduce our energy costs but because we care for the environment. We have an environmental club on the lower campus and are about to launch an organic garden program on the upper campus involving our students. We conserve our precious water. Concern for the ecosystem also leads us to strive to reduce our personal consumption.



In our context here and now we think of the gift that is Ramallah Friends School. As we approach the 150th jubilee of our school which is based on Quaker values we are reminded of the importance of our mission and our stewardship. How we operate, how we live as a community, how we make decisions and how we communicate must be based on those values and testimonies which saw the creation of RFS in 1869. So every action we take, every decision we make, every policy we develop and every procedure we implement must embody the values of Friends and ensure that Quaker based education is available for future generations of Palestinian children.*

Adrian Moody
Adrian Moody - Head of School

The School is Going GREEN

By Farhat Yousef – Project and Facility Manager

The school is gradually going green and more sustainable. During 2018, photovoltaic cells (PVC) will be installed at both campuses, an Outdoor Learning Center (OLC) will be created at Upper campus, the school's Kaykab and organic gardens that are planted and nurtured by students and watered from several water cisterns that collect an annual 2,500 m³ of rain water, are all steps that will carve the way towards a more Environmental/Green School. Some of these activities will also make RFS more sustainable as they will reduce the overall running cost at school.

In a country like Palestine, using sun power to generate electricity through PVC has become a very feasible source of renewable energy because of a major drop in installation cost, moderate sunny climate and high cost of electrical company electricity. It is expected that this system will tremendously reduce future operating costs for lighting and heating. PV systems need minimum maintenance requirements, have almost zero running cost, produce zero emissions, and have an expected lifetime of over 25 years. The payback period for this project is around 4.5 years with an expected 20 years of free electrical power. The panels will be installed over part of the existing building rooftops.

The large trees on campus already attract birds to the grounds with Palestine being an important rest stop for migrating birds. The addition of an Outdoor Learning Center (OLC) on campus creates a natural bird habitat area in the center of a very dense urban area for migrating birds to rest, feed and drink. It will also be a home for many indigenous and foreign plants to flourish and grow.



New outside-learning areas to be completed at Upper Campus.

The OLC will include features such as a manmade pool, a bird blind, a vertical garden, a sundial, sound and whisper tubes, a weather station and a wind station. Many indigenous trees forming a little forest is also planned in OLC area.

What is of utmost importance is the relationship between space, environment and education. Features such as PVC, OLC and the organic garden are very beneficial to students since they provide additional stimulus for the inquiry based interdisciplinary learning within the environment. It creates the grounds for RFS students to watch, research, document, and enjoy their natural habitats. Students will become naturally connected, learning from and about their natural world. This will open more possibilities for an experimental environmental education.*

Ramallah Friends School's Al-Kaykab Educational Garden

Ramallah Friends School's Al-Kaykab Educational Garden was established in 2003 across the street from the Upper School campus and is now the home to about 150 species of plants, including local wild plants as well as other plants indigenous to Palestine. The name comes from the Kaykab tree (photo to the right) a kind of strawberry plant (the fruits aren't edible) that



used to be common but became rare because of over exploitation. The park also boasts an eco-space built from local compressed soil with elements that increase the efficiency of natural heating and cooling. Al-Kaykab is open to the public, and sees many visitors and school trips every season.*

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 and staff 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).



Conversation with Head of School Room



Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra – Alumni Relations

As March is the month of focusing on Women, the Olive Press interviewed one of the few professional athletes in Palestine and the only female CrossFit Trainer in the country, *Amani Manasra*, alumnae Class of 2002. Amani attended RFS Upper School when she relocated in Palestine.

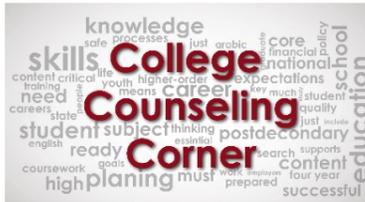
"At the time I was transferred to the school, it was difficult for me, where at the age of 16 my life took a different turn, and I had a new adjustment, at first I fought, gave up and tried to get my revenge by failing all classes in the first semester. But, with time and with the school's atmosphere full of understanding and acceptance, that phase passed very quickly."



Amani says that her years at RFS helped her connect with the community at a time when she felt that society wasn't accepting her. She believes that the hours RFS students spend volunteering and serving the community inside the campus as well as outside in the neighboring towns, creates a sense of belonging and a feeling of responsibility towards the community, which students gain and carry with them throughout their lives.

Amani talked to the *OP* about her journey in CrossFit, which she turned to 4 years ago after suffering a knee injury. In the process she turned her life around into a completely healthy life style. Amani is now a great example of young highly driven Palestinian women, as a Second Level CrossFit Trainer. She decided to take the different path and became a role model for other young women by practicing and teaching others that the perfect body is a reflection of a healthy soul. CrossFit is a fitness regimen developed by Greg Glassman over several decades. It is constantly varied functional movements performed at high intensity. All CrossFit workouts are based on functional movements, and these movements reflect the best aspects of gymnastics, weightlifting, running, rowing and more. Amani ended the interview with *OP* with a piece of advice to RFS future Alumni, especially, females:

*"Happiness comes from the inside, so the person should feel it, to be pleased you need to be healthy from inside and from the outside, being strong makes you healthy. Don't follow trends, follow what makes you mentally and physically strong."**



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming Application Dates:

* April Ongoing: Most regular deadline decisions released in the US/UK and some from Canada and Europe.

* May-June: UK students to decide a "firm" and "safe" choice of admitted school before IB Results are released.

* June-July Ongoing: Applications for Middle East universities (including in Turkey and for Birzeit) open.

College Counseling General:

* Upcoming Events:

- MARCH 29th, 4-6pm: *RFS Alumni College Representative Fair!* Stop by when you are at your parent conferences! Snacks provided.

- APRIL 5th-25th: Chris out of the office for US college visits. Email him inquiries at cakel@rfs.edu.ps

- APRIL 30th: Harvard, Stanford, and Pomona college representatives will be visiting our school and presenting to all students!

- 11th Grade Spring CC Meetings: Find [your students' first counseling meeting here](#). Email cakel@rfs.edu.ps for any questions.

- 2018-19 CC Handbook: This year's [College Counseling Handbook](#) has everything you need to know to apply to college and use the CC Office!*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Registration, tuition and all payments for both Lower and Upper school students (including KG) will take place at the Head of School Offices- Accounting Office on the Upper Campus (El-Bireh) as of March 1st.

*The new Accounting Office is situated on the 1st floor of Grant House @ Upper Campus.

[Follow this link for the Upper campus map on how to reach the new Accounting Office.](#)

Environmental Awareness – as a Community

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

Based on Quaker principles urging on simplicity and encouraging the harnessing of natural resources upon need, and preserving all other resources given to us by nature, RFS is working as a whole community towards protecting the environment. By involving all of our community's stakeholders, including students, parents, administrators, staff and teachers, Environmental Stewardship has become a norm for us so that everyone can enjoy their blessings. In line with the International Baccalaureate Programs' standards, and in cooperation with the local community as well, our aim is to keep our school environment clean and green, taking into account other global environmental concerns, and engaging in the process of attempting to find a solution for them.

RFS' Environmental Awareness Program started years ago inside our KG classrooms using the motto "Reduce-Reuse-Recycle" – and it is now used as a model to incorporate various environmental aspects in science, math and reading lessons. Our efforts were rewarded when we received Ramallah Municipality's Green School Award twice, and we

have recently received the newly established Sustainable School award for our continued efforts towards preserving the environment as a healthy green school.

Our campus is beautiful with its historic buildings and green grounds. Our students participate in planting and cleaning the campus on a daily basis. They are keen on eating healthy food as well. Moreover, RFS' environmental clubs are raising awareness of both students and their parents on health issues, to ensure a better and healthier lifestyle for all. Together with their teachers and parents, our students are creating healthy lifestyles and teaching others to do the same as well.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to each and every student, staff member, teacher, and parent who have helped us reach where we are today, and to Ramallah Municipality which is working hard to spread environmental awareness amongst our children and their families, so that the future generation can become the guardians of our homeland and its natural habitat.*

Lower School's Environmental Club

Rula Hayek – Teacher & LS Environment Club Coordinator

The Lower School's Environmental Club encourages students to voluntarily serve their surrounding environment. Our students spread awareness on many environmental issues through implementing different activities including preserving green spaces, reducing consumption of water, reuse of solid waste, and others. Our club plays an important role in nurturing positive feelings towards the environment, as students learn about their role in preserving it. We hope to continue our work year after year, reflecting the Lower School Environmental Club's vision below:

We keep our school green and clean in all times, We aim at creating a generation of values, principles and self-confidence. A generation that will follow our steps in maintaining our environment clean and pollution-free, choosing what's best for them & for their environment during all life stages.

With the help and support of our students' parents in all activities, we share, with our community, providing support and assistance.

*We wish that our message could reach our community, and all other communities. Our cooperation, and our team work is the cause of our success throughout the years, and our motto will always be to "maintain a clean and green school" at all times. We thank you for your continuous support and encouragement to change the behaviors of students. We thank you for standing by our side all the time, months, days and hours ...**



Environmental Features @ Upper Campus

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

The Upper School is making its way back to forming an environmental club and holding activities raising environmental awareness. In the past two years, grades 6 and 7 have worked in both Al Kaykab and the organic garden in various activities from weeding to harvesting olives. Although this has occurred intermittently, this is part of the school's build up towards a more cohesive Action and Service program as well as an afterschool program that is directly connected to what happens in the classroom.

This year several students worked on recycling ideas and mechanisms for their personal project product. Students in MYP year 5 (Grade 10) engage with a project that is of their own choosing. The subject matter is of the student's choosing and needs to be of interest to them.



Stewardship is one of the Quaker ethos. It can take different shapes and forms; environmental stewardship is one of them. And we will continue to build our programs until we reach our full capacity.*

Upper School Students Introduce the Environmental Club

By Noor Kamal – 7th Grade Student

In order to live and survive we need to live in a healthy environment, and that is why we must protect the environment. We need to prevent it from pollution, which has a harmful effect on



all living things. Pollution causes many problems and now it is time for a solution. At RFS we care a lot about the environment, we want all students to be aware and educated on the issue of pollution. That is why we decided to start the Upper School's Environmental Club with our Geography teacher, Miss Miraj, to grow plants and work on many different types of recycling projects. We have participated in different recycling contests around the Ramallah area and have won based on our ideas and teamwork. Our Environmental Club isn't only for students,

teachers participate as well. Our teachers have taught us about pollution and its outcome on nature. We also learned about ways to prevent or save the environment from pollution.

Every year students have to create a recycling project to make sure that we are helping our environment and we discover new ways to reuse items we usually throw away. One of our biggest projects was when we made different types of furniture out of old tires. For example, we made a chair and a table by reusing old tires. We also made a plastic greenhouse made out of plastic bottles.

It is important that we take care of our world and prevent pollution because it destroys our living environment. As the new generation, we want to build our community and save our environment. The best way to achieve this goal was to start an Environmental Club, because little changes often make the biggest differences in our environment.*

Upcoming Dates and Events

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

April 5th – 12th
Easter Holiday

April 14th
Isra and Mi'raj Holiday – tentative

April 19th
US – Professional Development (half day for students)

April 20th
US – Open Day

April 21st
US – No school

April 24th – May 24th
Registration of new students for the academic year 2018/2019.

April 27th
LS – Open Day
US – Start of IB Official Examinations

April 28th
LS – No school

May 1st
Labor Day Holiday – no school

May 17th
Ascension Day Holiday – no school

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

02.295.22.86 tel

02.295.83.20 fax

www.rfs.edu.ps

[Subscribe to the Olive Press](#)

Editor in Chief:
Besan Jaawan

Translation by Mai Ayoub and
Lama Murra.

Design, photos and graphics by
Besan Jaawan, Lama Murra,
Mohamed A. Dawud.



SUBSCRIBE NOW

Now you can subscribe
to the Olive Press –
[click here!](#)

April 2018

Ramallah Friends School Monthly Calendar

[RFS Monthly Calendar – Stay updated through our website](#)
www.rfs.edu.ps