



WINTER ■ 2018

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# Newsletter



/FriendsRamallah



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OFFERING QUALITY QUAKER EDUCATION TO PALESTINIAN YOUTH SINCE 1869



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## Construction and Maintenance Projects – Summer of 2018

By Engineer Hilal Saba'neh – Facilities and Projects Department

Every summer, the facilities team works on many projects around both campuses as the long holiday for students constitutes a great opportunity for working on projects that could disrupt the educational process or cause danger on school attendants. Most of the projects we were working on during this summer are either finished or awaiting the last touches.

I would like to share with you a short summary on some of these projects, which were implemented on both campuses.

At the Upper School campus:

- Rehabilitation of school yards: the most important part of this project aims to improve the outer surface of the "Rocky Area" that connects campus buildings and fills an area of almost 2000 square meters. This landscape is formed of natural rock and with the passing of time it has come to have many gaps, which could cause danger to student safety. This project helped us preserve the historical character of this area by filling the gaps and infrastructure lines with similarly looking rocks.

- Restructuring the arena above the basketball courts by paving it with a combination of concrete, natural rock and traditional stone.

- Pavement and expansion of internal vehicle lane next to the Science Building, paving it with artificial interlock blocks.



Area were the Quad was constructed on Upper Campus - before construction.



Upper School Quad November 2018

- Supplementary works around the Middle School Building, which included construction of pathways and agricultural basins. As well as the addition of a new parking lot for staff.
- Reinsulating of the campus apartments.
- Preparation and rehabilitation of the new uniform room.
- Completing the lighting instalment project for the basketball field.
- Establishing an irrigation network and planting natural grass on the grounds of the Quad and Outdoor Learning Center.

At the Lower School campus:

- Installation of a solar panel system above Whittier Building with a capacity of 22 kWh.

- Completion of the finishing works and furnishing of the new third floor above the KG Building to be used for Third Grade classrooms. The internal design of this floor was derived from the theme behind the design of the Middle School building, which is based on open spacing and the flexibility of innovative learning approaches.

- Complete maintenance on the isolation of the roof of Shaheen Building.
- Painting works on the ground of the basketball field.

And finally, maintenance works inside classrooms on both campuses included painting walls, fixing electricity, addition of sanitary parts, repairs of outside slides and swings, among others.\*

## Letter from Head of School

Adrian Moody – RFS Head of School

What is distinctive about a Friends education? The Friends Council on Education identifies six distinctive characteristics of Quaker education. They are learning through inquiry, reflection, collaboration and service. It also identifies that Friends schools have a culture of respect and identifies teachers as partners in the learning process. At RFS we provide a rich and challenging education based on Quaker values. The programs of the International Baccalaureate use inquiry based learning which encourages reflection and partnership between the students and the teachers in the learning process. We also believe in community, responsibility, integrity and stewardship. We believe that all God's gifts are entrusted to us for the sake of future generations which is why we educate our students to care for their environment. We believe that every student has unique gifts and talents and so we encourage our students to develop their own voices and interests. We believe in values education and that character, that is, the kind of people our students are becoming is just as important as their academic growth.

An important feature of a Friends education is the concept of silence. This year throughout the school silent meeting has become a regular part of the school week. We gather together each week for shared silent meeting. Silent meeting offers our students valuable opportunities



Middle School students during their first Silent Meeting, photo courtesy of Daniel Kasztelan

to be still and open to their inner life. Shared community silence offers a sense of closeness and connection to one another. It gives our students time to reflect free from the intrusion of the noise of everyday life and the demands of others.

We believe that RFS is present to provide a profound sense of hope in Palestine and that the education we provide our students develops the students' individual abilities to create positive change here in Palestine and beyond.\*



# Meet New RFS High School Deputy Principal Mark Bauman

By Lama Murra – Communications and Alumni Relations Officer

This fall, the RFS community welcomed new High School Deputy Principal Dr. Mark Bauman. Mark joins RFS with over 20 years of experience in school administration and 30 years in teaching, a PhD in Education Administration and Supervision, Master of Arts in Comparative Religion and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Q. What made you decide to travel miles from home to join the RFS Community?  
“Coming to RFS was merging lots of my experience and tracks in life, as I was a school Administrator, Principal and a Quaker. This job is a blend of my research interest, administration experience and Quaker life path.”



Uppers School Principal and High School Deputy during Silent Meeting.  
Photo courtesy of Daniel Kasztelan

Q. What do you hope for through your experience here at RFS?  
“I look forward to be in a school that honors Quaker values and philosophy, to learn more about the IB curriculum and work with a faculty that is primarily Palestinian, knowing and learning about the community and living in Palestine.”

Q. What are your main goals during the first year at RFS?  
“I hope to learn the faculty’s names, personalities, what they teach and how they work. Secondly, meet students, get to know their personalities, their interests and what their weaknesses and strengths are. And thirdly, learn Arabic and become more familiar with Palestinian culture.”

Q. What were your main concerns when you arrived at RFS?  
“My main concern, is to be accepted by the people and the community. Induction week was a good week meeting faculty and staff.”  
We ended our interview with a message from Mark to the school community:

“I have always valued community, so I would love to ask students, teachers and parents to have patience on each other and on me, so all problems can be solved as we all recognize we are in a community. Community needs to support each other and we need to stay positive.”  
We wish Mark the best of luck on his new journey here at RFS.\*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

By: Besan Jaawan – Development and Communications Manager

- His Royal Highness Prince William Duke of Cambridge visited RFS’ Lower Campus and kicked the ball with RFS students in a short soccer game during his visit to Ramallah last June.
- Raneem Khoury was appointed as interim Head of KG. And Sandy Ziadeh was appointed PYP Coordinator this year. On her goals for this school year Sandy said: “I believe that our best days are ahead of us, and my hope is that we as members of the RFS community will work hard together with positive energy to accomplish our goals.”
- RFS Student Council received positive media coverage for their initiative towards strengthening local use of Arabic words instead of Hebrew.



His RH Prince William shakes hands with RFS students during his visit. – Photo courtesy to AFP or Licensors.

- Upper School female and male soccer teams won several games in the ongoing championship for Ramallah district schools.

# Being Ramallah Friends School

By: Riyam Kafri-AbuLaban – Upper School Principal


“Friends believe that we need each other, since each and every one of us is precious to our community” We are each important to our community, and in order for us to find ourselves and truth we need each other. As a school, this value is lived through a variety of ways. RFS has and always will be committed to giving students the best educational opportunities there are. This year in particular, we will strive to have each student enabled to reach their fullest potential. However, this is not possible without the support and active participation of all of us together. We each have a role, and it will be up to us, the adults, to make sure that our children feel most enabled in the classroom, in the playground and at home, by meeting our obligations towards them.

A community sticks together, communicates with each other in respectful manners and channels, a community is compassionate towards each other, and displays a certain level of empathy towards each other especially in times of crisis.  
A community celebrates together their achievements.

Working hard, together, enables all of us to become better at what we each do, teaching, parenting, learning, communicating...Being RFS. The question I wish to pose to all of us at the beginning of the year, how much are we acting like a community? And how can we get better at it? Something to reflect on as we embark on a new learning journey together. Wishing each and every member of our community a year full of learning.\*



Upper School students participated in community service in September.



Participate in the future of Ramallah Friends School. With your tax-deductible gifts!

**U.S \$ Gifts:** Tax-deductible gifts should be made payable to Friends United Meeting and sent to: Global Ministries, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374-1926, or online at [www.fum.org](http://www.fum.org).

**Sterling Gifts:** Should be made payable to Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET), noting “for Ramallah” on the back and saying if Gift Aid may be claimed, and sent to: QuIET, 5 Dene Terrace West, Wylam, Northumberland, NE41 8AZ or Averil Armstrong at QuIET, Tel: 01295 720019; e-mail: [averilarmstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:averilarmstrong@hotmail.com)

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

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☐ General Award (any amount)

☐ ESJ Award (min. \$2,800)

☐ Preferences (age, gender, other):

☐ Where most needed \$

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

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\*Donate either to the General Award Fund (partial, any amount) or ESJ Award Fund (full). Tuition fees for 2018-19 range from U.S \$2,700 to \$4,120. For further information and inquiries, feel free to contact our office at [development@rfs.edu.ps](mailto:development@rfs.edu.ps) or Tel: +972-2-295-2286, [www.rfs.edu.ps](http://www.rfs.edu.ps)



# 6

## RFS QUAKER TESTIMONIES

1.

### SIMPLICITY

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

2.

### PEACE

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

3.

### INTEGRITY

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

4.

### COMMUNITY

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

5.

### EQUALITY

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

6.

### STEWARDSHIP

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

## Being a Student at RFS

By: Bashar AbuQteish – 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 now 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 holds the ballot box in this year's elections.*



Board of Trustees and RFS administration met with FUM General Secretary and delegation during their visit to Ramallah in September.



Third graders moved to their new learning communities this fall in the newly constructed third floor on top of the KG building at the Lower campus.

# Donor Thanks

We would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to Ramallah Friends School:

- Abdeen Ind.
- American Friends Service Committee
- Andrew and Sarabeth Marcinko
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- Miriam Joscelyn
- Monadnock Quaker Meeting
- Mr. Fritz Weiss
- Mr. John Paul Salzberg
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- Nancy R. Holt
- New Brunswick Friends Group
- New England Yearly Meeting
- Nihad and Susie Kaibni
- Noblesville first Friends
- Oberlin Friends Meeting

# Donor Thanks

We would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to Ramallah Friends School:

- Oberlin Friends Meeting

Old Chatham Monthly Meeting

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Wilton Friends Meeting

Donations received April through October 2018

## Friends in Residence

By: Besan Jaawan – Development and Communications Manager

Both campuses were livened by the arrivals of various volunteering Friends during the beginning of this semester as part of RFS’ Friends in Residence Program. Cheryl Engel returned to stay for a full year as the Middle School Librarian. Amy Miller joined Cheryl in setting up the library and they have both brought the library to life with monthly activities and reading encouragement campaigns. About her third visit to RFS Cheryl said:



Cheryl & Amy dressed as RFS Graduates for MS Library Halloween activity

*“Being a Quaker presence at RFS is a privilege, an opportunity, a welcomed challenge, and a most joyful experience. It’s a privilege to be invited into this culture, an opportunity to learn from others, a challenge to try and understand how best to be that good neighbor, and it’s a great joy to serve alongside the bright, beautiful students in this school, as well as the dedicated teachers, visionary Head of School, and creative staff. I am so happy to be here!”*

Visiting RFS and Palestine for the first time, Amy Miller said: *“As a first time volunteer at RFS, this opportunity has been an honor and a chance of a lifetime. I love being a part of this organization and sharing memories with the students.”* Arthur and Meg Boyd have been assisting the development team on the Upper Campus and working on Quaker Life on the Lower Campus. David Grundy also returned for a full year to work with English and Learning Support on the Lower Campus. While Emily Provance arrived mid-October to join on the Lower Campus.\*

## CROSS THAT BRIDGE

By Mai Zaru – Learning Support Teacher



Over the years, many of us have attempted to cruise through life while slamming the brakes. While car savvy folks refer to it as a rockford turn, Palestinians just call it driving. More often than not, slamming the brakes became a coping mechanism for life’s unexpected twists and turns. A flashback can take us as far back as 50 years ago to a historical period of unexpected spiral twists and rocky turns. During this time, triumphs and tragedies wrapped the earth like a blanket with the abrupt increase of Palestinian refugees and the strike on the Beirut International Airport. Throughout the terror and loss of the 1967 war, a pharmacist, a chemistry teacher, and most importantly a humble Palestinian father took a steep turn

to what became the most prominent 20 years of his life as the principal of Ramallah Friends School. For those of you who don’t know, his name was Fuad Zaru. Often times, despite the hardships, people ought to cross the bridge when they get there. The time has come, where I had to cross that bridge, however, for me, it’s the King Hussein Bridge on my way home. Being at RFS, means being able to walk alongside the footsteps immersed into the depth of this campus as a Palestinian, a Quaker and a Zaru. It took half a century from my grandfather’s time, for me to join this campus as a teacher, to sit amongst the students in Silent Meeting, to witness their growth, and to continue to grow myself in the presence of influential leaders.\*

TO DONATE: PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.RFS.EDU.PS](http://WWW.RFS.EDU.PS) AND CLICK DONATE



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