



December 2006

Rawdat
el-**Z**uhur
Newsletter



Dear Friends,

We are at the doorstep of a new year. It has been yet another very difficult year for us in Palestine, and there are little prospects for improvement in the foreseeable future.

Yet as a school whose core mission is to protect and promote the development of children and their wellbeing, we were more determined than ever to stand firm and continue to promote openness and to give the children a positive outlook for the future.

We continued to focus on helping our children to become responsible citizens and leaders who would contribute to the development of our country and to make the world a better place for all.

Today, as a result of the political situation, more than 70% of the Palestinian population lives under the poverty line. As Rawdat el-Zuhur caters for under privileged communities and families, this economic situation severely impacts the communities we serve.

The economic situation has further added to the burden the school is carrying in order to offer quality education to children. As some of you know, the children cover approximately 25% of their costs. The rest of the cost is covered by generous donations from friends and supporters. These contributions not only help sustain the school and its beneficiaries, but they also build bridges with friends and supporters from all around the world. These bridges serve to keep hope alive within the school community, and among students, faculty and administration.

We hope that the Year 2007 brings new beginnings with new hopes. We pray for peace in the whole world and we take this opportunity to wish everyone happy holidays.

Happy New Year.

Ranya Baramki
Executive Board

Salwa Zananiri
School Principal

Internal Renovations and Maintenance



We made use of the summer holidays to do some necessary renovations which included a first aid room, and two additional wash rooms, besides the maintenance of the old ones. The wooden partition between class one and two was replaced by a concrete wall for sound proof purposes, and new windows were installed in that section.

Another nice feature of the renovations was the nursery play area which had a door to the kitchen and another door to the teachers' room. Those doors were closed so that the area is not used as a passage way. These renovations were made possible through funding from BibleLands and Mr and Mrs Tim and Sue Wells.

More Renovations also took place during the Ramadan Holiday through the help of ANERA which included new windows for the kitchen, furnishing the first aid room and installing safety features for the electricity at the school.

Nutrition Day

On the 15th of February, the school arranged for a lecture by a nutrition specialist, Mrs. Munira Kleibo Zamamiri. Thirty five mothers and all staff attended. It was very enlightening and informative. Mothers and teachers interacted since nutrition and diet is an important issue in everyone's life. Mothers were concerned for the well being of their children and asked about healthy attitudes to adopt.



Nutritious Food Project

The project, subsidized by BibleLands is still going on for another year. The children really enjoy having a variety of nutritious food item each day. With 70% of the Palestinian population living under the poverty line, this project comes in very handy and important for the children's health.



Annual Reading Week

From April 1st till April 7th, we had our annual story-reading week whereby teachers and mothers took turns in reading stories for all classes. It was an active week with lots of fun.



Child's Day- Clowning Away

On Palestinian Child's Day which is celebrated on April 5th, the school had 4 clowns who did a lively, interactive and funny performance entitled "How to be happy".

The children were mesmerized by the show and their faces expressed different emotions such as surprise or a mere smile or sometimes a laugh that would make them jump out of their seats. It was such a joy to see the children having so much fun.

The show continued with painting on the children's faces. Then, all the children were given balloons shaped like different animals, swords, hats, etc.

Jumping around

In May, the school took the Nursery, kindergarten, grades 1 & 2 on a trip to "Souba " park. It is an amusement park with blown up slides and jumping areas, a pet zoo, tricycles and other toys. The children had so much fun. Grades 3,4,5 &6 went to "Dream Land" park, another amusement park where they all had a super time! It was a memorable day for all.





French Day

In May, a French day was organized. The children acted 5 different items: a play in French by grade 5, a song and dance by grade 4, a song by grade 3 and a dance and song by grade 2. A representative from the French Consulate, mothers, teachers and children were present.

PTA

During the scholastic year 2006-07, nine mothers were elected out of sixty, for the mothers' council. They are a very active group.

They volunteered to organize the Teachers' Day party which was celebrated on the 14th of December and they helped in wrapping the Christmas presents for all the children.

Graduation Day

On the 5th of June, eight girls and seventeen boys graduated from grade six. As they joined other high schools, they continue to be connected with Rawdat El-Zuhur through the alumni club which organizes many activities.

Music and Dance

Music and dancing has always been an integral part of the school program ever since Elizabeth Nasir founded Rawdat El-Zuhur for she believed that music lifts the spirits and a basic pleasure of life.

Mrs. Samia Khoury, the niece of the late Ms. Nasir and the ex-President of Rawdat El Zuhur, donated a portable key board to the school which facilitated having music in different classes and out doors.



Mr. Watan Kayyal is the new folk-dancing "Dabkeh" teacher for grades three to six. This was made possible through the support of ANERA and the local community.

Tree of Ethics

This Year the children decided to add "Optimism" to the tree of ethics.

The School director along with the teachers thought that was quite appropriate since we need optimism to be able to go on.



Women's Studies and Female Child's Rights

In cooperation with the European Union, the centre for Women's Studies in Jerusalem held 16 meetings with grade 5 concentrating on the rights of female children. Right to safety, to education and development of talents were some of the issues that were emphasized through different media such as story telling, art and music.



Walkers Raise Funds –An innovative way

Last September, young members of *Edington Priory Church*, near Westbury, went on a four mile sponsored walk through the Wiltshire Countryside to raise money for the school. The walkers were lucky enough to have some September sunshine to help them on their way. A barbeque of sausages was waiting for them when they arrived back at the church.

Parking Issue and The Court

During the summer holidays the school had to deal with a court case raised against the school by the owners of the parking lot which was established in 2002 in front of the school entrance, to serve basically lawyers and judges at the court house next door to the school. The parking lot owners claim that the school did not use this entrance until the car park was established, whereas during the hearing there was enough evidence to prove that this has been the entrance to the school since it



was established in 1952. After the first hearing the judge himself visited the site to see if there was any other access to the school, and the Principal felt very hopeful after she had shown him around and he saw for himself that literally there was no other access. Unfortunately at the beginning of this summer he made a ruling in favor of the owner of the parking lot to prevent the school from using the parking lot as an entrance to the school. We have asked our lawyer to submit an appeal to the higher court, and the hearing was on November 1. There were three judges and they ruled that the case should be taken back to the lower court. The hearing will be on February 13, 2007. In the meantime we can still use the parking lot to get to the school. So do wish us luck, otherwise we might need your support to join us for a sit in strike in the parking lot until justice prevails.

The Pontifical Mission

The Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem gave a donation for playground equipment and indoor games for the nursery and kindergarten classes.



The Apartheid Wall Strikes Again

With the Apartheid wall tightening and strangling everyone to the last breath, riding to school has become a very tedious journey, and sometimes impossible. Fifteen children were forced to leave the school because of the "WALL". One of them Leila, found it very difficult to leave school without saying goodbye. It was so moving to see her kissing her friends and teachers. Then she stood in the principal's office and looked at Salwa pleading: "Is it OK to hug you? There was a lot of hugging and tears as she left, not knowing what it was going to be like in her new school. Even a basic right such as the right to choose your own school cannot be granted under occupation.

Fire Fighter at School

In November, a firefighter from the fire department came to the school and gave the students a lecture about Fire, its hazards, what causes it, how to avoid it and what to do in case of fire. They also had a live demonstration on how to put off fires and how to react in case a fire occurs at school.



Staff News

Anisa Kreitem who has been working at Rawdat El Zuhur for 30 years has reached her retirement age, and this year was her last year as an employee. But as a grandmother there is no retirement age, and she is thoroughly enjoying her beautiful granddaughter Suzy. However, she has managed to give time to help in many activities at Rawdat El-Zuhur. The family is also expecting another baby which will definitely make Anisa's time even more valuable.

Nadia Kirreh, the French teacher, who has been with the school since 1991 has retired . She was replaced by Rima Hazboun who adapted very quickly to the working spirit of Rawdat El-Zuhur.

Maha Barakat was blessed with a baby boy "Nour" and Rana Al-Qutob with a baby girl "Maysoun"

Graduates come to visit

During the month of October 2006, a graduate from Rawdat El Zuhur, Ahmad Nabils, came to visit the school with his daughter. He was so impressed and touched, he wanted to do anything he could to help. So he spontaneously took out all the money he had on him and gave it to the school. Just before he left, he saw the fire escape stairs and offered to paint the steps in different colors the next time he comes to visit.



Another graduate, Basem Mujahed, who came to visit the school was overwhelmed and started reminiscing about old times he spent at the school. He donated physical education equipment to the school.

What a teacher should be like

One of the teachers heard a child in grade 3 saying " I wish I were dead". After talking to him alone, she found out that the child was always blamed for whatever goes wrong at home and was constantly being punished by his father. The father was called to school and the child's condition was explained to him. He was grateful for drawing his attention to his child's feelings. He even sent a letter of gratitude to the principal wishing more schools would have that personal attention like Rawdat El-Zuhur

Alumni Club



Inspired by the title of the 50th anniversary book, the alumni club is using A Radiant Hope for its slogan. Through the kind contributions of United Palestinian Appeal (UPA) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) the school has been able to expand the work of the alumni club. The club plays an important role in offering alumni the chance and space to meet and engage with each other in a safe setting. It now meets more frequently, for longer periods of time and with a wider variety of activities that allows them to express their hopes, dreams, and sometimes their frustrations. The feedback from the club members has been great and their spirit has inspired graduating students from Rawdat El-Zuhur to keep the connection with the school alive.



The club was re-launched again this school year after the summer vacation. The club members come to the school every two weeks and are offered the opportunity to take part in a number of activities, including art, dance (dabkeh), drama and computer. Specialized professionals facilitate the activities and school staff and/or volunteers take on a supervisory role. Together, they have formed a team, which is now meeting once a month to exchange ideas about how the club can continue to grow in terms of its size and programs.



We cannot overemphasize the impact that this club is having on young people's lives – it is a place where some come to catch up with old friends, others come to learn new things or develop a special talent, some

come to discuss their problems and have a kind heart listen to them, and yet others come because it is the only place where they feel loved and safe.

ANERA'S Annual Drawing contest

This Year's theme for the annual drawing contest was chosen by students from Rawdat El Zuhur. The theme was my "Friends and Me"



The prize winner from Rawdat El-Zuhur was "Raneen Siam" from grade One. She was awarded second place in the five-nine age group. Raneen received \$20 and some school supplies, as well as a certificate

Community Service

Every Year, the school takes grade six to visit the Four Homes of Mercy in Bethany. The children contributed money to offer the residents a meal, and they entertained them by singing and dancing.



Al Hoash Workshops and visit

For the appreciation of art, grade six visited three art exhibitions by young Palestinian artists at Al-Hoash gallery. They also learnt how to prepare a puppet show from simple material.



Al Hoash gallery has arranged for an art workshop for school children from nursery age till grade six. They all participated in mural making. The outcome was quite impressive. At the end of these workshops, an exhibition will take place to show the children's works of art.

Children go to science workshops

During the months of November and December 2006, all classes went to visit a science exhibition in Jerusalem where they enjoyed making experiments. The children paid a minimal fee and the rest of the cost was sponsored by friends of Rawdat El Zuhur.



Teachers' Day



The 14th of Dec. commemorates teachers' day where students and parents take this opportunity to express their appreciation to teachers. This year at Rawdat El Zuhur,

the day was celebrated through a comic sketch. It definitely made the day lighter and brought about many laughs. It was followed by typical Palestinian folk dance “Dabkeh” which made almost everyone enthusiastic and some even started singing to the words of the song. The festivities ended, with songs played by the children on the Oud , Qanoun and percussion. A small gift was given to each teacher as a token from the school for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Acknowledging the Art Teacher

Every Year, The Teachers Union, acknowledges special teachers in different schools. This year, the art teacher at Rawdat El Zuhur, Ms. Aya Shaker, was acknowledged on the 23rd of Dec. for years of dedication in the field of art.

Santa Comes to Town

On Dec 23rd all the school children were gathered in the multi purpose hall on the upper floor to celebrate the holidays. They had a little sketch where they expressed their right and longing to celebrate like all other children in the world. And then they started singing some Christmas carols and other songs. Despite the heavy rain that was splashing on the windows, they heard the jingling of bells.

And there was Santa dashing in and surprising everybody including the school principal. He was a very witty Santa, and with his funny remarks all the children were involved in the celebration. Laughs were heard and big smiles on children’s faces till their eyes lit up, were a true expression of what holidays were all about. Thank you Santa for lifting up the spirits of the children and all those who were present.

School Guests

It is always a pleasure to receive visitors and friends. It some how breaks the monotony of a school day, and the children are always happy to perform a song or two in between their math and science classes. Among those who visited us this year are the following:

Abu Zeidan	David Vargas	Mohammad Al Nabulsi	Rev. Monica Styron
Ali Houghton	Elizabeth Knott	Mounira Qleibo	Stacy Walton
Andy Gans	Geoff Harris	Zamamiri	Tricia Priden
Basem Mujahed	Gordon McCollom	Nada El Yassir	Wadad Abed
Cally Rogers	Ian White	Peter McCarry	
Connie Depond	Jenny Bond	Rabi’ El ‘Abassi	
David Jeffrey	Kathleen Dodel	Rafiq Bashir	

From The Guest Book:

- It was a joy to see children from all faiths learning together.
- The school is an inspiration, a sign of hope and the first fruit of real peace.
- It is the first time I visit the school since my graduation in 1984 and it is an honor to see such efforts.
- This school was my second home when I was a student.
- All the young people look so happy to be in this school.
- Your hospitality and welcome warm the heart.
- What a wonderful atmosphere at this happy lively school.
- You have impressed me with your warmth, professionalism and dedication.

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of Joyce Nasir, one of the founders of Rawdat El-Zuhur and who served for many years on its board. Joyce passed away on December 30, and the family has asked her friends to make a donation to Rawdat El-Zuhur in lieu of flowers.

In Appreciation:

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who sponsor 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, 2005- Dec. 31 -2006.

Organizations:	Individuals:
Al Sabeel	Al Bakri, Basima
	Al Qeimari, Yahia
Anera	Amjadi, Beverly
	Araiche, Diane and Manawel
	Baramki ,George and Wilhelmine
	Burr, Elizabeth
Bazaar International –ASBL	Callandar, Douglas and Lurette
Bible Lands	Callandar, Robin and Betty

	Doermann, Laurel Dianne
	Fares, Osama
Edington Priory Church	Glock, Lois
Faith Presbyterian Church	Hallac, A.T.
	Hargreaves, Sue
	Hayes, Lori
	Henricks, Marilyn
First United Methodist Church in Portland-Texas	Hishmeh, Basem and Muna
	Hughes, Rev. Jean
French Consulate	Jackson, Dorothy
	Jill ,Evans
	Johnston, Laurie and Aida
	Kang, Frances
Global Ministries	Karkar, Edward
	Khoury Caianiello, Lucy
	Khoury, Samia
Palestinian Craftaid	King ,Vera
	King, Ted
	Kleber, Herbert
	Kohn, G.M.
Pontifical Mission	Kreitem, Anisa
	Kuncar, Julia
	Landis, Kendall
Presbyterian Women's League in Pleasantville	Lapp, Nancy
St. Andrew's Church	Michon, Maurice
St. Mary's Church and Rimpton Friends	Mills, Margery
The Lehmberg trust	Nabulsi ,Mohammad
	Nasir, John
	Nasir, Shafiq and Susanne
	Robinson, Ruth
	Root, Rev. Howard & Celia
	Scott, John & Lois
The Parish of St. Clement	Seqali, Sam
	Shenstone, Michael and Susan
Trinity Lutheran Church	Spencer, John & Brenda
UNDP	Tarazi, Sama
	Usher, Neville
United Church of Christ	Weller, John and Anne
United Palestinian Appeal (U.P.A.)	Wells, Tim and Sue
	Zananiri, Salwa



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