

Friends Schools Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 1

Spring 2007



I Would Not Be What I am Today if it Weren't for the Friends School...

By Joyce Ajlouny, Class of 1983 and RFS Director

This issue our newsletter will shed light on some of our graduates— young and old. We are hoping that it will give our readers a glimpse into the hearts and minds of our graduates. I have been so touched to read some of the responses Trish Edwards-Konic received from our Alumni in her attempt to collect stories of the school's impact on students lives (see article on page 2). The words often repeated are: "I would not be what I am today if it weren't for the Friends School." What a privilege it is for our institution to claim such impact! We are also proud to see so many of our graduates return and work at the school—me being one of them (class of 1983). We share with you an impressive list of our Alumni staff on page 5.

With over 3,000 graduates who have made remarkable achievements in virtually all fields and all over the globe, the Friends School has exceeded all expectations and earned a reputation as a leading academic institution. What has brought about this resounding success is the commitment to its long-asserted mission of developing the whole person, where character development is just as valued as academics. For over a century we have strived to instill in our students the unmistakable values of Quaker education: simplicity, tolerance, community service, equality, creativity and peace. The sincere gratitude the School receives from its Alumni and attendees to date is what keeps us confident that we are doing it right! Whether it is the vast number

of visitors and email messages we receive, or the generous gestures of giving. They all attest to the impact the Friends School has had on its students. Success does not come about with students' hard work alone. Credit is also due to our dedicated teachers and staff that spend their every waking moment trying to make a positive difference in their students' lives.



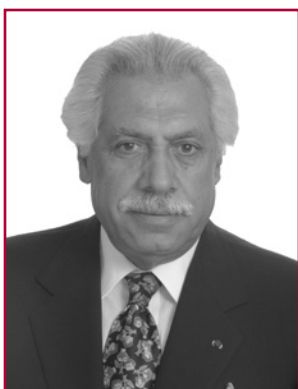
Above: Smiling faces at the 2007 RFS graduation!

Top: Joyce Ajlouny holds a strategic planning meeting.

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Editor: Manal Stephan Qanzu'a



A Way of Life

By Akel Biltaji, Class of 1959

It has been over 45 years since I left the Friends Boys School (FBS) in Ramallah. I still carry around the memories of the good old days, the beautiful people, the great learning and the unique campus where I was privileged to spend some of the most exciting years of my life. It was at the FBS where I started to learn how to live in a larger family, how to share and, most importantly, how to accept and respect the other. It was the grounds where I found peace within myself and with others. It was at a time where teachers stood as mentors and lead the student body to an active role in the community. Fixing my bed, cleaning the dormitory, waiting

at the dining room, maintaining the appearance and the grounds of the campus, singing in the choir; playing all kinds of sports, leading the Lions, retaining the position of the Head Prefect of the school in 1958 after it was abolished in 1941, standing on stage and extemporaneously talking about the subject of the day, all of that made me what I am today. I would not have been the successful teacher, the leading Public Relations man, the high ranking Airline Executive, the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, the founding Chief Commissioner for the Aqaba Special Economic Zone, the Advisor to H.M King Abdullah II and now a member of the Jordanian Senate, if not for the values and ethics of the Friends School, the teaching and discipline of the school and the commitment and quality of the staff. The diversified and great student body was an important element in my life which has helped me to be sociable and a team player. The Friends School was more than a school; it was a way of life that has enabled me and so many others to become community leaders, great academicians and successful businessmen.

Inspirational Quotes from our Graduates on the Impact of the Friends School on their Lives

"I look back in reminiscence on every corner; for there is nothing I haven't experienced within those walls."

Nadia Arouri, Class of 2005

"In a subtle way, Friends Schools inculcated the values and virtues of life-long learning. My success is, largely, attributed to these values."

Maher Barghouthi, Class of 1982

"My parents' gift of a RFS education, gave direction to a lifetime of fulfillment and achievements in science, business and international economic development and reconciliation."

George (Atalla) Assousa, Class of 1953

"You brighten things us. Thanks RFS for the inspiration and support you lend me."

Roula El-Khoury, Class of 2003

"Trees attached to their roots are destined to be taller. Flocks of birds fly to cut the winds and travel miles. Alumni support to produce institutions—great institutions. It would be wonderful to stay in touch."

Habab Khoury Musleh, Class of 1969

"To love and cherish what I do and to serve my people well."

Ayed Ayed, Class of 2005

"After attending the Friends [School], I became more social and appreciative. I now am more thankful and connected with humanity. The things I used to take for granted I now cherish. I feel sorry for the millions of people who are blinded by their ignorance. This opportunity truly broadened my horizons and allowed to me to be more connected to my community and heritage."

Amra Amra, Class of 2005



Music day at Friends Girls School

Enduring Hope: The Influence of Ramallah Friends School

By Patricia Edwards-Konic

Since 1869, the Ramallah Friends Schools have provided a beacon of hope in a land under occupation. Patricia (Trish) Edwards-Konic has joined with the schools this spring as Friend-in-Residence. She will work with the Quaker History class in the new Ethics curriculum, but her main work will be writing a book titled *Enduring Hope: The Influence of Ramallah Friends Schools*. It will focus on the impact of RFS alumni as workers for change in five areas:

1. community service
2. intellectual freedom
3. religious tolerance
4. peace
5. justice

She will interview students, community leaders and alumni. If you would like to participate, contact her at trishhek@fum.org or at the Director's office at 295-2286. You can share your story of how RFS has provided hope to you or request a questionnaire to fill out.

Trish is currently Editor of *Quaker Life* magazine and Friends United Press, Richmond, Indiana. She previously served as a Quaker pastor for over 20 years. She is married to Dan Konic and has two grown sons, Mike and Rick DeLancey.

Donor Focus

German Yearly Meeting (Quaker-Hilfe e.v) is one of the many Quaker Meetings who continuously support the School through generous donations to the School's financial aid fund. The GYM has committed its full support to four of our students until their graduation. Without this commitment, it would be difficult for these students to continue at the Friends School. We appreciate the German Yearly Meeting for their thoughtfulness and care.

Realizing Our Potential as Alumni

By Fares Azar, Class of 1994

The Friends School of Ramallah and Al Bireh recognize the importance of alumni involvement in maintaining the values that make the Friends School a dynamic and diverse institution. Over the years, the Friends School has contributed to the success of the Alumni Association in its acknowledgement of the great impact the Association has in facilitating and advancing the development of current and future alumni. In addition, an active associate will help preserve the links between the school and its alumni and among alumni themselves.

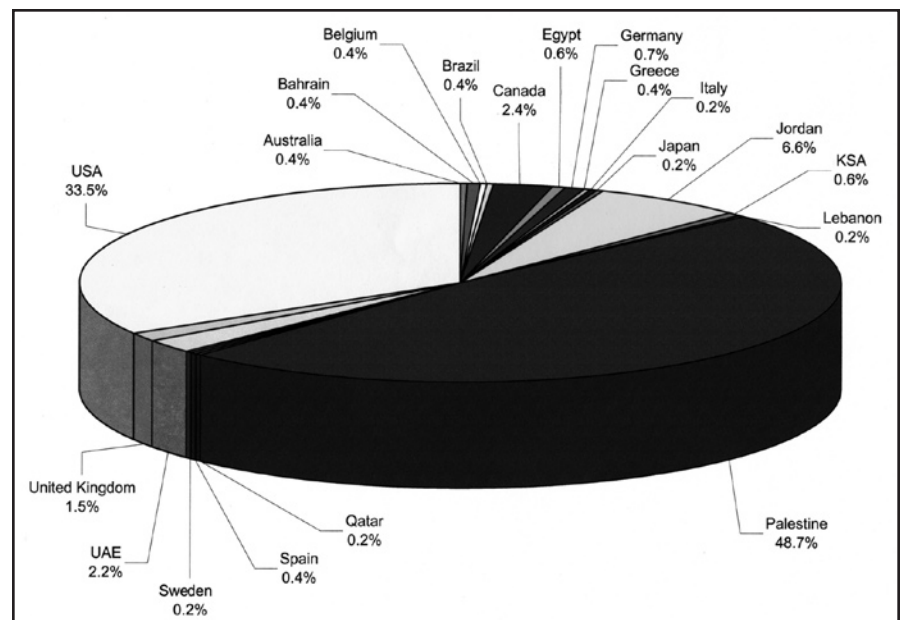
After a period of relative inactivity, the RFS is seeking to revive the Alumni Association in coordination with a small group of spirited alumni, which is currently involved in organizing and hosting an important event for alumni and their families. The event will include various entertainment activities in addition to the election of a body for the Alumni Association.

The school is also making an effort to advance and bring the Friends 500 Campaign to success. The target is to reach 500 alumni willing to support the Friends School with a minimum annual contribution of US\$100. Alumni participation has so far been limited. The plan is to reach more alumni and involve them further in a lifelong relationship with their school.

For this purpose, the Director's Office at the Friends School is currently making final touches to an online

alumni database. The Alumni Database is an online repository of information about RFS alumni that allows them to perform searches, profile editing, etc. While the RFS lists the names of the 2929 alumni since 1925, we have contact records of only 534 of them. The chart below indicates their place of residence. We are certain that introducing an online database will enrich our data and make it easier for alumni to preserve networks of childhood friendships and re-live cherished memories of school days.

Alumni Distribution chart



I Remember Ramallah

By Fahim Qubain, Ph.D

I was one of a long string of Qubains who attended the RFS. My brothers to go, followed by me in 1936, and later by a legion of nieces and nephews including my niece Huda Qubain (the daughter of my sister Nabiha). Both Huda and I now live in the United States. She is in the Washington D.C. area: I in Lexington, Virginia.

RFS Class of 1942

Fahim Qubain, first left from the top row



In 1936 I arrived at the front gate of the FBS one Sunday afternoon scared stiff, but excited, as I stepped into the unknown. I was immediately taken to the dining room for lunch where I was served okra stew and rice. I had hated okra at home but I was so scared I never said a word. I ate it and have loved it ever since. I graduated in 1942.

My six years of boarding school were wonder years. I thrived and the school became my intellectual, spiritual and almost-family home.

Without question the Ramallah Friends was, one of the best—and in my prejudiced judgment, the best-school in the country. Probably the quality and dedication of its teachers left the most impact on my life. Even at the age of 83 I still have fond memories of Khalil Totah, Shafiq Tarazei, Mr. Tabri, Abu Ya'qub and Wadi Di'dis. But I especially remember the loving care of Mildred White who dedicated her life to the Friends School, as well as Edward and Marion Kelsey who treated me as their own son.

Because of the inspiration for service that was imbued in me at the RFS, I established in 2000 the Hope Fund. Our mission is to provide college scholarships in the U.S. to the poorest and most vulnerable Palestinian refugee high school graduates, particularly those for whom a college education is beyond their wildest dream. We accept high school graduates with demonstrated academic excellence, achievement and leadership potential.

Inspirational Quotes from our Graduates on the Impact of the Friends School on their Lives

continued from page 2

"My eight years at the Friends Girls School (1952-1960) were the best in forming my character and opening my mind to the future."

Huda Qubein, Class of 1960

"It taught me that there could be more than one right way of doing things".

Yousef Naous, Class Of 1981

"Introduction to Quakers in Ramallah and attending FBS was critical to the direction my life took both professionally and in personal social commitments. For over 13 years (1973–1986), I devoted significant amounts of my time to several initiatives which I either started or co-started: FAIR (Foundation for Arab Israeli Reconciliation,

SIAS (Salzburg International Affairs Seminar), TIDE (Trust for International Development and Education) and COPSSED (Council for Palestinian Social and Economic Development). These efforts and initiatives have been in support of the Palestinian social and economic and educational development in the WBG and to approaches to conflict resolution."

George (Atalla) Assousa, Class of 1953

"The impact that the Friends Schools had on my life cannot be put into words. My whole life experience has been shaped, formed and molded by RFS principles, staff members and education. I am what I am simply for having been an RFS student, and I am certainly proud of what I am."

Wafa Darwish, Class of 1973

Alumni

FBS Graduate/Teacher: Two Faces of a Coin

By Anan Barghouti, Class of 1996

As I walk through the corridors of the FBS, wandering from class to class, reminiscences take me down memory lane. There I was, fifteen years ago, just like any other kid, jumping from one grade to another until one day I graduated. That I was a Friends graduate has always been a great honor to me. Graduating and leaving school was not the end of the rainbow. On the contrary, it was the beginning of a new phase. Getting into university and studying physics opened career doors for me and today I work as a physics teacher at my alma mater, the Friends Schools.

I always thought highly of my teachers. Not only did I respect and cherish them, but I had considered them my role models as well. Soon I realized how great and noble the profession of teaching is. Bearing this in mind, I decided to become a teacher myself, and what better place than the FBS?

Working at the same school where I was taught certainly poses an exciting experience. Standing behind the desks where my teachers stood and lecturing students seated in chairs where I used to sit bring back nostalgic recollections. Further, some of the teachers who used to teach me are now my colleagues. I know them better and this has led me to respect them even more. Dealing with students also helped me understand the burdens of teaching and empathize with my old teachers whom we used to give a hard time. In short, my experience

so far has been exciting yet exhausting, enlightening yet evocative.

Finally, I have discovered that patience, perseverance, respect of time and dedication are among the most important things needed to succeed, not only in one's career but in every other aspect of life as well.

RFS Alumni and Staff Graduates



Recognition is the greatest motivator— we are so proud of our Alumni/Staff Members!

Jerries Abu El Etham, 1974, Deputy Principal-FBS
Joyce Ajlouny, 1983, RFS Director-FBS
Mahmoud Amra, 1979, Principal-FBS
Amal Arafat, 1979, English Teacher-FBS
Cairo Arafat, 1976, RFS Board of Trustees
Faris Azar, 1994, Business Develop. Coordinator-FBS
Anan Barghouth, 1996, Science Teacher-FBS
Suha Ghawi, 1980, English Teacher-FGS
Hour Haj Abed, 1961, Librarian- FGS
Hala Hussary, 1966, Administrative Assistant-FGS

Frieda Dahdah Kayyat, 1983, Deputy Principal-FGS
Mazen Karam, 1971, RFS Board of Trustees
Sylvia Khalaf, 1973, English Teacher-FGS
Diana Khoury, 1981, Chief Accountant-FBS
Sama Nasser, 1985, Finance Officer- FGS
Shadi Othman, 1995, Engineer-FBS
Ropina Fafidi, 1996, Director's Assistant-FBS
Samia Abed Rafidi, 1981, Administrative Secretary-FGS
Hanan Saed, 1974, Office Manager-FBS
Samer Shehadeh, 1977, RFS Board of Trustees

A Busy Time at FBS

By John Hishmeh, Counselor

We have had a great start to the second semester! The Model United Nations conference, Junior/Senior Dance, the Youth Leadership Conference in Washington D.C., hiking trips and foreign exchange programs. Things are happening! In January, 16 of our cherished students traveled to Qatar to participate in the 2007 Model United Nations hosted by the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. It was absolutely amazing. Each of the students shined in their own unique way and they made new friends from all over the globe. Unexpectedly, we were placed in the Ritz Carlton Hotel Doha and lived like kings for a week! Also in January, Farah Sabbah and Sima Mustaklem were selected to attend the 2007 Quaker Youth Leadership Conference in Virginia, U.S.A., hosted by Sidwell Friends School, Washington D.C. The girls spent a week in workshops on leadership techniques, with the occasional visit downtown to America's capital city. It was a huge success and both of them returned to us safely and smiling from ear to ear!



Model United Nations

For the first time FBS has been offered three year-long exchange scholarships for Quaker schools in the States. George School, Westtown School and Sidwell Friends have each reserved a spot for one of our rising 10th or 11th grade students, fully paid! These schools are among the best educational institutions in America. Applications are underway and soon the names of the recipients will be announced. Stay tuned!

Lastly, one of the biggest school events of the year has come and gone—the Junior/Senior Dance. In the three years that I have been at FBS, this year's dance was by far the best! A job well done by Mazen and his partners in the student council! This was the first time a dance was held in the new multi-purpose hall. The evening included a host of arrangements and decorations, a DJ, food and a photographer. And let us not forget how stunning the students were dressed! It was an unforgettable night. Congratulations to Jamal Bajali and Pauline Mardrossian our 2007 Prom King and Queen!

News in Brief

- Once again, our students competed for full scholarships generously awarded by three Quaker Schools in the US, namely Westtown, George School and Sidwell. Selections have been completed. Our three students—all girls (two 10th graders and one 11th grader) and their families are thrilled to have this life-transforming opportunity. In addition, two 10th graders applied independently and were accepted to Westtown and George School, one of which is the son of the School Director, Tareq Khalaf. This brings the total number of our students who will be in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. to five! The school wishes them a great experience and looks forward to welcoming them back the following year. This was the first year Sidwell offers our students a full scholarship. Our agreement with Sidwell is for the next three years, after which an evaluation of the experience will decide its future. We thank the Sidwell Board for making this opportunity a reality and thank also the Sami Sulieman Fund for supporting all of our student's incidental expenses of our student at Sidwell.
- It is a joy to have Trish Edwards-Konic with us for three months as a Friend-in-Residence from FUM. Trish is busy with data collection and interviews in preparation for her book, *Enduring Hope* that she plans to write this year. The book will focus on the over a century old impact the RFS has had on the community and the lives of its graduates.
- UK Quakers responded generously to the Christmas appeal to support the Ramallah Friends School. Over £12,000 (US \$24,000) was raised as a result of the appeal. The Ramallah Friends School is very grateful for the care of the Quaker community in the UK.
- The U.S. Consulate General approved a grant for the Ramallah Friends School for the amount of US \$228,000. The grant will enable the school to re-build the deteriorating boundary walls of both campuses as well as build an overpass that will connect the Upper School (FBS) to the main sports field.
- Preparations for the 101st graduation ceremony are underway for the 27th of May, with Dr. Nabeel Kassis, President of the renowned Birzeit University as the keynote speaker. There are

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



☐ Yes, I would like to contribute to the Ramallah Friends Schools:

☐ Scholarships and Child sponsorship*

☐ General Award (any amount) \$ _____

☐ ESJ Award (min. \$1,500) \$ _____

☐ Preferences (age, gender, other): _____

☐ Where most needed \$ _____

☐ Enclosed is my total contribution of U.S.\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

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**

Sterling (£) Gifts: should be made payable to the Quaker International Educational Trust (QulET), noting "for Ramallah" on the back and saying if Gift Aid may be claimed, and sent to: QulET, Yew Tree House, Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4ET or Brian Morphy at QulET, Tel: 01295 720019; e-mail: brianmorphy@hvmail.co.uk.

*Donate either to the General Award Fund (partial, any amount) or ESJ Award Fund (full). Tuition fees for 2006–2007 range from U.S. \$1,500 to U.S. \$2,300.

For further information and inquiries feel free to contact Manal Stephan Qanzu'a at the Director's Office at admin@palfriends.org or Tel: 011-972-2-2952286, www.palfriends.org

total of 81 graduates, out of whom 30 will receive IB Diplomas, 16 will receive IB Certificates, 18 will receive their Palestinian High School certification (Tawjihi) and 17 will receive the RFS diploma. We share their joy and anxiety as they await word of their acceptance to universities at home and abroad.

- Applications for the next school year are looking very promising. The demand on the school is unprecedented with many students on the waiting list. We hate to turn students down but space is our main obstacle. We hope that the new buildings planned for both schools will alleviate some pressure and open the door for more students to join us.
- Two end-of-year celebrations were held at both campuses this Spring—we call them Open Days! Wonderful performances of music, dance and sport received the admiration of parents as they joined in the fun. The FBS built a rendition of a Palestinian village, served traditional food and crafts and exhibited both artwork of students that focused on Islamic art and wonderful science projects that included a real refrigerator!

- Online donations are now possible for support of the Ramallah Friends School using Paypal. Visit us on www.palfriends.org to securely donate.



Ninth graders visit the Kaykab Gardens at Friends Boys School.



Friends United Meeting
101 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond IN 47374-1926

Please notify us of your change of address

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Donor Thanks

Friends School, Ramallah/El-Bireh Scholarship Donors, Restricted and General
November 1, 2006–March 31, 2007

We would like to thank the following people and their meetings for their recent donations to Friends School.

Jamal A. SA'D	Daniel and Elizabeth Crofts	Otis McCrory Jernigan	Emily Riddle	Dublin Monthly Mtg Peace Committee
Debora Palmer and Mitchell Abrams	Colin Davies	Samir and Eva Kaibni	Mary Jo Robertiello	Durham Monthly Mtg
Adli and Carolyn Alliss	John Davison	Ray Kelsey	J. Houge E. Rodley	East Sandwich Friends Mtg
Janet Leslie and James Anderson	Patrick and Jean Deleon	Virginia and James Kenney	Samer Awieda & Family	First Friends Church
Joan and James Ashley	Holly and Allyn Dhyne	Richard Kimball	Betty H. Sams	High Point Friends
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Deeb and Kay Azar	Ernest Eadeh	June Salamy Krish	Richard and Louella Schweitzer	Iowa Yearly Meeting Missions
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Roger and Margit Cook Coburn	Lesley and John Higgins-Biddle	Thomas and Judith Paxson	William and Marygene Wright	Western YM Financial Trustees
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Linda and James Coppock	N.C. Parrigin and S.S.P. Hilton	Wendy Marie Phelps	BibleLands	Yarmouth Preparative Mtg
Ernestine Ann Corens	Kenneth and Jan Hoffman	John P. and Mary Porter	Canadian Yearly Meeting	
Miriam Covington	Raymond Lane and Laura A. Jacobi	Chip Poston	Corvallis Friends Meeting	