

روضه الزهور



Rawdat al-Zuhur



Dear friends,

Once again, it's this time of the year. We would like to wish everyone a happy holiday, Christmas and Al- Adha. And may the New Year bring peace, stability and love into this world.

This year the reality stands as hard as the WALL surrounding Jerusalem and other Palestinian villages, towns and cities. The reality of the new situation is as grey as the WALL, yet one still hopes and prays that there will be a breakthrough.

Many challenges await the family of Rawdat El Zuhur. A number of children had to quit the school due to the hardship of reaching the school with all the closures, the harassment and the check points. Some teachers take different risks while crossing without permits to be with their students.

As most of you are aware, Rawdat El Zuhur offers subsidized education for children of lower-income families and as such, school fees barely cover a quarter of the actual cost of the education that is provided to its students. The political pressures faced by Palestinian organizations and institutions in Jerusalem, coupled with the general reluctance of donor countries to support them, has resulted in an increasing financial burden. Rawdat El Zuhur, is one of the organizations in Jerusalem that suffer from these pressures and struggles to maintain its services.

However, we have been very fortunate to have a number of organizations and friends who always stood by our side, and never abandoned us during these challenging times. In fact their support was expressed in different ways and means. To them all we express our deep appreciation, realizing that without their substantial support our services would not have been possible. We would also like to seize this opportunity to express our thanks as well to the local community, as individuals and organizations for their support and solidarity at times of need.

A special appreciation goes to the parents and staff whose cooperation and spirit of team work have had a very positive effect on the journey and quality of education at Rawdat El-Zuhur.

Happy Holidays and may the New Year bring justice and peace to this troubled region and to the whole world.

Salwa Zananiri

School Principal



Ranya Baramki

President



OPEC Comes to the Rescue

In response to the challenges facing the Jerusalem organizations, which have not been able to maintain their running costs, due to the political pressures and closures, OPEC comes to their rescue. Salaries, rent, and endless types of taxes have burdened a number of those organizations, and very often they have been forced to either curtail some of their services, lay off staff, or close their offices in Jerusalem. Realizing the seriousness of the situation and its political effect on Arab East Jerusalem, OPEC took a meaningful and courageous initiative to support the running expenses of a number of the Jerusalem organizations whose services were making a difference to the local community of East Jerusalem. Rawdat El-Zuhur was one of the beneficiaries, and cannot be grateful enough to OPEC for its generous grant.

Breaking the Record

The beginning of September is always an exciting time for Rawdat El-Zuhur. Parents, children and staff all seem to be busy attending to one thing or another. It was so refreshing to watch the thirty two new children admitted to the nursery enjoying their first experience with bright faces and spotless uniforms. However, 103 applicants were turned away for lack of space. The number of applicants is increasing every year, but this large number of, “turned away” applicants, alerts us to the fact that there is so much demand for the services of the school that we need to start planning for larger premises. The total number of children this year is 242 (131 girls and 111 boys)

The Sad Side of the Story

Once again this year the “WALL” stands high and offensive to confront school children as well as the whole Palestinian population. Ten of our students whose homes ended up behind the “Separation Wall”, opted to leave the school because they could not cope with the harassment of the Israeli Occupying Forces, and the endless obstacles

they would face on their way to school. It was a hard decision for both the parents and their children to leave the heart warming and loving atmosphere of the school. Ameera, who had accepted the challenge last year, and ended up being drained and exhausted, realized she could not cope with another year. So with a broken heart she left the school to enroll at a school in her own neighborhood.

Graduation Day

June 11, 2005 marked the end of the scholastic year and the graduation of 26 children from grade six, the highest class in the school. (16 boys and 10 girls) As usual there is never a dull moment at Rawdat El-Zuhur. So here are some highlights of the scholastic year 2004/2005



PTA

Democratic procedures are applied at Rawdat El-Zuhur and do not need to be imposed by outside forces. Eleven mothers had been elected for the Parent Teacher Association in the fall of 2004, and will serve for a second term during this year.

A Unique Experience

Wissam-the father of Tala & Tamar, who is a carpenter by profession, volunteered a day at the school, displaying the tools of the carpenter and how they are used. At the end of the day he made a coat hanger for the children, a souvenir to remember that lovely day every time they hang their jackets and coats.



Story Telling

Board member Alia, who has a special talent in storytelling, has given some of her free time to read stories to various classes.

“Ashtar” Drama Workshop

Ashtar theatre group led a 20 hour workshop introducing teaching through drama for grades 3, 4, & 5. It was a very positive experience for the teachers and opened up a new vision for innovative teaching methods.

The National Palestinian Theatre

(Al-Hakawati) performed a comic but educational play for the school children which emphasized the importance of telling the truth, no matter what. That is indeed challenging when the world is full of lies these days.

An Educational Experience

Mohammad Adeeleh, an animal embalmer spent a morning at the school demonstrating the process of embalming birds and reptiles which the children enjoyed and thought was very interesting.

The Mothers' Regular Meetings

Monica Awad, a UNICEF staff member, who serves on the Rawdat board gave a talk to the mothers during their regular monthly meetings on the effect of Television on children. Another talk was on the importance of healthy and nutritional food given by Sahar Shehab Safady, a nutritionist. Actually both lectures were very helpful, and in a way closely related, because a lot of the junk food that the children eat is promoted through television.

The school continues to offer French lessons to some of the mothers. This bridges the gap between mothers and children, and qualifies them to help their children with their French homework.

ANERA's Annual Drawing Contest

"I'm happy when - "was the theme of ANERA's annual contest. Reem Al-Salfiti of grade Six won first prize for the age group 10-13 and a gift of \$30, which any young girl would know how to spend. "I'm happy when I am at school" was the theme of Reem's drawing.



A Generous and Warm Donation

Through a generous grant mainly from ANERA, Bible Lands and other donors from the local community who chose to stay anonymous, the long awaited project of heating the school in the cold days of winter will soon be realized. The space for the generator has already been prepared and done.



Internal Renovations and Maintenance

Financed by a generous donation from Bible Lands, renovations will include changing entrances to the staff room and kitchen so that the nursery area is not used as a passageway. Also brick insulated walls will replace wooden partitions for sound proof purposes.

The Nutritious Food Project

The project, subsidized by BibleLands is still going on, and the children get a fruit or vegetable every day during the break and occasionally a chocolate milk drink.



Local Fund Raising

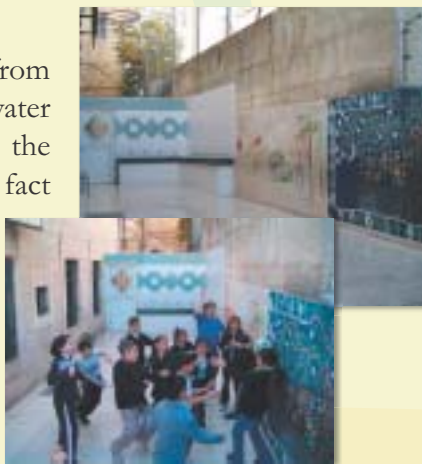
During the month of Ramadan, the school board held a special fund raising Iftar at the Christmas Hotel which was well attended by the local community.

Ramadan Special Gift

As part of their "Zakat" (Tithe) during the month of Ramadan, a couple from the local community who chose to stay anonymous donated sweaters to the school children. But the gift was doubly meaningful because they had ordered the sweaters to be woven by an organization for the visually handicapped in Nablus which does not have much opportunity to market their products with the tight closure.

New Water Fountains

Through a generous donation from Tim and Sue Wells, new water fountains were installed during the summer vacation. Despite the fact that the Wells visited the school while the children were on vacation, yet they were touched by its story and felt the urge to do something for the children. How appropriate indeed that the Wells would provide water to the children.



In Memory

In memory of Eleanor Aitkens, a friend of Rawdat El-Zuhur and its founder Elizabeth Nasir, Samia Khoury sponsored two children Mahmoud Farahat and Razan Abu Shame, to attend a music summer camp organized by the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music at the YWCA of Jerusalem.

Innovative Fund Raising

Janin Fattaleh Diliiani used her photography skills to raise funds for charity as she sold posters of a collection of photos she had taken of scenes in the Holy Land. The substantial proceeds went to Rawdat El-Zuhur and The Four Homes of Mercy, two projects that have always been close to her heart.

A Child's Initiative

Ali, 7 ½ years old, is not a student at the school, but his mother Alia is the vice-president of Rawdat El-Zuhur organization. Her caring for the school children must have been contagious and touched Ali who planned his own fund-raising initiative. He had a sale of his toys, and with the proceeds he bought books, puzzles and educational games for the school children. We hope Ali can be a role model for other children in our community who are more privileged than others.

Alumni Volunteers

It is indeed very rewarding to see the graduates of Rawdat El-Zuhur involved in the school. Nevart Ateek who had graduated from RZ in 1996, volunteered once a week throughout the summer months of June and July teaching English to the school children who needed help in the language. She is currently a 3rd year university student studying child psychology in the USA. For sure there will be a lot of need for her specialty once she graduates and comes back home to serve her community.



Two of the school graduates Shireen Abu Manneh and Sana' Alloush, who are still in high school opted to use their days off at their school to read stories to the younger children at Rawdat El-Zuhur. It was like homecoming for them.

Alumni Meeting

The most recent graduates continue to meet regularly every month, but the long awaited alumni meeting to launch the 50th anniversary book “Radiant Hope” will finally take place in January 2006.

The Pontifical Mission for Palestine

Shortly after his appointment as the new representative of the Pontifical Mission, Mr. Maher Turjman paid a visit to the school. Mr. Turjman is the first Palestinian to hold this post ever since the Pontifical Mission was established in Jerusalem after 1948. The school appreciates the work of the Pontifical Mission



with the local community, and is grateful for the contribution towards one of the canopies that were put up in the school yard as well as the gift of educational equipment. Ms. Rose Karborani from the PM visited the school later on.

In-Service Training

As part of her in-service training, Dina El-Basha, kindergarten teacher, did a twenty-six-hour course at the Early Childhood Resource Centre to keep up with the latest on teaching methods for the younger children.

Community Service

Grade six represented the school for the annual visit to the Four Homes of Mercy in November 2005. The children volunteered the morning at the Old Age Home where they entertained the residents with dancing and singing, and offered them a meal which was donated by the school children and staff.

Immunization

Nidal Centre for Community Development continue volunteering their services to immunize the children in grades one and six, in coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Education. The school now maintains computerized records of all immunization.



Training Centre

Once again four female senior students from Al-Quds University are doing their training as elementary school teachers at Rawdat El-Zuhur. Two plan to be English teachers while the other two want to qualify to be kindergarten teachers.

Music

Simon, the part time music teacher for nine years had to leave us this year as his full time job was now more demanding. But fortunately the music teacher Wafa Al-Zaghal from the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music who was teaching instruments last year was able to take a full time job at the school. Music continues to play a major part in the program of the school. Besides singing, the children will be learning how to read notes as well, while talented children will continue to have the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument

Summer Work Shop

The month of August was used to offer a 20 hour training workshop given by Mrs. Suheir Shawar, a specialist in education at the Ministry of Education. The workshop was on “Classroom Management” and was





rated very highly by the teachers. Therefore the school is seriously considering follow-up workshops based on a request made by the teachers themselves.

The Hawaii Connection

Beverly Amjadi, from Hawaii, who has been touched by the situation in the Palestinian Territories took a courageous step to come and see for herself the reality on the ground. She had met Samia Khoury, the past president of Rawdat El-Zuhur last fall in Hawaii, and that led to her visit to the school. She and her delegation, Cecilia Fordham, Leslie Isaki, Nancy Tourk, and John Williamson showed extreme interest and enjoyed their visit with the children. The children know now the Aloha greeting so we hope they will have the chance to use it when more friends from that beautiful land come our way.

Professional Entertainers

Cyril and Roxanne Bennis, an Irish-American couple accompanied an old friend of the school Neville Usher from Stratford-Upon-Avon. It was Neville's first visit after more than seven years when he used to visit regularly with his late sister Enid and mother Sue. Cyril and Roxanne made the children's day as they entertained them for more than two hours sharing their experience in the Sahari desert in Morocco, and their exciting vision of their future trip around the world in a space shuttle. With Irish singing and dancing they bid the children farewell.



Back to Base

Rana Khaldi Qutob, the computer teacher is back at the school after taking a year off to take care of her baby boy Ali, who was born on July 13, 2004.

Another new addition to the family of Rawdat El-Zuhur is Rafeek, the son of Maha Sabbareeni Barakat, the English teacher, and speech therapist, born on October 25, 2004. Diana Mushawar, the substitute teacher took Maha's classes during her three-month paid maternity leave, but continued to offer her services to the school as a volunteer.

The latest addition is baby "Leen" daughter of the President of Rawdat el-Zuhur, Ranya Baramki born on 27th of July 2005.

School Guests

Welcoming visitors at the school is always a pleasure. And the children enjoy performing a “dabke” or singing a song or two, and sometimes three, Arabic, English and French. Amongst the visitors were representatives from the organizations that support the school and sponsor children. At the beginning of the school year September 04 we had Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Callander from BibleLands and Ms. Mo Burley in the Spring. And in the fall of this year 2005 we had more people from BibleLands. Dr. Cyril & Mrs. Felicity Young, Dr. Carol Boulker, Dr. Hugh Boulker, Ms. Joanna Robertson, Mr. Richard Jones, Ms. Vicky Smith, Mr. Nigel Few, Ms. Alison MacTier. From the Common Global Ministries-UCC, Dr. Peter Makari was at the school again in November 05 along with Rev. John Deckenback, Rev. John Thomas, and Ms. Lydia Vehko. From ANERA, Mrs. Adrian Loucks visited the school in March 05, and from ANERA, Ms Ghada Khaleel was at the school before the Christmas break in 04. Rev. Malcolm Jones from PCDC makes Christmas come early with his regular visits and gifts to the children. Accompanying him in September 05 were Ms. Coli Taylor, Ms. Muriel Harris, Ms. Stacy Walton. The Director of the Swedish Christian Study Centre, Mr. Kent Malmqvist, accompanied a delegation from Sweden in February 2005. Other individual guests who went through the specialized guided tour of the Principal Salwa Zananiri were Margaret Cooper, Ada Lonni, Don & Gloria Delaplain, Inas Shawish, Penelope Harley, Imad Al Bakri, Ellen Coates and Anne Roberts

From the Guest Book

- It is indeed a highlight of our visit here in the Holy Land.
 - It is lovely to see so many children happily learning together.
 - For such a small school the space is used very well.
 - It is always a pleasure to discover some miracle here in Jerusalem.
 - You have a treasure here at Rawdat.
 - Merci bien pour votre courage.
 - In my city we say ‘ a community is known by the schools it keeps’ you keep a beautiful school.
 - Thank you for encouraging me to sing ‘ Twinkle, Twinkle’ in a setting I never imagined.
- عندما تتحول المدرسة لروضة من التعليم, الثقافة والابداع ومصدر لمستقبل واعد لهذه البلد.

In Appreciation

In Appreciation of the support of all our friends, we shall establish a tradition of publishing their names starting with this newsletter, unless they request otherwise. The following alphabetical list covers the period of September 1, 2004 - December 10, 2005.

Organizations

- Anglo-Arab Christian Congregation
- Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development
- ANERA
- BibleLands
- Canada Fund
- Central Congregational Church
- Coordinamento Nazionale Entilocoli per la Pace
- Consulat General de France
- Common Global Ministries / UCC
- Center Harbour Congregational Church
- Faith Presbyterian Church
- OPEC
- Pontifical Mission
- Presbyterian Church-Women's League, Pleasantville
- St. Paul / UCC
- Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
- United Palestinian Appeal
- US Omen
- The Woodcrest / UCC
- Women's Fellowship Sparta / UCC

Individuals

Aitken, Eleanor
Al-Eidah, Abed-Al-Hamid
Amjadi, Beverly
Anonymous from Palestine
Anonymous from U.K.
Aranki, Deema
Bakri, Basima
Baramki, George
Baramki, Ranya
Bennis, Cyril & Roxanne
Bruhns, Fred & Eleanor
Buchanan, G.
Burr, Elizabeth
Caianiello, Lucy
Coates, Ellen
Callander, Douglas
Cooper, Margaret
Corcoran, Paul
Crauder, Robert
Doermann, Ralph & Laurel
Elayan, Mervat
El-Hjuj, Taima , Majdal & Qais
Elmore, Joe & Billye
Evans, Jill
Farran, Kameel
Fattaleh, Jannine
Feith, Elizabeth
Fike, Dorothy
Fortna, Evelyn
Garrett, Dendy & Eleanor

Glock, Lois
Graff, James
Hallac, Antony
Harley, Penelope
Hikmat, Jacob
Hishmeh, Basim & Muna
Hogan, Denise
Homsy, Yvonne
Howell, Carolyn
Hughes, Jean
Jackson, Dorothy
Jerez, Guadalupe
Johnston, Lawrence & Aida
Kang, Frances
Karkar, Edward
Khoury, Rasha
Khoury, Samia
Kleber, Herbert & Marie-Anne
Knott, Liz
Kohn, Mary
Kuncar family
Lapp, Nancy
Loucks, Adrian
Luckey, Janet
Mason, John
Meo, Dina
Michon, Maurice
Miller, Roy & Lyle
Mills, Alan & Margery
Moore, Richard
Morris, Sue & group

Mousa, Paulette
Murphy, Catherine
Nasir, Abla
Nasir, Dina
Nasir , Fares
Nasir, John
Nasir, Muna
Nasir, Omar
Nasir, Shafik & Suzanne
Nasir, Hanna & Tania
Nawas, Yousef & Salwa
Plimsoll, Patricia
Pendleton, John
Queimari, Yehya
Roberts, Anne
Rois, Raquel Laura
Root, Howard & Celia
Rutter, Marion
Sahhar, George
Said, Huda
Saleh, Ronald
Sama'an, Fadi & Marwan
Scott, John & Lois
Spencer, John & Brenda
Tarazi, Rawan
Tarazi, Sama , Sari & Leen
Usher, Neville
Vier, Lester
Weller, John
Wells, Tim & Sue
Wurfel, David & Kathy



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