

April 5, 2021

Dear Members of the RFS and FUM Community,

In recent weeks it was my joy to meet with various Ramallah Friends School stakeholders to finalize my selection of the new Head of School. This is the completion of an extensive international search that began when I appointed a Head of School Search Committee to work with me to guide the process. The committee was made up of two members of RFS's Board of Trustees, Omar Tesdell and Richard Statler, and one member of Friends United Meeting's General Board, Sylvia Graves. These members brought to the search process a depth of experience in education, school administration, understanding of Quaker procedures, and respect for the Palestinian context.

The search for the new Head of School was launched in October 2020. By January 2021, the Search Committee received and vetted over thirty-five applications for the position. During the month of February, we conducted two rounds of interviews, narrowing the list to several highly-qualified school administrators who we believed had the capacity to serve as our Head of School. In February and early March, we contacted professional references and evaluated the insights they provided concerning our leading candidates.

Before proceeding with the search, I hosted listening sessions with RFS alumni, parents, staff, and board members. Members of the RFS community shared their hopes and priorities for the incoming Head of School. The input from these stakeholders weighed heavily on the Search Committee's discernment. While members of the RFS community expressed various opinions, we heard agreement that RFS community members hoped for a Head of School who possesses the following qualities:

- 1) Someone who understands and embodies the Quaker identity and mission of the school.
- 2) A Palestinian or someone who understands Palestinian culture.
- 3) A visionary leader, strong administrator, effective manager, teambuilder, experienced educator, and true servant.
- 4) Someone who understands school systems and invests in the development of teachers and staff.
- 5) Someone with financial competency and proven fundraising experience.
- 6) A good communicator and a good listener. A leader who will build trust and community on campus and among stakeholder groups.
- 7) A Head of School who is emotionally mature, well-grounded, honest, humble, and helpful.

As the General Secretary of FUM, it is my weighty responsibility to make this important appointment. Upon reviewing the input from stakeholders, conducting rounds of interviews, receiving important insights from references, and prayerful discernment, the Search Committee and I are in full unity to appoint Rania P. Maayah to serve as the Head of Ramallah Friends School.

Rania is no stranger to Ramallah Friends School. She is a former student, teacher, and parent of three alumni. She is an education specialist with over twenty years of experience across the fields of higher, secondary, and primary education, in Palestine, Jordan, and the United States. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Al-Yarmouk University in Jordan and a Master of Arts in Education from West Chester University, in Pennsylvania, where she was a Fulbright Scholar.

As a Palestinian Christian, Rania considers the RFS community to be the place where her spiritual journey and formation began. As a young child, Rania recalls attending Meeting for Worship with her classmates at the school. Through her education and career at RFS, Rania developed a powerful commitment to the school, and a close affinity and spiritual kinship with Quakers. While living in West Chester as a graduate student, the hometown of Quaker and civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, Rania often attended Downingtown Friends Meeting. Additionally, Rania attends Meeting for Worship at the Ramallah Meeting.

Shaped by her proximity to Quaker belief, Rania has come to view education as a calling and a location from which to reimagine the world and disrupt oppressive systems. Furthermore, Rania considers the Friends' testimonies to be a vital aspect of Ramallah Friends School's DNA, integral to propelling students toward academic achievement and spiritual transformation. "This transformation," she notes, "can only be understood as a reflection of God's inner light, which I see as constantly pushing us to strive for a more loving and whole world."

Rania adds:

My life and career have taught me to accomplish great things with limited resources, and to offer deep and sincere energy to those I work with and serve. It is a true honor to serve the School's mission and help hone students for God and peace, as etched in Arabic on the limestone of the Lower Campus' Main Building. As Head of School, I hope to further integrate Quaker practice into decision making, implement sustainable growth strategies, and support and realize RFS's tremendous energy and potential to the future generations of Palestinian leaders.

Rania currently works for World Vision, as the Education Lead for Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza. She oversees World Vision's programs to improve access to a quality of education for children in Palestine, focusing especially on those living in fragile areas. She has also served as an English instructor and school principal. She comes to Ramallah Friends School upon the recommendations of previous employers, former students, religious leaders, and noted Quakers.

The date for when Rania will begin her service at Ramallah Friends School is yet to be announced. However, it is my hope to schedule sufficient time for a smooth transfer.

Please join me in welcoming Rania Maayeh as the incoming Head of School. Please pray for her as she prepares to take up this important responsibility. Please find ways to encourage her and support her. She will need the full support of the community, staff, teachers, and School Board to be faithful to this call and accomplish great things for Ramallah Friends School.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kelly R. Kellum". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Kelly R. Kellum
General Secretary
Friends United Meeting