

Quaker Education in Palestine since 1869

Pledge Supports New Endowment

During a recent visit to Ramallah Friends School (RFS), alumnus and United States businessman Farouk Shami (Class of 1961) pledged two million dollars to support the school's new endowment fund. This unprecedented and historic pledge comes from Mr. Shami's belief that RFS plays an important educational, humanitarian and social role in Palestinian society.

As he toured the campus Shami reflected, "This trip takes me years back to the beautiful old days, in those buildings where I grew up, dreamed and learned a lot before I started my journey in the real world. The Friends School offered me more than an exceptional education; it provided me a home and more importantly, a solid value set that I carry with me every day of my life. I have learned the value of peace and the importance of giving at the Friends School. This contribution is one way of returning my gratitude and support to my school as it continues to help the coming generation, as it helped me, achieve their dreams."

RFS Director Joyce Ajlouny responded, "We feel very proud as we look at the school's history in Palestine and see the graduates who have gone on to such success. RFS alumni are a great example of the strong will of Palestinian people; they acknowledge those who positively influenced them and proudly give back. Farouk Shami's donation is an important milestone in the school's history; it gives us confidence and provides the key funds that are essential to establish



Mr. Shami in front of Swift House on campus, his home with FBS teacher Graham Leonard for seven years.

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Friends School Newsletter

Winter 2013



IB Diploma Program

There was a total of 91 students who graduated last year: 61 obtained the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and 30, the IB certificate. All IB students, except for 1, obtained the national high school matriculation equivalency. The average was 34 points for the diploma students with the highest grade being 43. More students are choosing to take the full diploma program every year. Our grades in Arabic, Sciences, Business, Economics and Math have been in general, higher than the world's average for the last five years and for the first time, our average grade in English A is higher than the world's average.



Ramallah Friends School
 Quaker Education in Palestine
 since 1869

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Photo on the cover:
 RFS graduating class of 2013

Ramallah Friends School is a
 ministry of Friends United Meeting



FGS Principal Appointed



Ramallah Friends School Board of Trustees and Friends United Meeting have appointed Dr. Kenneth Hulslander to serve in the capacity of Lower School Principal.

Kenneth brings a wealth of experiences in educational leadership. For the last 11 years, he has been the principal of an elementary school in Denver, Colorado; nearly all of his students were second-language learners.

Experienced in modern pedagogy, Dr. Hulslander will work with the administrative team at the Lower School to continue the transition to the IB primary years' program. In addition, he will be an important

member of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. Realizing his extensive experience, we have asked him to get to know the academic programs at both Upper School and Lower School, working with teachers and administrators at both campuses, and to develop a participatory academic strategic plan. We look forward to the coming years with Kenneth.

In his own words: "I am very excited about working with at RFS and getting to know that great country of Palestine . . . I am thrilled to be joining your community and to be able to contribute to the continued advancement of education at the Ramallah Friends School through its great Quaker tradition."

Lower School News in Brief

By Kenneth Hulslander



Kindergarten students playing with the blocks

It has been an exciting couple of months here at the Lower School. First off, the staff and community did an excellent job of welcoming me and helping me to settle into my apartment and get to know the great city of Ramallah. Thank you all very much for that.

I also want to mention what a great Back to School night that we had at the Lower School. Around 700 people attended and a great time was had by all. There was, of course, lots of food, plenty of activities, two clowns and plenty of laughter and conversation. Thanks to everyone who attended.

On the academic side, Ms. Duha and our wonderful team of teachers are pushing forward on our goal of full implementation of the PYP program. They have all worked very hard and the work is impressive.

In addition, our English department is undergoing a restructuring process about which we are very excited. We are looking forward to sharing with you in more detail in the near future. In the end, you will see a more comprehensive English program that

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Principles of Democracy and the Right to Vote

By Duha Masri, Preschool Head & PYP Coordinator

Lower elementary students at Ramallah Friends School have devoted special attention to incorporating the principles of democracy and exercising the right to vote through a democratic election process. This initiative provides the opportunity to work with families, private and public institutions and key individuals in the community as part of the educational journey of students.

The teachers and parents work with students every year to gather information about the animal candidates nominated for the presidential position to elect a new president for the animals. Eight years ago the “lion” was removed from his position as the king of the jungle. Teachers challenge students to think critically and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each animal candidate. In return, students are able to engage responsibly by campaigning for their candidate.

Students are responsible for preparing all campaign material, making signs and writing slogans that promote their candidates. This is a comprehensive educational process and one that is integrated with several courses such as: Arabic, science, math and social studies.

Through the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in this initiative, a kit was produced and published by Asala Publishing, a publishing company in Lebanon. The kit contains a book, a song, a manual and a DVD describing the whole process. It is hoped that this kit will provide an income for the school when it is sold in Palestine and that it will help spread the democracy experience in the Arab world.



Teachers practicing voting during the training at the school

The project was presented to the Central Elections Committee in Palestine and the Ministry of Education who, in turn, commended the rich content of the project and its ability to introduce the concept of democracy to other school students. The Central Election Committee decided to financially support a pilot project implementing the program in 20 public schools within 12 cities and seven villages, a second grade student population of more than 2,000.

The five teachers who developed the project held at our school two successful training days for 19 district advisers from the Ministry of Education. They, in turn, will train 40 second grade teachers.

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will put more emphasis on academic English, thereby making the transition to 7th grade easier for all students.

We are also following up on the work that Dr. Hendrick did with *Understanding by Design* to look more closely at our planning process, how we make our lessons accessible for all students, and we are seeing some very exciting results.

In order to create a better learning environment for all students, we have also implemented our 3R's program (Responsible, Respectful, and Ready) around which we have framed our expectations for student behavior in the classroom and on the playground.

In other news, Ms. Duha and her team had the opportunity to train a group of consultants from the Ministry of Education on an election program that they created to teach students about the election process in Palestine. The training was a great success, and the consultants will now help teachers in other schools use the program for their students.

Finally, going on in the school are a lot of other great things, too numerous to name here, but I can tell you that our fundraising, captained by Ms. Freida and Ms. Adele and supported by volunteers and other teachers, is going very well.



Right: Lower school students with their teacher at the break time; below: Lower school students wearing their costumes during a Halloween party at the school



Pledge Supports New Endowment

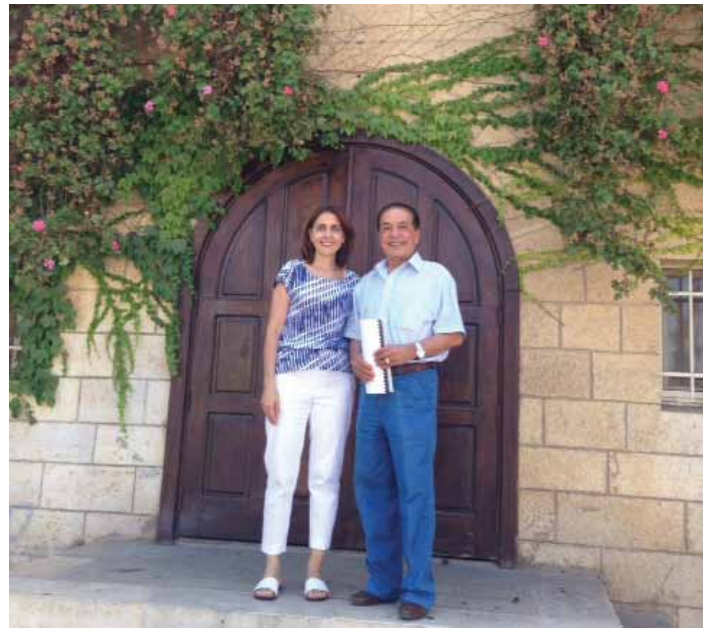
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an endowment ensuring our school's continuity and advancement. We are very grateful for his generosity and conviction that his school can continue to change the lives of young people, the same way it did his, over fifty years ago."

Farouk AlShami, born in the village of Beit, west of Ramallah, is one of the most successful Palestinian American businessmen of the United States. His education at RFS began through the receipt of a scholarship when he was 13 years old. For the next seven years he continued his studies living in the home of Graham Leonard, an American Quaker teacher. Upon graduation Shami moved to the United States to pursue a college education.

Shami worked as a hair stylist to cover his college tuition fees. Later he created a revolution in international spa and hair care products and became one of the most famous hair stylists in the world. He owns Farouk System USA Company, which manufacture the products CHI and BioSilk, as well as many others.

Over the years Shami has enjoyed many professional accomplishments. He has received nine patents for spa and hair care products and invented by replacing allergy causing ammonia, with a natural product made from wheat, corn and sugar cane the world's first ammonia free hair dye. Shami also worked with NASA, producing special hair products that



RFS director, Joyce Ajlouny with Farouk Alshami during his visit to the school

have low electromagnetic frequencies. Shami now owns the BioSilk Resort in Houston, Texas, offering the latest technologies, training facilities and mentoring opportunities from experts in the field of health and beauty.

Shami is committed to helping Palestine thrive economically. He recently decided to build a factory for his products in Palestine and to export to countries in Europe and Asia. This factory will provide approximately 400 jobs. He continues to encourage other Palestinian businessmen living abroad to come back to Palestine, invest, improve the economy and create job opportunities for youth.

Upper School News in Brief

By Mahmoud Amra, Upper School Principal

SAT Academy

For the third year in a row the school organized a three week college prep academy (CPA) for students in grades 10 and 11 to prepare them for the SAT exams. The program was extended this year, and a special English language reading and writing workshop for students in grades 7-9 was organized. More than 15 international teachers from the U.S. worked during the three weeks with approximately 200 students, developing the students' English language skills. In addition to that, students in grades 10 and 11 were introduced to the process of applying to U.S. colleges and universities. The CPA has been instrumental in achieving individual scores of 180 points on average and about 14 points higher on the ACT Science section (scores going from 10 to 24).

Go Palestine Summer Camp

Eighteen Palestinian students from different countries joined a similar number of Upper School students in the *Go Palestine* summer camp this year. The non-Upper School students were hosted by Upper School students, and together all participated in a variety of activities including field trips, sports, games, drama lessons, dance lessons, lectures and parties. Thanks to Haneen Sakakini and Walid Ghazi who were this year's program directors. More about the program is on the link www.summerinpalestine.org

Back to School Bonfire

In cooperation with the student council, the back to school bonfire took place on September 26th. Hundreds of students participated in this activity during which they had several games and activities.

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The Bittersweet End

By Fawzi Zughayer, Senior Student

If every school day were a single page, by the end of senior year, each student would have written a 720-page novel. There are 100 students in my graduating class. Imagine 100 copies of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* stacked on top of each other, towering almost ninety feet high. With only a few pages left in my novel of high school, I anticipate the end. I've almost completed this hulking manuscript; it's an accomplishment. Yet, I'm experiencing a growing sense of nostalgia. I am flipping back to the first chapters, re-reading sections I'd forgotten, recalling originally minor characters who later become integral to the plot. I'm making connections but also finding loose ends. I look back on my favorite scenes and recognize how much I've evolved over a few infinitely long yet surprisingly short years. Writing the conclusion, I realize something: My life is not a single novel, it's a series. It's an encyclopedia, and I've finished volume A.



Fawzi with a classmate while attending last years graduation

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MUN Conferences

This year the Upper School's drama committee decided to adapt "Kharej al-Serb," a play by Mohammad al-Maghout, because of the author's dreamy, wandering suffocation and disillusionment with the reigning world. The performance premiered on March 2nd with 700 people attending and was one that will not be forgotten.

Students Exchange Program

The school is once again proud to announce scholarship exchange program opportunities in partnership with Westtown School, Sidwell Friends School, and Penn Charter School. These three Quaker schools have generously offered to accept one student each and to provide scholarships for them to spend the academic year 2013–2014 there. All three students have safely arrived in the U.S. and have started school.



Right: RFS students at the bonfire; below: Seventh graders working on a project during their English class



From the Director's Office

By Joyce Ajlouny, RFS Director

Much More Than a Building

I am reminded of our school's history every day, but nothing is as great a reminder as the etched cornerstone of our main administration building at the Upper School campus, which is also known as the Friends Boys School (FBS).

Constructed in 1913, the administration building has certainly seen a lot of action. It was first used by British and Turkish rulers as a hospital during World War I, and during and after World War II. In 1948 the Palestinian *Nakbah* used the building to accommodate refugee children. The building was first used for educational purposes in 1919.

Despite wars, earthquakes and the passage of 100 years since its construction, this majestic building continues to be the center of the educational life at the Upper School. With thousands of students studying or living there at some point in time, it maintains a special place in the hearts of many of our graduates, teachers and staff. With its thick walls, exquisite arches, stone tiled floors and stately architecture, this structure serves as a unique and practical connection with both past and future.

Today the administration building stands as one of the most historic landmarks in Ramallah. With four stories, including basement and attic, the educational center houses a cafeteria, student lounge area, administration offices, a library and many classrooms.

In celebration of the building's 100th birthday, we took on the cumbersome task of cleaning the external walls. Taking the experts' advice, we opted not to take the easy and more customary approach of sandblasting the walls. Apparently, the sand is too abrasive and causes harm as it erodes the vital, irreplaceable protective layer that has been developing on the stone for the past century. Hence, the workers reverted to the ancient and tedious practice of cleaning the stones with a sponge, mild soap and water — one stone at a time. While seeing each stone transform from a dull gray to a bright ivory, I recalled how *every stone is precious*. My mind then drifted to how this attention to each stone is also paralleled by the individualized attention we provide our students, *for each and every one of them is unique and precious*.

Note: This renovation was made possible through a grant by USAID/ASHA



From the top: Before, during and after cleaning the administration building

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



Yes, I would like to contribute to the Ramallah Friends School:

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U.S. \$ Gifts: Tax-deductible gifts should be made payable to the Ramallah Friends School 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 (QUIET), noting "for Ramallah" on the back and saying if Gift Aid may be claimed, and sent to: QUIET, Yew Tree House, Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4ET or Brian Morphy at QUIET, Tel: 01 295 720019; e-mail: brianmorphy@tiscali.co.uk.

*Donate either to the General Award Fund (partial, any amount) or ESJ Award Fund (full). Tuition fees for 2013-14 range from U.S. \$2,800 to \$3,100.

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

Support RFS through Online Giving!

Through an initiative aimed at saving money and resources, we have begun to shift much of our correspondence online. Donations can now be made with the click of a mouse on our **completely secure** online donation page (designed and supported by eCommerce, a U.S.-based company). Donations made through this secure site are U.S. tax-deductible; please visit our web page for other donation methods. As always, we will never share your information with a third party. Visit www.palfriends.org and click "Donate" for more information.

Friends School, Ramallah/AI-Bireh Scholarship Donors, Restricted and General, April 1 - October 31, 2013

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Friends on Campus

By Elizabeth Todd

From Oregon I read about Ramallah Friends School's programs, hopes and past successes. No newsletter can adequately show the dedication of administrators and teachers as they support students day after day. No article can capture the energy of kindergarten to 12th grade students as they walk through the gates of school each morning, what it is like to hear them tell about living under occupation or to express their hopes and plans for the future. It is so much better to be here in person.

Here, in person, I'm able to accompany other students as they visit local refugee camps and pick olives in villages. Realizing that my being in this community is an unusual experience, I capture some of the beautiful moments on campus, moments of creativity, friendship and obvious pursuit of excellence as posts on the RFS Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FBS.RAMALLAH>). I look for ways that Friends can support teachers and administrators and ways that American Friends can learn from Ramallah Friends Schools.

Mostly I learn and, as a foreigner, I have a lot to learn. The administrative support team orients me and helps me through the transition. Mahmoud Amra, Principal of the Upper School, has even



Elizabeth in one of her Arabic classes

allowed me to audit a beginning Arabic class; I suppose I am the oldest high school student in Palestine. Even the English conversation groups I have with teachers, teach me. Through them I learn about life and culture, music, and families; I meet people who enrich my life.

In the past three months I have seen that the work of Ramallah Friends Schools is deeply personal and each day is precious. I thank God for the opportunity to be here as a Friend in Residence.

Editor's note: Ramallah Friends School has a long history of welcoming Friends from America to campus. This year that tradition continues with Elizabeth Todd serving as a Friend in Residence. Elizabeth comes from Newberg, Oregon, and is sent by the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends.

