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Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

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Our Quaker Testimonies

Simplicity
Friends believe that the most important things in life aren't things.

Peace
Friends believe that there is always a path that brings peace, justice, dignity and respect.

Integrity
Friends believe that our words and actions must reflect our truest selves.

Community
Friends believe that we need each other, since each and every one of us is precious to our community.

Equality
Friends believe that every person is equally beloved by God, no matter what.

Stewardship
Friends believe that all God's gifts are entrusted to us for the sake of future generations.

The Quaker Testimony of Equality

Letter from Head of School

Ramallah Friends School began in 1869 as a school for girls. Its mission was to provide education for girls at a time when there were few opportunities for women. Now we are a co-educational school but our belief in equal opportunity continues to be a central part of our mission.

At RFS we believe that every person is equally beloved by God. This testimony was reflected in the early practice of Quakers who believed in promoting equality of persons and demonstrated by their assigning equal spiritual authority to women, refusing to use forms of address that recognized social distinctions, and supporting religious freedom.

This same sense of equality is reflected in our daily school life. RFS started the first and continues to operate the only Inclusive Education program in Palestine. Our aim is to care for every child's specific needs. These include educational, physical, behavioral, emotional and social needs. In 1995 the Learning Support Program was introduced as an expression of the importance of equality of opportunity in education. Over the years and in the midst of all the challenges it has developed to become a pioneer model in inclusive education in Palestine.

The Learning Support program at RFS was implemented adopting an inclusive philosophy.

Inclusion is a value that supports the rights of children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively and naturally with others. We believe in equality for every child. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn and inclusion teaches everyone to act and treat each other recognizing that every person is equally beloved by God, no matter what.

Our Learning Support program speaks to our integrity. We provide education for all and this teaches our students to respect each other and to show honesty within each other and the school environment.

We feel that a successful inclusive school must, above all, provide a caring and trusting environment. Inclusive schools help the development of communities where all people are equally valued and have the same opportunities for participation. That is RFS.*



Adrian Moody - Head of School

What it is like to be a student in Ramallah Friends School

Bashar AbuQtaish – RFS Senior Student

Joining RFS as a student in 2013 was a purpose for me and not a wish. During the five years I spent at RFS, I was able to develop my personality, express myself freely, and advance my general skills. RFS offered me a variety of opportunities to become the person I am today.

The School gave me the space to explore my potentials by offering me, as a student, the opportunities to participate in several different onstage performances during the weekly Meetings of Learning (Chapel), and to join several sports teams, and much more.

Another aspect that makes this school unique is the nontraditional system of teaching which stimulates students' passion to gain knowledge, instead of the traditional grading system. That is why RFS is seen as one of the best schools in Palestine. And that is why I want to leave my own fingerprint in this school.

Family and friends always tell me that I communicate ideas effectively and that I can inspire others. With their encouragement, I decided to run as Vice President of the Student Council last year. I had noticed that many of the differences between the school administration and the student body over the years had been caused by poor communications.

After I won the student elections, I felt an incredible responsibility to deliver on the promises I had made. During the school year I worked hard with the other members of the Student Council to achieve our goals before the year ended. Looking back at what I had planned and promised during my electoral campaign, I feel that I delivered on most of my commitments which included improving communications between the school administration and student body.

Looking back at this amazing experience I feel that it helped me gain invaluable leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. It opened my eyes to the role and responsibility I have towards not only my immediate local community, but my people as well.*



Bashar carries the ballot box while students participate in 2018/2019 elections.

Afterschool Programs at RFS

Lama Murra – Communications Officer

RFS' Afterschool Programs have a long history on both campuses for offering extracurricular activities to all students. This year, the Upper Campus widened its programs to include a larger variety of Sports and Arts. And LKG and UKG students are now offered music and dance activities through the Daycare Program.

At RFS, we encourage students to take part in as many extracurricular programs and activities as they would like because we view it as an opportunity for them to develop new interests and learn new skills. This is part of the School's responsibility as a learning environment that provides students with choices that they can make voluntarily and independently.



Part of Afterschool programs, the Middle School soccer team won the Ramallah District Football Championship in October.

The school introduced self-defense classes, environmental club, science club, coding club and movie club this year. As an inclusive Quaker school, RFS believes that every person is equally beloved by God, no matter what, and all should get equal opportunities, and that is why - for the first time - the school introduced "The Art Workshop" as an afterschool art program for students enrolled within the Learning Support Program.

The School is also offering Yoga lessons for RFS teachers and staff on both campuses.

For more information and details about the After School Programs, kindly check RFSS website:

<http://www.rfs.edu.ps/page/1483966229>



Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra
Communications Officer

Meet RFS alumna, Class of 2014, singer, flute player, and composer Nai Bargouthi. Nai launched her professional singing career in 2011 at the age of 14 with her first album "Munyati"; a full program of classical Arabic songs of the Tarab genre. Concert tickets were sold out in Cairo, Kuwait, Lebanon and several Palestinian cities.

After graduating from RFS in 2014, Nai started pursuing her studies in Jazz voice at the Amsterdam Conservatory of Music.

When asked about being a student at RFS, Nai told the OP:

"Studying at RFS for six years was quite special to me. Not only was it strong academically, but it also allowed me to develop as a musician. Mahmoud Amra, the school's principal at the time, allowed me to use one of the empty classrooms to practice my music during free periods. This kind of trust pushed me to work harder and to realize that music is really what I want to do."

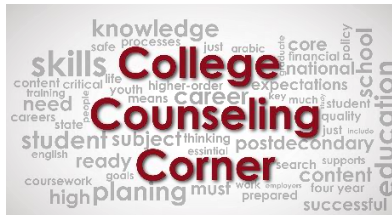
Nai says that afterschool programs and activities were important to her at RFS because they allowed her to experience the different areas of art, saying:

"They all had a great input in my overall musical outcome. They also helped me shape my personality and learn how to stand up against the racism and sexism that was and still is a huge part of being Palestinian, or better, a Palestinian woman."

For the future, Nai plans to combine Arabic music with Jazz to write her own music. And she hopes to travel all over the world to listen to different types of folkloric and modern music.

Nai ended our interview with a few words to future RFS alumni saying:

"Do not censor yourself! Do not settle for anything just because that's what's available. Don't be afraid of chasing after your dreams, go as high as you possibly can, and when you finally do, and go even higher!"*



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming Deadline Dates:

November 1-30: Round 1 of early action and decisions for US Colleges and Universities
November 10th: Nominations for Canadian Scholarships released from College Counseling Office
November 30-December 30: Some regular deadlines for American Schools (UC, AUB)
January 15: UCAS deadline for all traditional UK/Wales/Scotland schools Ongoing through
January/February: European deadlines (students can start applying to European and UK universities as soon as the application opens in October/November)

Upcoming Events/Announcements:

November 17: Earlham College Admissions Visit (3pm, Chapel)
November TBD: Fall 2018 RFS Alumni College Fair (TBD, Middle School Library)
November TBD: Virtual Presentations from Top US Schools (TBD, Chapel)
November TBD (multiple dates): Personal Statement Work Time

College Counseling General:

Personal Statements and Recommendations - 1 month before deadlines: All students applying anywhere in the world will likely need to ask their teachers for a recommendation, and many will develop a personal statement. However, students MUST request their recommendation 1 month in advance from their teachers and if they want feedback from Chris, they MUST submit the personal statement to his email at least 2 weeks before their deadline.

2018-19 CC Handbook: Last year's [College Counseling Handbook](#) has everything you need to know to apply to college.

With Values and Principles... Equality Transcends

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

To believe in equality you should do actions, as it's louder than words, this is the idea we have at the RFS and it's what we try to inherit to the next generations by the stories we share every day. At RFS we try to address and be part of all community's segments, by giving back to the community. RFS will remain deeply rooted in the joy and tenderness of all human beings, bearing the good and spreading it to successive generations as a supreme value, from which successive chains of feelings descend, to appeal to their students the spirit of equality, whose fruits are scattered with gold, and spread all over the world, despite the social and economic situation.

At RFS we believe that all people are equal, Jubran Khalil Jubran once said "The dreams of those who sleep on feather doesn't differ than those who sleep on the ground." To see equality on the ground, as it's one of the school's main pillars, we need to keep working on consolidating this value in the behavior and actions of the community in all of its elements. RFS will continue to add development to its programs as an advocate of equality and in support of everyone, which is represented in its vision and mission.*



Equality

Friends believe that every person is equally beloved by God, no matter what.



November Middle School Library Book

By Cheryl Engel – Middle School Librarian

The middle school library pick for November, keeping to the theme of equality is *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Children find a key to a secret garden that is located on the property where they live. They sneak in and begin to clean-up and restore the garden, and in this protected place learn about friendship, healing, beauty, and a place where there is room for different personalities to grow.*



The middle school library is declaring November a month of thanksgiving. Being thankful lifts the heart. **Design a bookmark about something for which you are thankful.** It can come from a book you've read or use your own words and design.

Include your name and submit to the library anytime in November.



The top 3 bookmark winners will receive an award. Our MS library is thankful for young people like you!

Lower School Receives Sustainability Award Again!

By Besan Jaawan – Development and Communications Manager

The Lower School received 1st place in Ramallah Municipality's Sustainability Award 2017/2018 for remaining a Green School that is Friendliest to the environment in the city of Ramallah.

The award ceremony took place in Tabari Hall and was attended by students, teachers, Ramallah Municipality's environmental program team as well as representatives from Bank of Palestine, the program's sponsor. This is the School's 2nd Sustainability Award after many Green Awards that were awarded to RFS during the last decade. The ceremony began with student performances and a few speeches, followed by lifting the curtain off the award.



A short animation video was produced as part of RFS' Environmental Stewardship by joint efforts between Lower School students and teachers, the School's Environmental Club, and RFS parent Basel Nasr. Sound was recorded in the Upper School's multimedia lab during the academic year of 2017/2018, to watch the video please [go to this link](#).

[Do not forget to subscribe to RFS' YouTube Channel!](#)

Upcoming Dates & Events

- Nov. 8th
US: Report Cards distribution
- Nov. 10th and 12th
US: Parent Teacher Conferences
- Nov. 15th
Declaration of Independence Day (no school)
- Nov. 20th (tentative)
Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawi Holiday (no school)
- Nov. 24th
Professional Development Workshop – half day for students.
- Dec. 1st
Community White Gifts Dinner
- Dec. 3rd
US: Start of Midterm exams for grades 11th and 12th.

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



[Press here for RFS Calendar 2018/2019](#)

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

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