

THE OLIVE PRESS

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Realize Potential | Fulfill Dreams | Share Hope

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150th T-Shirts & More!



We now welcome you in the RFS Souvenir Store – Upper Campus in El-Bireh on school days. Just contact the Communications Office in front of the Finance Office and you can get your own RFS 150th specially designed T-shirts, coasters, bookmarks and much more!

*Kids sizes available!



Looking Forward & Looking Back...

Letter from Head of School

This has been a time for celebrations in Ramallah. Aside from the extraordinary Easter parade just passed, a week ago we held our Field Day celebration. It was a great time for the community from both campuses to come together to celebrate 150 years of RFS. Over 2,500 people came through the gates and were treated by performances from children, displays of robotics and art, and dance and other performances.

As I spoke during the opening, in celebrating 150 years we connect with our mission and our origins. We celebrate those who began RFS so long ago and through this year's celebrations we recognize that we are the stewards of RFS.

Our stewardship is a joyful expression of faith. Stewardship is an all-encompassing decision to be dedicated to our institution. Through our celebrations we mark an historic moment in the life of the school looking back and at the same time looking forward.

Let us never take it for granted. A few days later we buried our time capsule. It is our way to communicate



RFS Field Day 2019



RFS Field Day 1940s

to future generations and it will provide the community in the future a greater understanding of this time period. The capsule included current related items reflecting RFS today with contributions from students, staff, parents, alumni and the entire school community. We also inaugurated our historical museum and a new classroom floor. We plan to re-open the capsule after 25 years, on the school's 175th anniversary in the year 2044. This is a time for our community to come together to celebrate our school, its history and its traditions. This is an important time for Ramallah Friends School. We

Realize Potential Fulfill Dreams Share Hope

Adrian Moody - Head of School

Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra - Communications Officer

Meet RFS alumnus, Class of 2006 Assistant professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department at the American University of Beirut, Omar Awartani. Omar attended North Carolina State University (NCSU) where he completed his B.Sc. in Aerospace Engineering (2010), and M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering (2015).

He received his post-doctorate in Physics at NCSU and Berkeley National Lab (2015-2017), where he was able to investigate nano-morphology and organic solar cells in relation to their electrical performance using advanced X-ray characterization techniques.

In 2017, Omar joined Intel Corporation as part of the Portland Technology Development (PTD) where he worked in the plasma tech group developing the next generation of microprocessors' nano-features. Most recently, in 2019, he joined the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the American University of Beirut as an assistant Professor.

When asked about being a student at RFS, Omar said:

"I loved my time at FBS. It was stressful at times and a lot of hard work went into it for sure, but it was a great learning environment and my teachers did a very good job in giving us a strong foundation to catapult off of to whatever we chose to do next, particularly in the fields of science and engineering."

We asked Omar about the school's effect on his life, and he said:

"I believe the environment in FBS, alongside the culture in Ramallah in general, helped us grow into global citizens yet with a strong Palestinian identity, which is a difficult balance to strike in my opinion."



Omar ended our interview with a few words to future RFS alumni saying:

"Generally speaking, our students are smart and motivated and that is a wonderful thing so I don't think I need to say much. However, if I were to give them some advice I would perhaps address it to 11th and 12th graders. I would say don't worry too much about what major to choose for your undergraduate studies. You can always transfer to another major after your first or second year. Or you can pursue a Master's degree afterwards and steer your career into a different direction. But the important thing is to find something that you are passionate about. The other thing I would say is if you are interested in studying abroad there are many great universities in this world that offer elite level education. The top 10 schools in any discipline are superb, of course, and you should aim to get into them, however, there are more than 10 great schools in the world so make sure you apply to universities within top 10, 20, 30, 40...etc. to improve your chances of admission. Lastly, research the town or city the college is located in and make sure that this is an area that you would enjoy living in for 4 years**

A Look at Our History

1934

To accommodate the new kindergarten, Whittier Hall, named in honor of Alice Whittier Jones, was built at the Girls School.

During this era, the school adopted the colors maroon and grey and a suitable emblem.

1936

In 1936, when the Palestinians called for a strike against the British, the Friends Schools were regrettably closed when teachers could no longer obtain food supplies to feed the boarding students.

1942

On May 2nd, 1942, the Friends Girls School hosted the second Annual Palestinian Children's Music Festival.

1948

During the Nakba, or "catastrophe", over half of the Palestinian people became refugees. Friends Meeting House and the School grounds became the temporary home for refugees. School numbers swelled to accommodate refugees from the coastal cities.

The *White Gifts* giving was instituted to give foodstuffs and money to needy families. There was a conscious endeavor to increase the Schools' scholarship support. As World War Two came to an end, once again the schools continued to struggle to be a positive influence in a troubled world.

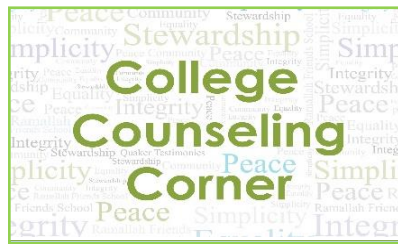
The Friends School commencement that year with 47 graduates was perhaps the most moving one the schools had yet experienced. Even as the exercises were going on in the auditorium, hundreds of refugees were fleeing into Ramallah. Students and families assembled for a happy occasion could hear explosions in nearby Jerusalem.

For a period, the International Red Cross occupied the Boys School buildings with the school providing accommodations and occasional hot meals to medical staff. The auditorium balcony was boarded up to store medical supplies. *

Glimpse @ 150th Anniversary Field Day



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



College Counseling Corner

By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Application Acceptance UPDATE (as of March 25):

- 106 universities & colleges, 42 students, 13 countries
- \$10,151,430 in scholarship and financial aid total over 4 years
- 38 full demonstrated need awards for 23 different students
- 17 Ivy League or Ivy-League-type US Schools, and 7 world-ranked schools outside of the US.

Upcoming Deadline Dates:

Through May: Registration for I Know I Can Summer Academies and College Prep Academy Extended!

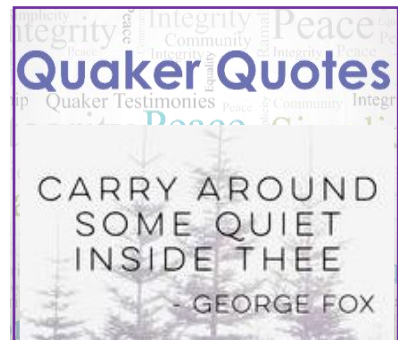
August 20: Due date for the first College List Draft for all rising 12th graders

Upcoming Events/Announcements: May TBD: 101 Workshop: Applying to the US & around the world.

College Counseling General: Spring Meetings: In order to reserve a Spring meeting, any 11th grader interested should follow the following directions (in the email from Chris):
- Fill out [this survey](#) in detail.
- Send Chris an email with days and time of their Free or Religion periods.

2018-19 CC Handbook: [College Counseling Handbook](#) has everything you need to know to apply to college and use the CC Office!

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



For Another 150 Years...

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

For another 150 more years... With hope and ambition we continue in our path in steady steps towards the future stewardship of this institution.

That is the mission of our school, Ramallah Friends School, which began 150 years ago, and is still in continuance amidst an ever changing world in all forms be it educational and technological development or even the resulting social, cultural and economic changes which touch the life of every individual.

As an ancient academic institution, RFS has succeeded to maintain its existence through all these years. The environment and principles this school had founded have touched many generations. These principles have helped RFS in its development and stability, as our nation has gone through many historical turning points of which RFS, as an educational institution, has stood by its community in strengthening the principles of justice and equality, not only for the Palestinian community but for the international community as well, until it became not only a role model for education but for justice and humanity in all forms.

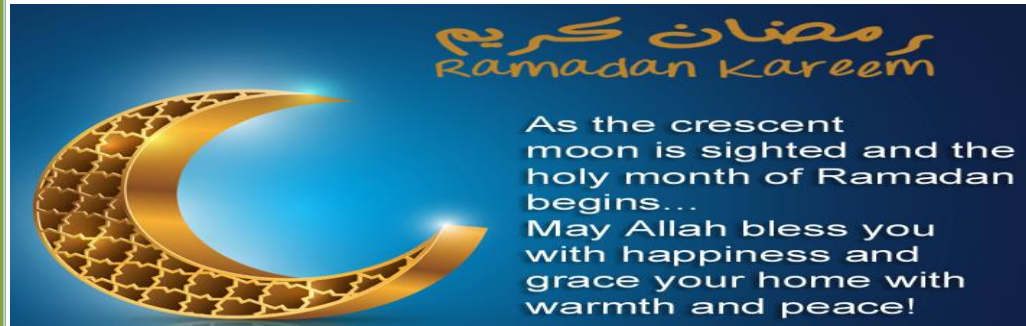
And because the school believes in individuality, it has focused on individuality to spread the arms of giving and goodness in keeping this institution alive. Encouraging its students to become the leaders of tomorrow and leading innovation in Palestinian education, and this is what promises that RFS will go on for another 150 years and more. An institution that continues in its sustainability and development is one that will always survive. And that



is what RFS is about.

During our 150th anniversary celebrations, we have launched a series of events and activities such as the inauguration of the new classroom floor and the RFS museum and planting of the Time Capsule in the Lower Campus which will not be opened again until after 25 years and that was done with the participation of large numbers of our students and staff and parents and the director of education and RFS alumni. The Palestinian arms who assisted in construction of the new classroom floor were honored and thanked and so were all the 150th events sponsors from the local community.

To another 150 years, which we may hear about from the angels of the heavens, we hold all the hope that our school will stay and prosper in the Middle East, connecting it to the larger world surrounding it.*



Middle School Library Corner

By Cheryl Engel – Middle School Librarian

The RFS Middle School Library has taken on a special project for the 150th anniversary. The school community of students, staff, administrators, teachers, and volunteers have all come together around making 150 + origami cranes that are hung in the library. Origami is a Japanese paper folding art form. The cranes are on display in the library to spread the message of hope, peace, and bringing an end to nuclear weapons. The Quakers have a saying, "There is no way to Peace, Peace is the Way." Please come by the library when you are on campus to witness how these beautiful origami cranes have turned into an incredible work of "art from the heart." We have one student, Hanna Qahoush who deserves special mention for the many, many cranes he contributed to this project. His additional origami work is also on display in the library. We invite you to drop by and celebrate with us whenever you are on campus.*



Returning Home...

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

With the school year ending, it is necessary to reflect back at this very important year. Our school turned 150 years old, and that in itself is a huge achievement. A school that survived 150 years in the unstable and troubled history of Palestine is evidence of perseverance, and steadfastness and a live witness of our presence in this land. At RFS one cannot help but feel like they are part of something bigger. And this was clear during our 150th celebrations. Field Day had the joyous notes of weddings and birthdays. It was heartwarming to see so many old friends return home to join in the celebration. I was moved by the smiles and the high spirits of all members of the community and was touched by the hard work of teachers and students. I think what made Field Day especially beautiful is that it was a true community effort. We worked as a team, and we held each other up when one of us needed support. This is the spirit RFS instills in us as students, and that spirit was plenty alive on Field Day. As an alumnus of the school, it is truly a unique opportunity to serve our community. I feel like I have become a mother of seven hundred plus students overnight.



I feel blessed to come in every morning to see all the smiling easy faces. And I feel a great sense of responsibility to stand in the shoes of those who lead the school in the past. It is not easy to be part of a 150 years legacy... Here is to another 150 years! May our great great grandchildren graduate from RFS!

Glimpse @ 150th Anniversary Time Capsule



Upcoming Dates & Events

- May 2nd – 18th
Registration for new students 2nd – 11th Grades
- May 6th
Change to Ramadan school hours.
- May 7th
Deadline for Financial Aid Appeals
- May 9th
Deadline for registration of current students
- May 15th
Final exams begin for 11th graders
- May 20th
US: final exams begin

[Press here for RFS Calendar 2018/2019](#) *** LS – Lower School *** US – Upper School

- May 22nd
LS: start of half days for students.
- May 23rd
End of Official IB Examinations for seniors.
- May 30th
LS: end of 2nd semester for all students.
5th Grade Farewell Ceremony @ LS.
- June 1st
US: end of final exams.
- June 4th- 7th (tentative)
Eid Al-Fitr Holiday
- June 9th
Graduation Ceremony

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

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