

THE OLIVE PRESS

ISSUE 01 YEAR 17

Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

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INTRODUCING RFS' OLIVE PRESS

RFS campus conveys a beautiful mix of old and new, historical and modern. Hence comes the name, *The Olive Press*, chosen as the name for the school's newly established monthly newsletter.

As we introduce the first issue in October, along-side the beginning of Palestine's traditional olive harvest, no other name could match better.

If you take a walk through the Upper Campus' administration building, you will find an old red metallic press that has been sitting there for decades, right next to the library. I remember passing by it many times every day when I was an RFS student in the late 1990s. No one knows where or why it came to our school, but it remains a display of our school's long history and proud Palestinian culture.

Besan Jaawan '01
Development and Communications Manager

Letter from our Head of School

Welcome to the first edition of our new look newsletter 'The Olive Press'. We chose this name for several reasons. It was inspired by the press which sits outside the library in the main building on the Upper School Campus – traditionally known as Friends Boys School. It has been sitting outside the library for longer than anyone can remember. It is heavy and almost impossible to move and very much part of this school. The olive is significant in Palestine. The olive branch is a symbol of peace and the olive tree is seen by many as being a symbol of nationality and the fact that olive trees live and bear fruit for thousands of years is parallel to Palestinian history and continuity on the land.

This press also reminds us that RFS is a school with a long history – it began with the Friends Girls School in 1869. In 1901 a school for boys was opened. 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 as it is today. We now proudly identify as one school with two campuses.

Being identified as one school with two campuses is very important to us and we make every effort to look for ways to bring the two campuses together so that we can all work together for the benefit of the school to ensure continuity in our programs both within the classroom and beyond.

Somerset Maugham wrote in his novel 'The Razor's Edge' that *"Nothing in the world is permanent, and we're foolish when we ask anything to last, but surely we're still more foolish not to take delight in it while we have it."*

If change is the essence of existence one would have thought it only sensible to make it the premise of our philosophy. Schools change over time and that is to be expected. RFS today should not be the same as the RFS that was created in 1990.

We know more about education and we know more about health and safety and the benefit of creating opportunities for the students.

But there is something about RFS that does not change and that is the Quaker values of

peace, justice and integrity which shape the kind and quality of education RFS offers. It is these which we must cherish and that which we must preserve and pass on to current and future generations of staff and students.

They are articulated in the values of the school and reflected in how we relate with each other, in how we make decisions, in how we teach our classes, and in how we nurture our students.

This is the spirit which flows through the school through the years. We hope you enjoy the new look of our monthly newsletter.

Adrian Moody

Adrian Moody
Head of School



Our Journey to PYP Authorization

Duha Masri – PYP Coordinator

Over the years, many initiatives have been taken for the goal of improving educational and learning methods and developing teachers' abilities in educating children. There are many experiments and experiences that were successful of which some were able to survive and some were not. Some experiments fail from the start, which makes us inquire and think about the factor or factors that help an experiment fail or succeed?

I would like to mention the most significant steps that were taken before the process began; identifying the goals, staff development, developing an action plan and the community's belief in the importance of change.

In the beginning I remember fearing the big responsibility of taking this step, its demands, consequences and aftermath. The reality of the implication process which had lit a long controversial discussion about whether the possibility of



actually running the program even existed, for two main reasons. The first reason was that this program, PYP, is specific in that it uses a transdisciplinary approach and it is also aimed at a specific age group which needs to focus on learning the required skills in languages and math. The second reason is that the PYP is an international program and we as Palestinians need to focus on the uniqueness of Palestinian society.

At the end of every journey we look back, and that is when we forget the fatigue and suffering we had gone through when we finally see how we are able to change the world surrounding us. That is when we feel that the journey was well worth it and even the little steps were significant and important in reaching the required goal.

Now when I think about this wonderful journey I know how much it has contributed in transforming me, and how it has strengthened my faith in those around me, specifically our teachers and young staff, because we are departing and they are rising to carry on what we have started. And our only investments in the future is investing in them. They are our hope for the future and the least I can say is that I am very grateful for every step I was able to take with them in this journey because it has changed me and I have learned a lot from it. Now I can look around me at school and I can only see colorful butterflies looking with admiration at cocoons about to open and fly out.*



Alumni in the Spotlight

The Upper campus received special guest RFS Graduate, El-Bireh Mayor Azzam Ismail (Class of 1975). The Mayor was the guest of a TV program featuring the RFS as one of the historical schools of Palestine.

"This school is my second home" – Mr. Ismail expressed joy to visit his school, and reminisced about his school days.

"When I was young, the Friends School sent a teacher to lecture me at home because I had trouble walking, and when I reached fourth grade I was invited to study on campus... This is where I, my brothers, and children received our education. And now, my grandchildren are students here as well." – Azzam Ismail (Class of 1975)*

Introducing the RFS Radio

We now have an online Radio Station! The RFS radio is already on live, and will be broadcasting student radio shows and news soon. Remember to click *FOLLOW* so you can stay tuned – through [this link](#).



Class of 2017 Achieves IB Grades Above World Average



RFS' largest graduating class – ever – of 120 seniors achieved a 98.5% pass rate with 96 students being awarded the IB Diploma. Five students achieved high IB grades in the 40s, and 67 students achieved IB grades in the 30-39 rate.

IB results 2017 raised our heads high – Wishing the best of luck to Class of 2018!

INTRODUCING RFS COMMUNITY BLOG

“Every successful individual knows that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together.” – Paul Ryan (Speaker of the United House of Representatives)

The Ramallah Friends School Community Blog's mission is to engage all members of our wonderful community and provide open and constructive conversation between students, parents, teachers, staff, and alumni.

This blog, managed by RFS' Communications Office, is a communication space for all of us. All of you are invited to write and share your thoughts as active members of this community.

You are most welcome to write about anything... You can write about academics, school life, grade transition, Quaker values at the RFS, student-teacher relations, parental fears, IB... Anything at all!

Visit our new blog through this link:

<http://ramallahfriendsschoolblog.blogspot.com/>



IB and Quakerism at the RFS

Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” John Dewey is a well-known philosopher and an educational reformer. His style of changing the traditional education system to a pragmatic one was influential in which the thinking process is an instrument for problem solving, prediction, and action. He believed that the practical application of ideas is by acting upon them and testing them.

At the Ramallah Friends School, adopting the IB program and practicing Quaker values in a combined institution, drive us to have a leading educational system in which we provide pragmatic learning experiences for our pupils. As we prepare our students to take education as life itself, we encourage them to think independently and take ownership of their learning. In this fast changing world, our students are prepared to become globalized and international minded. IB learning experiences designed by the educators simultaneously blend in the learning profile attributes such as being open-minded risk-takers.

Bringing up generations of principled, caring, and communicating students works concurrently with Friends Schools' Quaker values of truth and integrity as well as justice and community and service.

Our students experience a plethora of teaching experiences through incorporating IB attitudes such as tolerance, respect, and empathy.

We, at the Ramallah Friends School, continue to take pride in reinforcing realistic learning involvements while keeping in mind our Quaker values, in addition to IB learner profile attributes and attitudes as a whole. We strive to provide our pupils with what John Dewey would be proud to refer to as an emphasis on the real-world use of knowledge, language, concepts, and science.*



Approaches to Learning in MYP and DP

Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

The IB programs are based on a holistic approach to learning. In an attempt to structure this style, a clear set of Approaches to Learning (ATLs) are identified across the IB Program continuum.

In terms of learning theory the ATLs in the IB programs stimulate cognitive learning, and allow students to develop social (affective) skills that help them in self and mood management. They also allow for metacognitive learning to be activated making students aware of how and what they learn. ATLs are divided across into five categories: Communication, Self-Management, Social, Research and Thinking. Each of these categories has specific clusters for the MYP and the DP.

Last year, the faculty in both the MYP and DP engaged in several discussion sessions on ATLs and how to implement them. We vertically planned ATLs and incrementally tried to introduce them into the curriculum, and decided on some practical steps to structure the internal assessments around dates and deadlines and strengthen the follow up process with students, teachers and parents.



Starting in November and during the upcoming months, we will organize and implement a school wide activity dubbed *“Self Management Week”* in the aim to better strengthen implementation of the ATLs.

Understanding and implementing ATLs, I must admit, is one of the biggest challenges we face, but we will continue to work on it through this year and many years to come.*

What is CAS?

Lama Murra – Communications and Alumni Relations Officer

Every week the Upper campus witnesses IBDP students carrying shovels and wearing vests or gardening gloves headed to a nearby street for CAS. *What is CAS?*

The Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) program is a vibrant part of the IB Diploma Program where all students are required to commit 150 hours of their time in assisting, helping, improving and serving the community in different ways.

CAS comes in accordance with the IB mission, which aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Through this program, students focus on three aspects of work. In Creativity, students rely on their imagination. In Activity, they rely on the physical ability to do things. And lastly in Service, they rely on serving others who are less fortunate than themselves as well as working together towards a greener environment.

An IB student is asked to balance between the three aspects of the program but he/she can also combine them.

After finishing their CAS hours, students gain 7 learning outcomes, to learn more please visit [this link](#). RFS gives the CAS program an Arabic name “ONEH” meaning aid or assistance, a term used for



thousands of years to refer to the act of lending a helping hand by Palestinian farmers and residents of villages and towns towards each other.

CAS enriches our students' lives and completes their path towards serving the community, a Quaker value the RFS has adopted since its inception in 1869. All RFS students in grades LKG-12th participate in the school's community service program.

“CAS allows our students to become active members of society, by knowing their responsibilities and obligations towards their environment.” Mohammed Salim – CAS Coordinator

Upcoming Dates and Events

October 7th
Staff Professional Development Workshops
LS – No school
US – Half-day

October 14th
US - PSAT exam for 11th graders

October 24th
US – Last day of 1st quarter

November 2nd
US – Report card distribution

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



Get your RFS t-shirt, mug, or keychain today!

NEW Ramallah Friends School memorabilia/souvenirs now on sale: t-shirts, mugs, and key chains.

To get your own, either contact the Communications Office (lmurra@rfs.edu.ps) or visit our sales tables in school events!



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

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