

Rawdat El-Zuhur Newsletter

December 2018



Dear Friends: As we approach the Christmas season, we want to thank you all for your support and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Things do not always go smoothly in our region, and at the end of the day we never know what to expect the next morning. However, it was wonderful to be able to welcome our children back to school after the summer holidays, and to welcome new ones as well. It was amazing to see how well the new ones settled down as they and their parents were introduced to their second home, Rawdat El-Zuhur. The new academic year 2018-2019 started with a positive energy and everybody seemed busy and looking forward to a productive year. We would like to share with you and highlight some of our programs and activities that took place during the first semester.

Abla Nasir

President

Raeda Jasser

Prinicpal

Educational Programs:

To ensure the professional development of the teachers, which will contribute positively to their performance, a set of workshops for all the teachers and the administrative staff took place before the classes started at the beginning of September. We plan to have those workshops ongoing throughout the school year, and some of them will continue for the next three years. These include:

1. Communication Skills for Teams:

The workshop was organized with the trainer Diyala Medhat for 3 consecutive days. All the teachers participated in the workshop, during which they identified the most important problems facing the staff in communication. Various activities and exercises were



applied to stress the correct communication skills in order to radiate the right spirit of work, through participation and team work.

2. Faisal Hussein Foundation Programs:

As part of the Comprehensive Development project for 15 schools in Jerusalem, a new memorandum was signed with the administration of Rawdat El-Zuhur to implement the following programs in the next 3 years:

1. **Learning Difficulties:** With the consent of their parents to take a special test, eighteen students from the second until the fifth grade were selected to join this program after they were diagnosed to have learning difficulties. So, an individual plan was set for each student in order to specifically identify the study loads that best fit each student's learning ability. Over and above, the Arabic language and Math teachers participated in workshops specially organized for this project so that they will be well equipped with the required techniques and methods to help those special students.



2. **Critical Thinking:** This program is implemented through regular workshops for the faculty and the students' parents as partners in the educational process. With this partnership the process becomes complementary and wholesome. These workshops help the children and their parents become more open to new ideas and it provides them with insights and wisdom to analyze in order to make the best decisions in different life situations. Critical thinking is an



important element in public education because students are able to handle problems in a more rational way.

3. **Demography and Child Rights:** The school is considered to be the main nucleus for human education and learning. So, through this program, we aim to educate children about their rights and their feelings towards themselves and others. We also enable them to develop a sense of responsibility, tolerance and moderation in different situations in order to shape the personality of the student based on moral values and principles. This goal is achieved through teachers by adopting programs and curricula that contribute to the founding principles of human rights.

4. Workshops for the Parents:



Faisal Hussein Foundation has organized two workshops for the children's parents, during which they were introduced to the Foundation and its programs designed for the children and implemented through the schools. The two workshops were about: Critical Thinking and Demography and Child's Right.



5. **Reading Contest:** The school reading competition was held on Thursday, 29/11/2018 for 55 students from the third and fourth grades, and on Thursday 6/12/2018 for 42 students, from the fifth and sixth grades.



3. Integrating People of Special Needs into the School Community:

In order to raise awareness towards people with special needs and to provide them with full support and acceptance by others in the community, the school administration has signed an agreement with Elwin organization for people of special needs in Jerusalem, by which the school will host a student from Elwin as a volunteer intern to assist teachers in the Kindergarten.

4. Educational Leadership Diploma Program:



In partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, UNDP and the National Institute for Educational Training, the Principal of the school, Mrs. Raeda Jasser, has been participating in the Diploma of Educational Leadership Program and School Planning throughout the current academic year with 340 hours of training. The aim of the diploma is to acquire the basic competencies in the planning process; for both the annual and the strategic planning through self-

assessment of the school, and based on this evaluation, a development plan will be set in order to achieve the desired goals.

6. Cultural and Educational Activities:

1) On 16/10/2018, the fifth and sixth graders paid a visit to **Tamer Institute for Community Education**, which focuses mainly on children's literature. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the students to the institution and its activities. In addition, the Institute organizes various educational activities for children such as story-telling and handicrafts.



2) "Father Read for Me," Campaign:



This campaign was held under the supervision of Tamer Institute on the 10th of November 2018: Fathers were invited to participate in reading stories for their children in the classroom. In addition to that, fathers had joined their children in doing some handicrafts activities. Each father brought a toy with him which belongs to his child. The toy had to be purchased by the father for his child on a special occasion. Then the father had to talk a

little bit about the toy to express the moral value of the gift in order to strengthen the relationship between parents and children.



3) Heritage Day and Olive Picking Season:

Under the slogan, "The Palestinian heritage: A memory of a people and their homeland," the Heritage Day was celebrated on October 6, 2018. The celebration was launched with the Palestinian National Anthem, and a moment of silence in memory of the martyrs. This was followed by the morning radio talk about the importance of one's heritage. A competition about the Popular

Proverbs was organized between the fifth and sixth grades with the participation of the made this celebration meaningful was the



teachers. What special and presence and



participation of the grandparents of students, whereby they narrated stories from the Palestinian heritage and exchanged conversations with the children from the days gone by. The celebration was concluded with a traditional Palestinian breakfast, and the traditional Palestinian wedding ceremony whereby it was a joyful celebration with Dabkeh the national dance and traditional songs. The school also hosted the Palestinian writer Aziz Al-Assa, who addressed the children on the significance of one's heritage and its importance and how to preserve it and celebrate it joyfully.



4) PV crid connected photo voltaic system:

Funded by the Jerusalem Waqf Fund and the Swiss Foundation, and within the Program of Building and Development, it will be possible now for the school to use solar energy to generate electricity for Rawdat El-Zuhur. This project aims at using the sources of renewable energy as an environment friendly source and does not negatively affect the environment. In addition to reducing the cost of electricity consumption and to instill awareness among the young generations about the importance of natural resources and how to make use of them efficiently. The project will be implemented after the first semester break, and the project supervisor will be the Jerusalem Electricity Company.

5) World Day for the Elderly 1/10/2018:

In order to express respect and appreciation for the elderly community, the sixth graders visited Al-Ja'abah Hospital for the elderly in Beit Hanina. They brought joy to the hearts of those elderly people with their singing and dancing the "Dabkeh." They also, offered the residents some sweets, flowers and cards bearing expressions of respect and care for the elderly. One of the residents was specially moved as she had taught for many years at the school.



6) School trip:

Two months after the beginning of the scholastic year, a recreational trip was organized for the students to re-charge their energy and vitality. So the Kindergarten students went to the Tsuba recreational park while the elementary grades went to the Zoo.



7) Jerusalem Festival of Tales:

On the occasion of the opening of the Jerusalem Festival of Tales by Yabous Cultural Center, the students of the first, second and third grades participated in the opening by attending the play "Zarif" on Monday 3/12/2018.



8) Fantasy Band:



On the occasion of Christmas and the New Year, as well as the end of the first semester, an entertaining performance was presented to the students to create an atmosphere of joy before the holiday season. Fantasia band provided some entertainment and magical games. And of course, Santa Claus was there with gifts for the children. Christmas is more than a religious symbol, it also has a social meaning for the family and all that makes for love, security and peace. So let us hope that the New Year will mark the end of wars, conflicts as well as famine all over.

Welcoming Visitors:

On the 7th of November, **Samia Halaby**, the renowned Palestinian American artist visited the school with her sister **Nahida**, her husband **Donald Gordon**, their daughter **Jean** and granddaughter **Madison**. Samia and Nahida are founders of Embrace the children of Palestine, an organization that is familiar to many of our friends by now, because it is through Embrace, donations exempt from taxes can be sent to Rawdat El-Zuhur. For Jean and Madison this was their first visit to the school, but hopefully not the last, as they enjoyed their visit and especially the Dabke, the folk dancing of the children. Jean has already made a commitment to sponsor a child at the school.



On the 4th of December, **Peter Makari** from The Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) visited the school with **Linda Lawrence**, the staff member for the sponsorship program at the Global Ministries. Linda had a long session with Randa Gharfeh, the staff member at the school who handles the sponsorship

program and was impressed by Randa's efficiency of handling the sponsorship program. On that day the children were making their own Christmas cards, and they were more than happy to share some of their work with the school guests.

October 17, 2018, a group of students and their professor Ian Clark, from Oundle School, Britain, visited the school.

Donations:

Special thanks go to our friends who have made a donation during the first semester, and after our last list was published.

Global Ministries (UCC) Common Services Cooperation, USA

George Baramki

Samia Khoury in memory of Butros Shehadeh

PALCRAFT AID, Anonymous, UK

Embrace the Middle East, UK

Friedrich Mulka Stiftung, Germany

Mrs. Jean Hughes, UK

Oundle School group

The following individuals made their donations through Embrace the Children of Palestine, USA:

- A.T. Hallac
- O. F. Faris
- Vangurd Charitable, Anonymous
- Ghada Nasir
- Suheila Aziz Nasir
- Nazih N. Nasir

Special Christmas Gifts from:

Karine & Tony Kafity

Noor Al Ghafari

Camelia Karam

In the meantime, we would like to remind 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.

Thanks to all who sent contributions to Rawdat El-Zuhur for this period. Kindly be reminded that we receive donations all through the year.

Please check our website regularly for future updates www.rawdat.org.

Also, check our Facebook page for more school activities and news.



Rawdat El-zuhur School