

Rawdat El-Zuhur Newsletter

December 2019



Like Autumn leaves, the years go by, and here we are at the end of another year, and ready to welcome 2020 with vigor and “Sumud” resilience. It is very important that this new generation continues to hold on to hope for justice and peace to prevail, so that our country and the whole region is spared further wars and suffering. Despite the onslaught on East Jerusalem and its institutions, Rawdat El-Zuhur continues to be a beacon of hope for those young children, so that they will carry with them beautiful memories as they leave their safe haven and face the new challenges in their new surroundings. As we send you our greetings for Christmas and the New Year, we hope we can continue to count on your support that will make a difference to the lives of those children.

“If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children” Mahatma Gandhi

Raeda Jasser
School Principal

Abla Nasir
President

Here are some of the highlights and interesting news of the first semester.

- ❖ In preparation for the beginning of the new academic year 2019/2020, the teachers participated in several training workshops during the month of August. The workshops were conducted jointly with the UNDP and the representative office of the Palestinian Ministry of Education in Jerusalem, for five consecutive days. The target group were the teachers of Arabic,



English, Civics, and Technology. Over and above the teachers participated in a 9-hour workshop in an Inter Active Project in collaboration with the Feisal Hussein Foundation to be applied in



the educational and learning process. Over and above, the school hosted Dr. Ruwaida Barham, the Palestinian representative on the International Board of Human Resources to run a workshop with the teachers on psychological counselling.

- ❖ The new academic year started on August 26, 2019 with a total number of 226 students: 118 girls and 108 boys. Simsim and Zaatar entertainment group greeted the children with several interesting activities emphasizing important and positive behavioral aspects, such as sleeping early, and eating healthy food; all done in a comic and entertaining style with music and dance.



- ❖ September 28 was an open day organized by the teachers of the



Kindergarten for the parents of that section, whereby they interacted with their children enhancing effective communication through a number of activities and competitions between mother and child. An entertaining and a fun event that brought joy and a lot of smiles on the faces of the children and their mothers.



- ❖ September 30, As Health Education continues to be on the school's yearly plan, all the children from grades 1-6 had the opportunity to spend a class period to talk about and discuss healthy eating habits and hygiene with a representative from the Health Centre



- ❖ October 1 is the world day for the elderly. In recognition of their contribution to the society at one time, and the warmth by which they filled so many homes, a group of students accompanied by their teachers paid a visit to "The Home of our Lady of Sorrows" for the elderly located in Abu Dis, East of Jerusalem. The Students presented the elderly with greeting cards which they had made themselves with their own drawings. They also entertained the residents by singing and dancing the Dabkeh and donated some groceries and Arabic sweets to the residents.



- ❖ October 5. Former and retired teachers and administrators met with the present staff over lunch at Al-Zahra restaurant. The gathering was blessed with the first drops of rain that came in time for the Olive harvest. It was a special occasion to meet the younger generation of staff, and to be updated on the school activities as well as to share lovely memories.



- ❖ October 5. The Palestinian National theater, Al-Hakawati hosted the children of Rawdat El-Zuhur from grades 3-6 on the occasion of Palestinian Cinema Days. They watched a series of short films focusing on educational issues such as moral values, followed by an open discussion whereby the children excelled in the discussion and in critiquing the films.

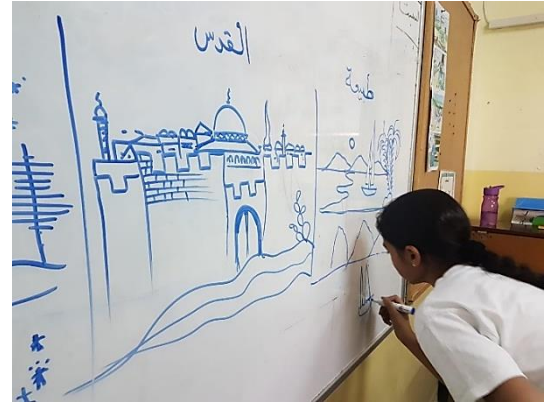


- ❖ October 16. The school celebrated the Palestinian Heritage Day and Olive picking which is officially celebrated on the 7th of October. The celebration included an exhibit of heritage tools, a traditional Palestinian breakfast of “Zeit o Za’atar” (olive oil and thyme) with tomatoes and cucumbers, as well as “Hareeseh,” a traditional Palestinian dessert. The kindergarten children who were all dressed up in the Palestinian

traditional costumes pressed some olives, and each filled a small jar of those pressed olives to take home.



- ❖ As part of the extra-curricular program, and to develop the children's talents and skills, an after-school courses in Chess, drawing/sketching, have been held twice a week. These courses are conducted in partnership with Alp Stone Academy and they will be running till the end of the current academic year.



- ❖ “Discover your Child’s Capacity” was the theme for the “learning difficulties program” in partnership with Faisal Hussein Foundation. Students’ parents were invited for five meetings held by Learning Difficulties specialist Mrs. Kifaya Baidoun where they were introduced to the term and ways to identify it, and to set learning strategies and methods to deal with those children who have such difficulties.
- ❖ October 22. School trips are essential in the school program. To create a recreational atmosphere for children and to break the daily routine, the school organized a trip to Jericho, known as the “city of the moon”, where the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders visited the shrine of Prophet Mousa which is on the road to Jericho. The second part of the trip was to the amusement park “Tiger Land”. In the meantime, the children of the lower grades and the Kindergarten had an enjoyable time at an amusement park near Jerusalem.



October 23. "Pink October": An initiative by the Mothers' Council in partnership with the school administration to raise awareness for the early detection of breast cancer. Mothers were invited to attend a lecture by Dr. Dima Qutteineh, and Nurse Fatimah Ayyad.



- ❖ October 29. Responding to the alarming news that the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, the only hospital that serves cancer patients from the West Bank and Gaza, is facing a financial crisis, the school children joined the spontaneous campaign by the community and donated NIS 5580 from their pocket money. (equivalent to \$1591.) to go towards medication for the cancer patients.
- ❖ To encourage artistic talent in creative children, a competition in drawing was held for all the classes from grades 1-6 whereby the following from each class won:



Grade six: Tawfik Awiwi
 Grade five: Hana Misk
 Grade four: Talin Zuheikah
 Grade three: Rafif Suboh
 Grade two: Aya Sawwaf
 Grade 1: Siba Shatnawi

But the over all winner was Tawfic Awiwi from grade 6.



- ❖ Universal Concepts of Mental Arithmetic Systems (UCMAS) competition: Qusai Ubeid from grade three was one of two hundred children from the Palestinian Territories who had joined the competition conducted by UCMAS in cooperation with the Palestinian ministry of Education in ten different centers. They were to solve 200 problems in 8 minutes, and Qusai passed the second level.

UCMAS is a unique scientifically-proven brain development program designed for children and young people ages 4-12 to develop their latent mental power at an age when brain development is reaching its peak. UCMAS utilizes the "Abacus Mental Arithmetic" skills as a training tool for the mental development of children. Mental Arithmetic is a form of calculation that is solely done by the human mind without the use of pencil and paper, calculator or any other gadget or electronic device



❖ November 28, the second and third graders were invited by Tamer, the Institute for Community Education in Ramallah to attend a film at the Yabous Cultural Centre in Jerusalem, based on the play "Forest of Neil" by Majd Kayyal and produced by Ayman Nahhas. The film focused on the addiction of the young children to smart phones and electronic devices and emphasized the importance of out-of-doors activities and the enjoyment of walks and the discovery of nature.

❖ November 30, the school hosted Dr. El-Khansa'a Theyab from Al-Quds university accompanied by Mr. Muhannad Abed, representative of the Palestinian office of Education. The objective of the visit was to introduce the teachers to the Master of Arts in the teaching program, a joint program between Al-Quds University and Bard College in New York. It is a cross disciplinary program that blends graduate level courses in education with courses in the fields of specialization of the students.



❖ December 2-5. As part of the development program of the East Jerusalem schools, the Faisal Hussein Foundation conducted its yearly Reading Competition for grades 3-6 on three consecutive days, with one day allocated for each class. The children had read three educational books focusing on child's rights, democracy and gender.

❖ The Christmas Holidays. The last day of school before the Christmas holidays and after the final exams are finished will be on December 23, and school starts again on January 9, 2020.



❖ Palestinian Teacher's Day: On December 14, Rawdat El-Zuhur celebrated the Palestinian Teacher's Day with the Mothers' committee, who also deserve recognition being the first teachers of those children. The school takes pride in the cooperation of the home which reflects positively on the children. There was a short program by some of the students, followed by a brunch and some games, prizes, and a special gift was presented to each teacher. Attending the function were Mrs. Salwa Zananiri, the past principal and Mrs. Samia Khoury a past president.

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Guests and Visitors:

November 12, a surprise visit: Walking with some guests on the way to the school, Mrs. Khoury noticed that some of the ladies stopped a woman to admire her “Thob” the national Palestinian dress. The irony of it all is that the woman “Halimeh” recognized Mrs. Khoury as she turned out to have been one of the early girls of Rawdat El-Zuhur. So she joined the group to visit the school, and



while reminiscing over the good old days, she expressed her gratitude to the late Miss Nasir who had provided those girls with so many skills that they carried with them all along. Moreover, one of the teachers recognized Halimeh as she used to visit her aunt, who was one of the first teachers at the school when it started in the early fifties.



November 12, Kathy and Ziad Shehadeh, Lizzy Holmes, Samia Salameh, USA



Other Guests:

On October 15, Mrs. Khoury accompanied an old friend from the pre 1948 days of Jerusalem with whom she shared beautiful memories of their YMCA days and their privileges to use the YMCA gymnasium and library. Lucy Janjigian, the daughter of the late Mr. Boyajian, a long-time headmaster of the St. George's school was not a guest in her own country, neither was it her first visit to Jerusalem after 1948. But it certainly was her first to Rawdat El-Zuhur, and we are sure it won't be her last one.

In memorium:

May 2019, Ada Kalbian who had served on the board of Rawdat El-Zuhur in its early beginnings and continued to support the school though she had left the country shortly after 1967. On her 80th birthday during the ANERA dinner in October 2009, she had asked friends to make a donation to Rawdat El-Zuhur in lieu of gifts.

June 2019 Osama Faris who had made a commitment to his aunt Elizabeth Nasir to keep supporting the school until the end of his days.

Bless their souls; may they rest in peace

Contributions:

Thanks to all those who sent contributions to Rawdat El-Zuhur since our last newsletter:

- Mrs. Samia Khoury, Jerusalem
- Mennonite Central Committee, MCC, USA
- Muna & Basem Hishmeh Foundation, USA
- Global Ministries, Child and Elder Sponsorship Program, USA
- Anonymous, through Palcrafts,UK.
- Sami, Tamara, and Ruba Khoury, Dubai

A short reminder to all our friends **in the USA**, that the easiest way to send a gift is through **Embrace the Children of Palestine** at the following address. Donations are exempt from federal income tax:

Lana Kurtz, Embrace the Children of Palestine, Inc.

3410 Wisteria Court Birmingham, AL 35216

While in the UK you may send your gifts through:

The Treasurer

Palcrafts UK 123 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4JN Palcrafts/Hadeel, 123 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4JN www.hadeel.org; 01312251922 Palcrafts charity No. SC 033983 Hadeel is an importing and trading member of the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers.

Kindly be reminded that we receive donations all through the year.

Please check our Facebook page for more school activities and news.



Rawdat El-Zuhur School