

THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Designed by: Mohamed A. Daoud | Editor in Chief: Besan Jaawan

Our Quaker Testimonies

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ramallah Friends School's 150th Anniversary

Letter from Head of School

I would like to welcome the community back to a new semester. 2019 marks a special occasion for the school as it is our 150th anniversary. This is an ideal time for our community to reflect on where we have come from and where we are going. As part of the 150th RFS anniversary celebrations, RFS will plant a time capsule on one of our two campuses. The capsule will include current related items reflecting RFS today with



150th Anniversary Steering Committee meetings

contributions from students, staff, parents, alumni and the entire school community. The capsule will be opened in 25 years from now at the time of the school's 175th celebration.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of this school, we want to bring back an old RFS tradition – the RFS Field Day! Historically, the Friends Boys School used to celebrate this day in spring by organizing a fun-day of sports competitions and gymnastic performances for the school community. We want to bring back this tradition to include the whole school community and present a celebration of our students' and staff accomplishments, and represent the launching of RFS' 150th anniversary celebrations! This year we will not be holding the traditional Upper and Lower School Open Days. Instead we will be holding a joint event in spring. This will be the first time that the school will be celebrating together as one school in one place!

Throughout the year we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary with many events including having each class plant a tree on the campuses. We will be inviting the students and their parents to participate. The culmination of the year will be the RFS Gala event scheduled to be on Friday 6th December.

Please follow the 150th celebrations on our social media and website events page which can be found at [this link](#). We will be asking for your support at various times of the year to participate in our celebrations. As Friends we strive to use God's gifts wisely, with gifts conceived in the broadest of terms. These gifts include our talents and our possessions but we also see RFS as a gift and we are responsible to take care of our school - not just for ourselves, but for the people around us and for future generations. The history of the Ramallah Friends School is one closely tied with the history of Palestine. This school stands as a witness to history and we celebrate that.*

Adrian Moody - Head of School

Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra - Communications Officer

Meet RFS alumna, Class of 2000, Planning and Projects Officer with the International Commission on Missing Persons - ICMP in Iraq, Nellie Soudah.

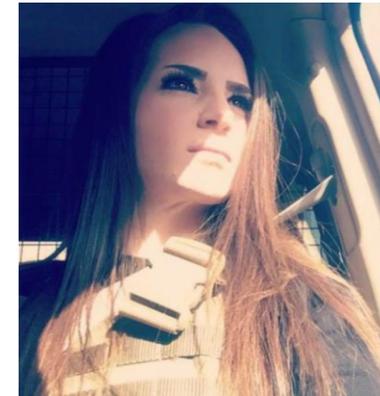
After graduating from RFS, Nellie received her BA degree from Birzeit University in Business Administration and Finance. Then got her Executive MBA from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Nellie is also internationally certified in Project, Program and Portfolio Management from the United Kingdom.

When asked about being a student at RFS, Nellie told the OP:

"My experience at the Ramallah Friends School was exceptional back when I was a student and now as an Alumni. An experience that is only felt but could never be explained!"

"It is simply demonstrated in the feeling we graduates get when we meet, a feeling that is overwhelming and heartwarming, a feeling that is just right. Only us, who have been there, could cherish and appreciate the memories we have today, so precious they grow stronger with years. The secret is the bond that was naturally created in each and every one of us, it stems from the culture that our school embodies, one that overpowers religion, ethnicity, background, color, and any other difference. Deeply embraced in us, it became part of our identity and the way we introduce ourselves... I am Nellie Soudah and I'm a Friends School Graduate"

We asked Nellie about the school's effect on her life, and she



said: *"It all lies in how we (as students) were prepared for the real world outside the gates of our School."*

"Life is all about challenges and opportunities, how we face those challenges and grasp those opportunities, go back to the characters and traits that were built in us at a younger age, and along our years of education. The School's composition of the Quaker Values, the intellectual set of teachers and heads, the educational system it runs, and us, its Palestinian students; the born fighters with endless perseverance, is what makes us who we are today." Nellie ended our interview with a few words to future RFS alumni saying:

*"Have passion in what you'd want to become, and pursue a career that you look forward to fulfill every day. You have the choice, make sure you wake up every morning to something you'd love doing."**

A Look at Our History

THE FRIENDS SCHOOL HAS A LONG AND HONORED HISTORY IN PALESTINE and it is interesting to trace the origins of our two schools of which we are justly proud. Over the last century, the School has experienced Turkish, British, Jordanian, and Israeli occupation, world wars, and closures. Ramallah Friends School, in its checkered political history, has served not only as schools, but also as a center for refugees, hospital, and a center for community lectures, concerts and other cultural activities.

As RFS prepares to celebrate its 150th Anniversary, this column in the Olive Press will feature a different period of the School's history every month.



1869
In 1869, Eli and Sybil Jones of the New England Yearly Meeting met Miriam Karam, a 15-year old girl, in Ramallah – a



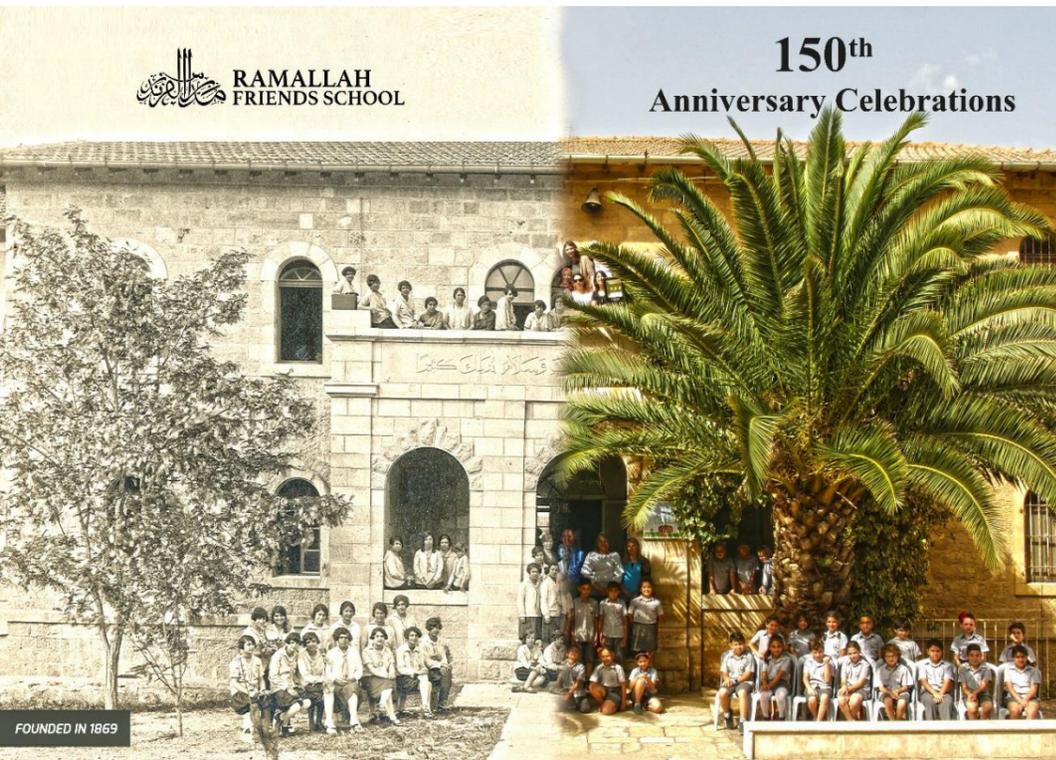
village of about 3000 inhabitants. Miriam asked them to start a school for girls since there was no educational program for girls in her village.

Miriam, who had been educated in Jerusalem offered to teach. The Quakers agreed and by 1893 eight day schools were operated with traveling teachers in Ramallah and surrounding villages.

1889
In 1889, a Girls Training Home, sponsored by the American Friends Mission Board (later known as Friends United Meeting) opened its doors to 15 students from across Palestine and from Lebanon.

Quaker Testimonies
Education was based on Quaker principles: non-violence, equality, integrity, simplicity, community and service. In 1901, the charges were the equivalent of \$20 per year for room, board, tuition, books, laundry, and other incidental expenses. Kate Gabriel was the first principal followed by Alice Jones in 1906.

Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope



 RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL

150th
Anniversary Celebrations

FOUNDED IN 1869



Press here to find out more about RFS' 150th Anniversary celebrations and upcoming events.



By Chris Akel – College Counselor

EARLY Application Acceptance Announcement!! 23 universities & colleges, 14 students, 5 countries \$1,017,864 in scholarship and financial aid 6 "full demonstrated need" awards for 6 different students: - Harvard University - Haverford College - Middlebury College - Swarthmore College - Emory University - University of Rochester

Upcoming Deadline Dates: Ongoing through February/March/April: European and Canadian deadlines.

Upcoming Events/Announcements: March 11: PSAT 10 (10th grade only, registration closed - will open in late February) March 19, 3-4:30pm, Middle School Library: US College Fair with Council of International Schools. Spring Meetings: All 11th graders will receive an email for their first official meeting. No meetings will be scheduled during breaks. Instead, all official meetings will be scheduled in advance. In order to reserve a spring meeting, any 11th grader interested should follow the following directions: 1. Fill out the survey in detail. 2. Respond to Chris' email with days and time of their Free or Religion period.

College Counseling Handbook has everything you need to know to apply to college and use the CC Office!

Contact Chris and the CC Office: cakel@rfs.edu.ps

Memories from My School Days

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

Ramallah Friends School graduates every year distinctive people in the community, it's like the sacred tree of olives, offering the best fruits to its surroundings. RFS alumni are well known to be leading personalities on the academic and moral levels in the community.

I was raised in a small family, with a father who was passionate about education and an open-minded mother. I grew up with four siblings, and I was the oldest. In our family my father insisted on enrolling me in school and I did. I enrolled at my school, Ramallah Friends School.

I remember my school, it's the family that contained me despite of the challenges, where I was the youngest in my class. My school used to be named Friends Girls School, where it offered co-education from Upper KG to third Grade, then boys would leave after that to attend the Friends Boys School. The two genders would study in the same classes together again in 11th grade, where boys and girls who planned to study Arts attended the Girls School, while boys and girls who joined the Science program attended the Boys School.

I remember the Principal at the time was a Quaker and the school was filled with volunteers, staff and teachers who left their mark in the corridors of the school, which we feel until this day.

We were few students in the class, where we were enriched with proper education, love, sympathy, tolerance, giving, and equality. These are the basic values of Quakers, which also basic humanitarian values in all religions.

Our values aren't just slogans in front of people, but are acts that transcend our lives before God. Such as the White Gifts program and the community visits that we have been doing over the years.

Today, we are teaching our students to respect themselves, deal well with their peers and defend their rights in civilized ways. Our teachers were parents and mentors who were characterized by their compassionate hearts that taught us how to teach others these values. We have become creative personalities who are open to the world, because they believed in us.

Now I am sitting here to greet you from my warm office, which was my classroom in the twelfth grade. Since that day, these walls have radiated light, inspire me whenever I encounter difficulties, and remind me that the hardest is over... I can keep on talking about this special spot, my school, the place that made me the person I am today.*

Announcement: Parent-Workshops to be continued in February 2019

We want to start the New Year off right for both our children and our parents; therefore, we started by offering a 3 part workshop series on Saturday mornings from 10:30-11:30 in the upper campus Middle School library for parents from the upper and lower campuses. This is a cooperative project between our campuses.

The 1st workshop was held in January, and the remaining two workshop workshops are entitled: Raising Successful Kids, as follows:

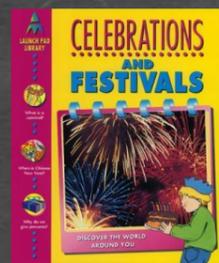
- 2. Screen Time- The latest research on how screen time impacts our children's mental and physical health. Saturday, February 2, 2019, 10:30-11:30
- 3. The effects of Sugar in a child's diet and healthy alternatives that are also good for the brain. Saturday February 16, 2019 10:30-11:30

Our presenters are experts in their fields. We have an MD, pediatrician, psychotherapist, and a public health nutritionist. Please contact the MS library for more information. See you there!*

Lower School Library Corner

By Nadine Haj Abed – Lower School Librarian

"Celebrations and Festivals" – Peter Crisp This book explores how people all over the world celebrate special days, from birthdays and weddings to national holidays and festivals.

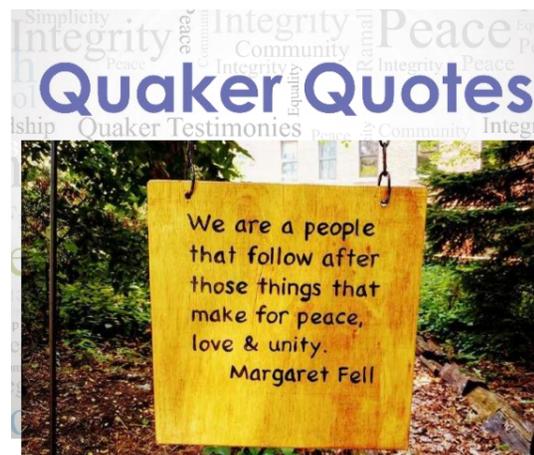


It explains some of the reasons why people celebrate, and describes holidays and festivals from various cultures that mark the changing seasons, holy days, points in the life cycle, sporting events, and public occasions.



RFS' 8th Palestinian Model United Nations Conference

Almost 500 Palestinian students participated in the Eighth Annual Palestinian Model United Nations Conference at the Ramallah Friends School.



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

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Upcoming Dates & Events

- Jan 24th – Feb 4th New Student Applications for Grades LKG, UKG and 1st.
- Feb 7th – 28th Financial Aid applications for next year 2019/2020
- Feb. 16th Professional Development Workshop – half day for students.
- Feb. 18th Tuition payments due (Plan C).
- Feb. 28th Last day of school for seniors (12 IB)
- March 4th Start of IB Mock Exams for 12 IB
- March 11th PSAT Exam for 10th grade students

Press here for RFS Calendar 2018/2019

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



Stop by the Communications Dept. and buy your 2019 Calendar NOW! We are @ Head of School Offices – Upper Campus

