

THE OLIVE PRESS

ISSUE 06 YEAR 2017/2018

Ramallah Friends School's Monthly Newsletter

THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

- Letter from Head of School: One School Two Campuses 01
- Announcing Head of School's Conversation Room @ Lower Campus 02
- Parents, Teachers, and Principals share views on RFS campuses 03
- Upcoming Dates and Events 04

Designed by: Mohamed A. Daoud



RFS Organizational Structure

As one entity both RFS campuses (Lower and Upper Schools) function within one organizational structure led by the Head of School, Adrian Moody, who chairs the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which comprises of Lower and Upper School Principals, Frieda Khayat and Riyam Kafri respectively, and senior staff. SLT meets regularly and attends to the operational needs of the whole school. The day to day educational functions on each campus are directed by the school principals within the framework of RFS.

The Board of Trustees of RFS provides regular oversight of the School and all the activities and projects associated with it in partnership with the Friends United Meeting (FUM) based in Indiana USA. FUM appoints the Head of School and is ultimately responsible for RFS. As a Quaker school decisions are made by consensus through an inclusive policy which embraces all members of the school community of parents, students, staff and even alumni. Based in Grant House on the Upper School Campus, Head of School Offices operate as several departments whose work is spread over both campuses; *Facilities and Projects Management Department* (Construction Projects Management, Security, Maintenance, Gardening, and Cleaning) *Finance and Human Resources Department* (Finance, Accounting, Human Resources), *Communications Department* (Communications, Alumni Relations, Developmental projects), *IT Department* (IT Support and Maintenance).*

Besan Jaawan '01
Development & Communications Manager

One School Two Campuses

Letter from Head of School

RFS is one school in two locations. What does this mean? While we operate as two campuses we are a single school with a singular board and singular mission. Traditionally the Friends Girls School and the Friends Boys School operated as separate identities. However in 1990, the campus of the Girls School became a co-educational Elementary School and Kindergarten and the campus of the Boys School became a co-educational High School. Together we are Ramallah Friends School. We no longer officially identify as FBS and FGS and our communications and documentation reflect this now. You will notice that communications from either campus all identify us as Ramallah Friends School and they identify themselves as the lower school, or the middle and upper school. We are RFS with an Upper School Campus and a Lower School Campus. This is not simply a matter of terminology because being one school with two campuses means that principles and practices are united across each of the campuses. So issues such as student welfare, professional development, communication, staffing are dealt with on a

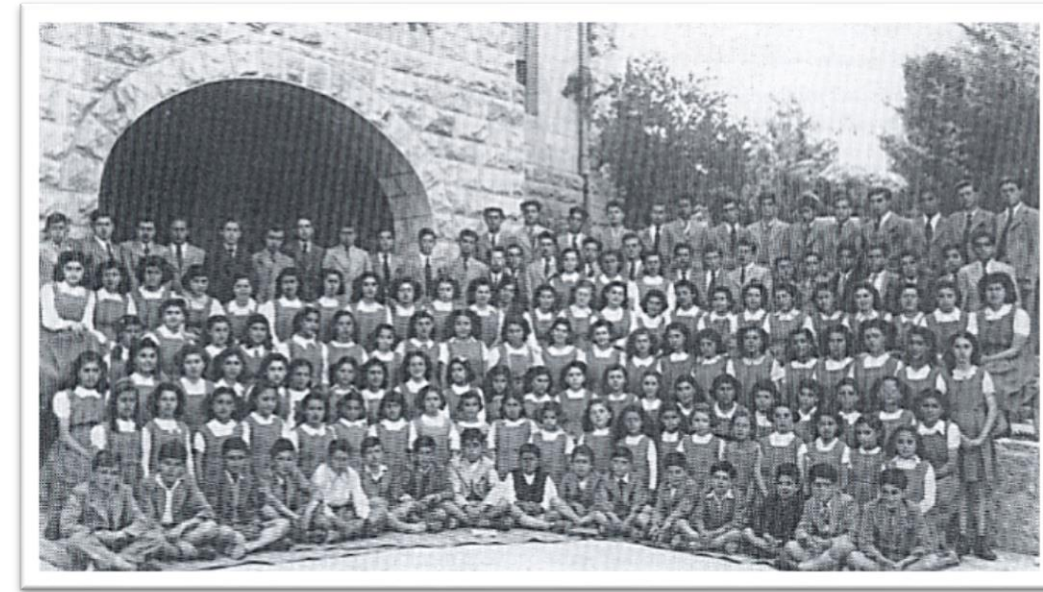
whole school basis. This is also true for administrative functions of the school. For instance, as of the beginning of March we have one Finance Office which is located in the Head of School Offices connected to Grant House on the Upper Campus. So any payments that parents need to make will be made at that one office and not at the upper and lower school offices. Being one school also affects the school in practical ways. Each campus next year will run on the same calendar so that holidays will be the same as will teacher only days for professional development. This calendar will be printed and made available to students and parents. You will also notice that we have implemented new security measures to create a safer environment for our students. The procedures are identical for each campus. Working as one school means that we will work more effectively and students will be able to transition between the campuses in a smooth manner. One other important feature of being one school will be the implementation of the school wide strategic plan. The strategic plan is one which will develop RFS as one entity into the future.

As part of the one school policy I would like to also let you know that I will be available on the Lower School Campus every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon. The room which the Finance Officer has been sharing with the IT Manager will now be available for me. The IT Manager will continue to use that room each morning but in the afternoon it is going to be a Conversation Room. So any parent or member of staff is welcome to come and see me. To ensure that I am available please make an appointment with my Administrative Assistant, Jumana Thalji, at jumanathalji@rfs.edu.ps. Otherwise you are welcome to pop by if I am available. I look forward to getting to know the Lower School community much more.*

Adrian Moody
Adrian Moody - Head of School

RFS' Journey towards Coeducation

By Mohammed Salim – CAS Coordinator & Math Teacher



All RFS students in 1941 - photo was taken at the Upper Campus

For many years in Palestine education was confined to males while girls' education was limited to a few private schools which were available only in some Palestinian towns. At RFS we owe it to Ramallah native Mariam Karam, who later became a teacher at the Friends Girls School (now the Lower School), when she approached American Quaker Mrs. Sybil Jones while she was visiting Ramallah and asked her to open a school for girls, and the Jones' then promised her that they would. In 1869, Mariam's wish was granted when RFS was first founded under the name of "Girls Training Home" and in 1889 it became the Friends Girls School and is now known as RFS Lower School.

Co-education was never absent at RFS since its establishment in 1889. Students at the Kindergarten level and in early primary grades used to study side by side as boys and girls. And they would later be separated when reaching the Third Grade with the girls continuing in the girls' school and the boys moving to another school which was situated at the time in different Ramallah family residences including the homes of Harb,

Shahla, and Ajlouny families, until the Friends Boys School was built (now known as the Upper School) in 1901.

As for coeducation at RFS in the modern era, it goes back to the academic year of 1988/1989 after the First Intifada had broken out in 1987 and a wave of migration led a lot of students and their families to immigrate to the USA and other countries. This included high numbers of the school's English speaking students and caused a steep decline in overall student numbers in both schools. The number of students fell from 1100 to about 700 female and male students, while the number of teachers and staff stayed the same and that caused a large financial deficit.

Coeducation is a belief all Friends Schools around the world have shared historically. And the financial deficit RFS faced during the First Intifada accelerated the integration of the school's two campuses to begin offering coeducation for grades 9th- 12th. Coeducation was then gradually expanded to include all grade levels on the school's Lower and Upper campuses.*



Alumni in the Spotlight

By Lama Murra – Alumni Relations

For this month, the OP interviewed RFS IB Physics teacher Ustaz Anan Bargouthi. Anan graduated from RFS in 1991, and he was one of the few who witnessed the school's great transition to become the co-educational institution it is today. *"The period between 1987 and 1991 was a hard time for the school as the First Intifada erupted and our nation went into political and social instability, and so RFS had to adjust and make changes."*

Anan told OP that during the First Intifada, the RFS transition came as a result of the hard situation the school and the country were going through. Anan said that even during the Intifada, RFS always felt safe for students. In addition, he emphasized the role the school played on students' personalities at the time, where he believes having an active Student Council and all the activities helped shape his personality. Talking about his school days Anan talked about how proud he is of the school, as a student, a teacher and a parent of three daughters studying now at RFS.

"By talking to my daughters I keep acknowledging the difference the school is having on them, the quality of education and amount of information they have exceeds any of their other peers outside RFS." When asked about coming back to work in the school, he answered that it's because of the feeling of belonging the school created in him, where a great part of school work is focused on structuring students' personalities and emphasizing the importance of the moral values. *"I can't forget Ethics classes with Jean Zaru, where she taught us what she used to call the Golden Rule; Treat people the way you want them to treat you, and until today I take it in mind."*

Ustaz Anan ended our interview with a piece of advice to future RFS alumni: *"It's rare that any RFS alumnus fails, so for the future you need the dedication and clear mission the school planted in you."**

RFS Head of School, Adrian Moody, will be available in the Head of School Conversation Room @ Lower School for casual conversation every Wednesday and Saturday at 12 pm.

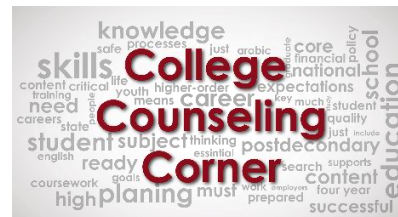
All parents and teachers are welcome!

You are welcome to make an appointment or walk in @ Head of School Conversation Room in the Lower School's Administration Building (right in front of the Lower School Principal's office).

RAMALLAH FRIENDS SCHOOL
LOWER SCHOOL

Conversation with Head of School Room





By Chris Akel – College Counselor

Upcoming Application Dates:

April Ongoing: Most Regular Deadline decisions released in the US and some from Canada.
 January-June Ongoing: UK release conditional decisions from Jan.
 15th Regular Decision Application
 May-June: UK students to decide a "firm" and "safe" choice of admitted school before IB Results are released.
 June-July Ongoing: Applications for Middle East universities (including in Turkey and for Birzeit) open.

College Counseling General:

11th Grade Spring CC Meetings: Find [your students' first counseling meeting here](#). Email cakel@rfs.edu.ps for any questions.

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

Upcoming testing dates:

- [SAT dates](#) (not on RFS campus - through Amideast and College Board)
 - PSAT: March 10th at RFS - registration in late February.

Harvard, Stanford, and Pomona College Visit: On April 30th, we welcome these prestigious institutions onto our campus! More information to come.*



Meet RFS College Counselor Chris Akel

FGS Becomes the Lower School

By Frieda Dahdah – Lower School Principal

The Friends Girls School (FGS) means a lot to me. It's where I grew up and graduated from. It is the school from where I received my Tawjihi high school certificate. Despite the fact that I was at the girls' school, the graduation ceremony at the time took place at the boys' school. This indicates that both schools are indeed connected as one entity under the umbrella of the Quakers: *One school with two campuses*. The FGS was established in 1869 with the aim to educate girls of Ramallah & Al-Bireh areas. RFS provided its services for all social groups from different geographical regions; such as Jordan, Lebanon and others. In 1901, the Friends Boys School was established with the aim of providing the same academic program for boys. Under one umbrella both schools experienced political changes in all circumstances, yet they continued to give. They also made many adjustments and applied several modifications, including the redistribution of both students and classes, until we ended up with one coeducational school for boys and girls on two different campuses. Throughout the years, we made sure that Quaker principles and values always remain the base of what we offer here at RFS on both campuses.



We at the Lower School (formerly known as FGS), start our academic and educational journey by instilling values, honing skills, and building a personality that is compassionate, responsible, aware, and belonging to its Palestinian and international community. This journey is being continued at the Upper School (formerly known as FBS). At RFS we aim to produce an aspiring, unique and open generation that seeks to achieve justice, preserve the environment, care for themselves and for others, and be able to solve problems and take good initiatives that contribute to the achievement of effective goals. I do pray that our beloved RFS will continue to give more and more for many generations to come!*

Under the Skies of our Ramallah Friends School

By Fatima Arafat – Arabic Teacher

Twenty years ago at RFS' Lower School I started my career as a teacher. In fact, it is there at that place where my life, my youth, and my dearest friendships were made and will always remain. It was not easy to move eighteen years later to a new place to continue my mission as a teacher. Even though it is the RFS middle school after all, a different building yet the same spirit of Friends which I have been enjoying during the last eighteen years. The same values and principles that the school instills in the hearts of its students and teachers. The same traditions and integrity. This is what this school means to me; one mission, one community, and one heart for two bodies under one sky. These values that are being instilled in the hearts of RFS students during their time at school; eight years at the lower school, then at the middle and upper school afterwards as each child moves on from one level to another. Nothing changes, it's rather a growing responsibility, and an increasing challenge as we grow older and older. Despite that, RFS students are always well-equipped with compassion, values, and belonging to their school. They leave RFS to continue the same journey that they've started here to produce a conscious generation, by becoming leading, unique, and promising personalities in the world. Our alumni are our ultimate hope, in all their different stages. And, as I am coming to the end of my second year at the RFS Upper School, it is like moving from one sky to another; one beating heart for two bodies: It is our Friends School that I love, am proud to belong to, and an honored member of its family.*

Upcoming Dates and Events

March 3rd
 US – Start of final exams for 12 IB students.

March 10th
 LS – Distribution of Report Cards
 US – PSAT exams for 10th grade students

March 12th, 13th
 LS – Parent Teacher Conferences

March 17th – April 22nd
 Registration of current students for the academic year 2018/2019.

March 20th
 US – Last day of 3rd quarter

March 24th
 US – No school for end of 3rd quarter

March 28th
 US – Report Cards distribution

March 29th
 US – Parent Teacher Conferences

March 31st
 US – No school - Staff professional development workshop.

April 2nd
 US – First day of fourth quarter

April 5th – 12th
 Easter Holiday

April 14th
 Isra and Mi'raj Holiday – tentative

April 24th – May 24th
 Registration of new students for the academic year 2018/2019.

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

FBS Becomes the Upper School

By Riyam Kafri – Upper School Principal

About a week ago, my sister, a Ramallah Friends School graduate (Class of 2001) stopped by to say hello. She walked into my office and the first thing she said to me, "ah the spirit of RFS, it is special, isn't it? You feel it anytime you step foot on either campus". She nailed it! The spirit of RFS! This particular set of values, behaviors, feelings...etc. that ties all of us together, teachers, students, alumni and parents is definitely present. It is not something you consciously feel when you are in the middle of the academic year trying to get through a pile of papers, or a parent-teacher conference or another essay that needs to be written. It is a spirit that our friends, volunteers and alumni see and feel that makes us recognizable to others starting as early as kindergarten. That is what makes us one school with two campuses. It is easy to sit here and pick out the many different procedures and practices that make both campuses different. And I can assure you that ensuring curriculum congruity across the IB curriculum is something we talk about and look at ways to make better throughout the



year. I can also tell you that we look at our students and think of the skills they need in grade 12 and plan how to scaffold such skills. However, what really makes us who we are is that inexplicable, unmistakable RFS spirit that is built into the school genetic make up and innately handed down from one generation to the next. It is that same exact spirit that led to this year's prom king and queen to be both learning support students.*

Parental point of view on RFS campuses

By Khalil Ghawi – RFS Parent

My life experience connects me to RFS as a graduate, parent, and through my family and friends. We always saw these two schools as one as they continuously try to offer the best of education and Quaker values. The values of integrity, equality, service, love, justice and peace are as important as our learning of science and language. They do equip us with guidance for life. In 1869, Quakers responded to the needs of society to build a school for girls. Later again on the request of women graduates, they built a school for boys. That was the beginning, but later they developed according to the challenges they faced through difficult political situations. When we were students we considered our schools one school. We waited anxiously to move from one campus to another as we were growing up. All of us experienced the two campuses. Quaker values influenced our lives, to respect everybody equally male or female, young or old, and to be open to learn about one another. The Friends education is important to equip us for life and work and the development of ourselves for the services of our community.

Quakers always say there is that of God in everyone and that is the source of respecting all and believing in non-violent ways to transform our situations and conflicts. I do hope that the administration will give equal attention to the needs of both campuses. It is important to build the one school community on a firm, strong foundation. One of the things they do at RFS is white gifts program, where children learn about the needs of the community and try through their compassion to build community, exchange interaction that is of a great value. In our torn world, knowledge is often sought because it can bring power to exploit the creation and other human beings. In the purpose of God, knowledge means being related to one another and being for one another. Finally the two campuses are one, and hopefully the parents, students, teachers and administration will work together to build a transforming community for all.*

ANNOUNCEMENT
 Registration, tuition and all payments for both Lower and Upper school students (including KG) will take place at the Head of School Offices- Accounting Office on the Upper Campus (El-Bireh) as of March 1st.
 *The new Accounting Office is situated on the 1st floor of Grant House @ Upper Campus. Please follow this map to reach it.



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

02.295.22.86 tel
 02.295.83.20 fax

www.rfs.edu.ps
[Subscribe to the Olive Press](#)

Editor in Chief:
 Besan Jaawan

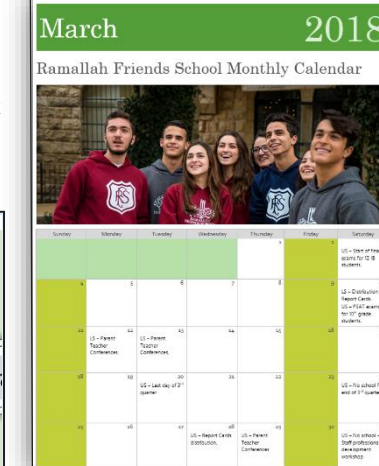
Translation by Mai Ayoub and Lama Murra.

Design, photos and graphics by Besan Jaawan, Lama Murra, Mohamed A. Dawud.



SUBSCRIBE NOW

Now you can subscribe to the Olive Press – [click here!](#)



[RFS Monthly Calendar – Stay updated through our website](#)
www.rfs.edu.ps