



December 2007



# Rawdat

# El Zuhur

Newsletter

## Dear Friends and Partners,

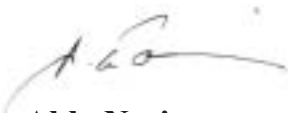
It is always a pleasure for us to share with you news of our school. With this newsletter, we give you an idea about the activities that have taken place throughout the year, what has developed and been accomplished, and a glimpse on who visited and left a note of appreciation.

The words and photos in this letter speak for themselves but for many of you who have visited the school, the voices of happy children resonate in the background. We cannot think of the school without seeing images of children filled with enthusiasm and pride to demonstrate what they know, and perform what they have learned. Those images reflect an atmosphere of love and safety that nourishes those little minds with knowledge and warms their souls with care and understanding. It is indeed a mission that every staff member adopts as part of her / his duties in equipping children of RZ with the needed skills to learn and to grow. We take this opportunity to express appreciation and thanks to the administration of the school, faculty and staff for all the good work and for their commitment to keep it up.

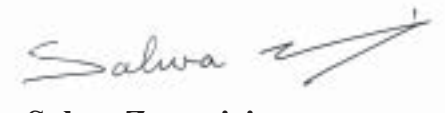
The school is alive with its children, who continue to charge us with the hope and the will to make their future a better one amid the numerous difficulties that surround us. Every step we take, to better achieve our goals and fulfill our duties, is made possible with the care and support of all of you who have stood by us and made sure that our mission is realized. As this newsletter includes dreams and aspirations of the children of RZ, we, and as we shared with many of you, aspire for new school premises with enough space to accommodate the growing need to take more students into our program. If every idea starts with a dream, every action is made possible with collective efforts to achieve it.

On behalf of the family of RZ, we extend our deep appreciation to every one of you. Your support to the school has made it possible for us to transform many ideas into a reality, which we still want to develop to reach our dream.

May God be with us all to continue with our endeavor to provide those children with better opportunities for learning through growth. And may their growth be blessed with the peace we aspire for in this troubled land of ours.



**Abla Nasir**  
Executive Board



**Salwa Zananiri**  
School Principal

## SPECIAL EVENTS / CELEBRATIONS



### Mothers' Day

Mothers of the Nursery, kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade were invited to celebrate Mothers' day on March 21. The program included songs, folkloric dances and a short play was performed by the Kindergarten children.



### Labour Day

Since the school was on holiday on the occasion of Labour day on May 1, a special event was held the following day for the four workers as a gesture of appreciation. The children started the celebration with a short speech followed by songs, music and folkloric dances. A reception followed the event.

### Open Day

On May 19 an open day was organized at the school. It was a very lively day as guests walked through the different activities and exhibits. Guests were very impressed with the children who were demonstrating science experiments and technology. They also enjoyed the folkloric dancing, drama, music and sports that were going on in different areas of the school, as well as the artwork exhibit of the nursery and kindergarten.



Members and friends of Rawdat El Zuhur and representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and many organizations attended the event.

### Teachers' Day

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, marking Teachers Day, a short program was organized to express appreciation to the teachers. Mrs. Salwa Zananiri gave a short speech emphasizing how the commitment to the school mission and the promotion of ethical values have been the key to the success of the work and the beautiful relationship between staff, children and parents.

A short speech was presented by one of the members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) following Mrs. Zananiri's words of appreciation. At the end of the program, children performed a folkloric dance "Dabkeh" and played their oriental instruments the "oud" and "zither" during which everybody joined in the singing.

Traditional Palestinian embroidered shawls were presented to the teachers as a token of appreciation. A reception followed the event.

### Santa Comes to Rawdat El Zuhur

As Eid Al Adha and the Christmas holidays coincided almost at the same time, Rawdat el Zuhur celebrated both feasts on December 17<sup>th</sup> before the beginning of the holidays. The children received Santa with Christmas carols and applause while Santa surprised everyone with amusing and funny gestures.

The theme of the celebration was to empathize with those in need and to be thankful to God for all the blessings with the hope that the message of the Eid and Christmas will prevail. A pleasant sketch was presented by first grade students highlighting that message. It was very clear during this celebration that the founding spirit of Miss Elizabeth Nasir still hovers over "the garden of flowers" with children radiating with joy.



# EXTRA\_CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## Annual Reading Week

The annual reading week was held in April to promote and encourage the habit of reading, creative writing, and appreciation of literature among children.

During that week a puppet show was organized for both the nursery and kindergarten, while mothers took turn in story telling to the rest of the classes. Some stories were later produced and performed as short skits by the children themselves.



## French Day

French teaching has been supported by the French Consulate in Jerusalem for many years. On French day, held on May 12<sup>th</sup>, children were given the opportunity to express their language skills. Students chose themes from their textbooks to perform in front of the French representative, mothers, teachers and other guests.

As part of that week's activities children of the nursery, kindergarten, grades one and two watched a French film translated into Arabic at the Palestinian National Theatre, known by many as "Al-Hakawati". The theme of the film was about cooperation and helping one another. The event was organized by the French Cultural Center.

## International Palestinian Book Fair

At the invitation of the Ministry of Education grades five and six, some teachers and PTA representatives visited the International Book Fair in Ramallah, held on September 6<sup>th</sup>. The fair displayed valuable resources for all ages, and the children



enjoyed listening to exciting stories, some of which were performed as short plays by Al Kassaba theatre on an outdoor stage. Later the students participated in different games, comic plays and competitions.

## School Trips

The kindergarten and nursery classes enjoyed a beautiful sunny day on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Banana Land amusement park in Jericho. PTA mothers, teachers and kindergarten trainers joined the students. Children are taken to school trips twice a year for enhancing group activities and learning to share and have a good time.



# PARENT'S INVOLVEMENT

## Ongoing Parents/child consultations

Parents are regularly invited to school meetings to discuss their children's academic progress and conduct/behavior issues. This is an ongoing activity to enhance parents/school relationship and encourage parental active participation in their children's education. The school psychologist and kindergarten teacher are always available for advice.

## Monitoring Committee

At the request of the Palestinian Ministry of Education Rawdat El Zuhur was requested to form a monitoring committee to discuss arising problems and how to reduce violence in schools amongst children and encourage positive behavior. A committee was formed by teachers and a representative from the PTA committee. Shortly after convening the committee decided to organize a competition amongst fourth, fifth, and sixth graders to identify the cleanest classroom. Grade six was responsible for the nomination of the winning class. The picture of the winning class will hang at the entrance of the school. Members of the committee agreed to hold meetings whenever the need arises.

## PTA

Committed as they are, PTA mothers never fail to come to a meeting or render a helping hand whenever necessary. On one occasion four teachers were absent, so one of the mothers came over to take some of the duties. During the Christmas preparations they helped in gift wrapping and other chores. Their endless commitment is highly appreciated.



# APPLYING NEW TEACHING TOOLS

## The Welfare project:

In the framework of the Welfare project “Enhancement and Development of a Holistic Approach to Education” a three day workshop on first aid and emergency was held for the employees and teachers of Rawdat El Zuhur on August 27. Twenty five attended.

Another session was held for mothers on November 14. Ten mothers participated and some school staff.



## Active learning:

Rawdat El Zuhur’s slogan for this year has been “active learning” which is applied by all teachers. The children are the center of activity and the process is achieved through thinking and analysis that lead to children’s acquisition of knowledge and the development of practical skills.

The nursery and kindergarten children enjoyed a day of picking and pressing olives in a practical lesson. They also learnt about the importance of the olive tree, not only for its health benefits, but its symbolism of steadfastness, peace and solidarity which were conveyed through a performance of singing and folklore dancing.

As an example to active learning the French teacher took grade 5 to a nearby hotel to show them



how a hotel bedroom is furnished. She also took grade six to the French Cultural Center to watch a documentary film about France. She uses a special method using body language and music to teach children proper French pronunciation

## Visit to Helen Keller:

In the curriculum of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, students were exposed to the functions of the eye, after which they discussed the story of Helen Keller. Rawdat El Zuhur with its commitment and understanding to coordinate with other organizations, arranged a day for grade four to spend at the Helen Keller School in Jerusalem for the visually challenged. The day was fabulous and the warm welcome was exceptional. The children were fascinated by all what they saw. For souvenirs they had their names written in Braille. They enjoyed playing sports with the Helen Keller pupils on the balance bar, some front wheels on the gymnastic mattresses and even some cart wheels. It was such an informative day and full of appreciation.



## INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

### Music and Art

Music continues to form an integral part in the school's program. Besides singing, talented children are encouraged to learn playing on different instruments, while others learn how to read notes. Samer and Bisan have continued music at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music and are now part of the orchestra there. Watching the children happily playing their instruments or singing from the depth of their hearts is evidence that music lifts up their spirits and is indeed a great pleasure.

As to dancing, the Dabkeh teacher managed in less than a year to teach the children dancing to the music of various folkloric songs.

In these difficult times the best way for children to express themselves is through music, art and drama.



### The tree of Ethical values

Dream is the new branch now growing amongst other values decorating the tree of values such as love, forgiveness, justice, peace and hope, honesty, cooperation, patience, commitment, reconciliation, etc... Each branch represents one of the values that Rawdat El Zuhur wishes the children to adopt and cherish throughout their lives.

The children decided to add dream to the tree of values to emphasize hope for a better future, and the importance of dreaming as a first step towards realizing great achievements in life.

On broader terms, the children keep hoping that more classes will be added to the school so that they do not have to leave it at an early stage.

May each and every child dream and excel in his/her performance so as to realize that dream.



In succession and every two weeks one of the PTA mothers joins grades five and six during break time to talk about chosen values on the tree. Public Welfare, honesty, tidiness, etc... were amongst the values addressed. One of the mothers began her topic on respect with an Arabic limerick about the tree of values. *"A tree in life- its fruits we pick one after the other, once picked cautiously and skillfully, we lead a pleasant life bound with love and respect."*

Another mother addressed the issue through a story where she was walking down the street and one of the leaves of a tree fell, on that leaf was written "Public Welfare" the leaf was crying and sad. This is how the discussion evolved and went on. Class six and five decided they will have their own rules from now on to maintain public welfare.

The children are encouraged to discuss and express their views and are keen to listen to every word especially coming from a mother's mouth

### The Nutritious Food Project

We are ever so grateful to BibleLands for subsidizing the Nutritious project for the Nursery and Kindergarten. The children enjoy different varieties of healthy food on a daily basis. Sometimes the children get a fruit or vegetable and occasionally a chocolate milk drink. On one occasion the Nursery teacher talked to the children about a variety of vegetables and their health benefits, after which they received a cup of warm vegetable soup to warm up their small hearts.



### Medical checkup:

The Greek Catholic Society – Infant Welfare Center volunteered its services by taking blood samples of all the school children. The blood tests were for checking hemoglobin and diabetes. This is the first time that such an activity takes place at the school but is highly important especially that most parents are unaware of its significance.

The school is grateful to the Greek Catholic Society for its kind support.



The school is also grateful to Nidal Center for Community Development for immunizing grades one and six against different diseases.

## Alumni Club

The Alumni Club, established in 1994 has fifty members this year. They continue to meet regularly on Fridays and participate in a variety of activities like drama, folkloric dancing (dabkeh) and music. They are a creative group and are supervised by some of the staff. Keeping ties with the alumni makes it possible to provide them with leadership training and help them maintain the values that they had acquired at the school. The floor is usually open for discussion and the alumni are encouraged to discuss a variety of issues, and some problems that they encounter in their new schools, and how to deal with them. Very often professionals are asked to help facilitate those discussion groups. One of the graduates shared the experience of being in a school with closed windows and doors. How very different from the atmosphere of Rawdat El Zuhur where students could walk into the principal's office any time and feel the love, concern and understanding.

## Graduates come to visit

Dr. Kareem Abu Libdeh, an alumnus, came to visit his "second home" Rawdat El Zuhur. He was impressed by the progress he had seen since he was at the school twelve years ago, and ended his visit by writing a very emotional script in the guest book.



Another student Sabha Jaddalah, 1974 graduate, visited the school and reminisced about the good old times, the laughs and the smiles when Santa Claus gave her and other children their Christmas presents. The first thing she did upon receiving the permit to come from Hebron was to visit her school where her heart and soul still lie. "Those were the days," she said. The school principal, Mrs. Salwa Zananiri, presented her with a mug and many hugs while going away. It was a moment where the past and present met with the same affection and love.





## COMMUNITY SERVICE

### Day of the Elderly

October 1 marks the International Day for the Elderly. To commemorate this occasion, the children of grades five and six performed special plays to point out the role of the elderly in the Arab world and how they should be respected and how the younger generation should benefit from their wisdom and experience. Rawdat El Zuhur encourages students to do community service and coordinates with other organizations for that purpose.

### Four Homes of Mercy

Grade six visited the Four Homes of Mercy for the elderly accompanied by a few teachers and PTA mothers. The students offered them a meal which was donated by the school children and staff. They entertained the residents and danced on the tunes of various folkloric songs, accompanied by the music teacher who played the oud, while two other students played the zither and the Arabic percussion instrument- the Tableh. This really brought joy to the hearts of the elderly.

The visit broadened the children's perspectives to empathize with those who are less fortunate and the teachers could not help but notice how pleased the children felt as they were able to help in their own little way.



## Admissions:

Thirty one new pupils were admitted this year making the total enrollment 241; 134 girls and 107 boys. Unfortunately the school had to turn down 130 applicants because of the limited space.

Although the cost of education per child is \$1200 a year, the school fees are \$350 a year per child which cover about 30% of the cost. It is through the kind support of friends and donors that we are able to fulfill our financial commitments but are still in great need of further support. After all, ever since its establishment, Rawdat El Zuhur has been committed to serve the needy and the lower income community in Jerusalem, and it has never turned back a child because of fees.

## Human Resources Update:

Najwa Sahhar-Sayegh was appointed as a Development and Public Relations officer as of the beginning of November. It is indeed a small world as Najwa is the daughter of the Late Basil Sahhar who had served on the board of Rawdat El Zuhur when it was developing into a formal school during the time of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Naser who established the school in 1952.

Maha Sabareeni- Barakat is on maternity leave for one year and was replaced by Lubaba Hussein.

Reema Hazboun, the French teacher resigned and was replaced by Mrs. Juliana Turjman.

The Arithmetic teacher, Neda Farhat gave a model lesson to grade six as part of the training of six teachers from the Palestinian Ministry of Education who attended with their supervisor Sana El Ashab.

## School president

A former president of Rawdat El Zuhur, Mrs. Samia Khoury talking to the new President Mrs. Abla Nasser.

Mrs. Khoury is passing on her magic smile that always prevails at the school and makes everybody welcome.



## Elections:

On February 17 and at the end of the three year term of the board, the general assembly elected a new board as follows:

Abla Nasir - President

Alia El Yasir – Vice President

Dalia Habash – Treasurer

Hanan Halabi – Secretary

Safa Abu Assab

Joan Abu Jebara / Assali

Dina Nasser

Maha Sader

## School Guests:

Mrs. Margaret Cooper, a friend of BibleLands was warmly welcomed in October with a group of friends. The group was shown around the school – saw the different classes and activities and later on had a chat with the principal and president of the board. The group enjoyed a taste of Ka'ek and Zatar – a typical Palestinian breakfast along with a cup of mint tea. Finally the group ended their day by joining the children in a dabkeh- the traditional Palestinian dance which left some of them in laughter and others in a breathless state.

A surprise visit by Nadia Salfity brought joy to all. She and her husband Paul Race and some friends came unexpectedly from England to visit Rawdat El Zuhur.

Nadia's mother Mary Salfity, worked at the school in the early sixties before she got married and moved to England. Nadia has heard a lot about the school from her mother and was anxious to see what it's all about. She was moved by the pictures of her mother hanging on the wall.

It is indeed amazing how the staff of Rawdat El Zuhur remain concerned about how things are going at the school. No matter how long they have been away, the connection remains strong.



Also among those who visited us this year are the following:

Antczak, Sheron	Makari, Peter
Bagley, Rachel	Mayer, Wendy
Bates, Bonnie	Moyse, Marilyn
Bennis, Cyril and Roxanne	Newby, Elizabeth
Bruno, Bishop J. Jon	Nye, Nancy
Bohnan, Whit	Pitzwitt, Doreen
Brouwer, Femhe	Pummill , Father Joe
Bruhms, Maxine	Pummill, Doris
Chaath, Mary Kate	Rainford, Jacqueline
Clark, Howard	Tumilty, Rev. Anne
Cobb, Hope	Jones, Rev. Malcolm S.
Cooper, Margaret	Seikaly, Sleman and Lois
Cunnington, Helen	Students of Eden Theological Seminary
Davis-Amjadi, Beverly	Watkins, Shawn
Delaplain, Gloria	Weir, Alison
England, Denise	أمال الجعبة
Father Dick O’Riordan	إبراهيم غياظة
Hannikainen, Heikki & Lauretta	حاتم مسك
Hargis, Beth	رائد سمارة
Harris, Judy	رأفت ناصر الدين
Hoey, Carolyn	رشاد إشتيه
Hughes, Reverend Jean	روان دعه
Hylkema, Ben and Carol	سليمه ابو الحاج
Jodd, Kathleen	عايدة عيسا وي
Knott, Rev. Liz	غسان فرحات
Kramer, Marta	كريم أبو لبدة
Lehne, Barb	منى حليبي
Letzler, Elizabeth	ناصر عوده
Lewis, Janet	ياسمين مسك
Lowey, Rick	

## From The Guest Book:

- Rawdat El Zuhur is a credit to my friend Lizzy Nasir, she marked diligently to help children have a better, fuller life.
- It is such a joy to see the bright happy faces of the children. May all the hope of the character tree be realized amongst us all.
- It was such a pleasure to visit Rawdat El Zuhur school again. I continue to be impressed with the quality of education and the beauty of the children.
- Visiting Rawdat El Zuhur school took us back to the old days with your lovely staff. Thank you so much for keeping the smiles and hope on our children’s faces. Wishing all of you the very best in your hard work to keep Palestinian children of Jerusalem happy, growing in a beautiful school.

• إلى مدرستي ومعلماتي وأهلي – بعد سنين غياب، عدت لازور بيتي وأمي وجميع أفراد أسرتي، لاسترجع بعضاً من ذكرياتي أحلى أيام حياتي في هذه المدرسة لأجد الجو العائلي، والترابط الذي لا يوجد سوى في روضه الزهور

## In Appreciation:

Thanks to the generous contribution of Tim and Sue Wells, the computer Lab received twelve new computers, a projector and a movable screen to enhance the teaching methods in both the computer Lab and the classroom.



Special thanks to Palcraftaid for its generous contribution and continuous support. Part of the donations were used for renovating different areas of the school.

As always it was a pleasure to see Reverend Knott and Connie once again at the school in October.



We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who support Rawdat El Zuhur and believe in its mission.

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who made a contribution during the period between Dec 11, 2006- Dec. 31 -2007.

## Organizations:

ANERA	Center Harbor Cong. Church
Congregational U.C.C. of Newton	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Faith Presbyterian Church	First Congregation Church Women's League
French Consulate	Global Ministries
Great Amman Municipality	Greenburg District United Methodist Women
Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church	United Nation's Women's Guild
Pal Craftaid	Pontifical Mission
Presbyterian Women's League in Pleasantville	St. James Episcopal Church
The Bible Lands Society	Parish of St. Clement.
U.S. Omen	The Parish of St. Clement
Welfare association	United Palestinian Appeal



## Individuals:

Abushar, Rizeq and Alice  
**Anstey, Eleanor**  
 Baramki, Ranya  
**Belding, Linda**  
 Bennis, Cyril & Roxanne  
**Bevans, John & Judith**  
 Birch, Rev. Judith  
**Bruno, Bishop J..Jon**  
 Buchanan, George & Marlene  
**Burr, Elizabeth**  
 Delaplain, Gloria M.  
**Doermann, Ralph & Laurel**  
 El Bakri, Basima  
**El Nabulsi, Mohammad**  
 Evans, Gillian  
**Habash, Dalia**  
 Halaby, Samia  
**Hargreaves, Suzan**  
 Hendricks, Marilyn  
**Hishmeh, Bassem and Mona**  
 Hughes, Rev. Jean  
**Jackson, Dorothy**  
 Karkar, Edward

**Kassis, Nabil**  
 Kazzaz, Mahmoud  
**Ketley, R.**  
 Keulers, Renee  
**Khader, Helen**  
 Khouri, Rasha  
**Khoury, Samia**  
 King, Vera  
**Kleber, Heribert & Marie-Anne**  
 Lizz & Connie  
**Knutson, Helen**  
 Kohn, Mary  
**Kuncar, Julia**  
 Kutteineh, Abed & Hussnieh  
**Landgraf, John**  
 Landis, Kendall  
**Lapp, Nancy**  
 Maune, Bernadette  
**Michon, Maurice**  
 Mills, Margery  
**Moline, Charles**  
 Morris, Sue  
**Muha'sha', Ali & Leen**

Nasir, John  
**Nasir, Shafiq & Suzanne**  
 Nasser, Abla  
**Nasser, Dina**  
 Nasser, Hanna & Tanya  
**Newsome, Rev. Zondra**  
 Odeh, Azmi  
**Race, Nadia & Paul**  
 Robinson, Mary Sue  
**Root, Celia**  
 Sahhar, Raja  
**Scott, John**  
 Seikali, Sleman & Lois  
**Sobanet, Henry**  
 Kohn, Mary  
**Spencer, John & Brenda**  
 Swale, A.  
**Usher, Neville**  
 Volkman, John  
**Warkentin, Ruth**  
 Wells, Tim & Sue

For Contributions please send your check or wire transfer to:

**Rawdat El Zuhur account #: 605806**

**Arab Bank – El Bireh/West Bank**

**Swift number: ARABPS22030**

**Fax: +972 - 2 - 295 9588**

**Tel: +972 - 2 - 295 9581**

**Or Rawdat El Zuhur account #: 1003-570060-410**

**Arab Bank 73 Brook Street**

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**Fax: +44 (0) 20 74994193**



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