

Rawdat El- Zuhur Newsletter

December 2017



After an enjoyable, yet quite an eventful summer holiday, a new school year started on August 26, 2017. We trust that the New Year will bring about hope, justice, and peace.

As we continue to work with children and yearn for justice and peace, we cannot but recall the words of the late Indian leader Manatma Gandhi:

“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”

Indeed children are our business and we hope that the Christmas spirit of joy and love will strengthen us and help us care for each other, and enable us to face the daily hardships, especially after the biased and irresponsible statement of Mr. Trump regarding Jerusalem, which has enflamed the whole region. We pray for the safety of the young people who are always victims of injustice.

We want to thank you all for your support and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Abla Nasir

President

Raeda Jasser

Principal

New Look:

Funded by the Governments of Sweden, Norway, and Austria, through the UNDP's Community Resilience and Development Programme for area C and East Jerusalem (CRDP), Rawdat El-Zuhur's first floor was rehabilitated and restored during the summer vacation. Therefore, new floor tiles and new doors have been installed and new facilities such as students' bathrooms have been renovated. In addition, safe and new indoor recreational toys have been installed in the Kindergarten area.



New Students and Teachers:

1. Amidst the joy of coming back to school, and the crying of new children separated from their mothers for the first time, the school welcomed 32 new children in the kindergarten.
2. Three new teachers joined the staff this year: Samer Rashed, music teacher, Tahrir Mahfouz art teacher, and Hiba Edkeidek, librarian.



Educational Activities:

3. The Comprehensive Development Program of the Jerusalem Schools (2017-2020):

Rawdat El-Zuhur is one of fifteen schools which are included in a special Comprehensive Development program to develop the education sector in East Jerusalem. It is conducted by Faisal Hussein Foundation and funded mainly by

the European Union and partially by the Bank of Palestine. The program serves 15 schools and involves 4359 students and 289 teachers.

The main objective of the program is to guarantee that students would receive a comprehensive high quality education so as to build a democratic society that respects diversity, human rights, and equal rights for women and social justice. And whereby, decision making is based on scientific research so as to be technologically competitive. The program will run for three years and includes the following activities:

- *Scientific Research*
- *Building up Robots*
- *Reading Competitions*
- *Democracy and Human Rights*



4. Improving Conditions for People with Special needs in East Jerusalem:

The Princess Bassma Association concluded its campaign that started in October, for raising awareness about children who have hyper-active and lack of concentration symptoms known as (ADHD) so as to rehabilitate them and develop special educational plans for them.

Rawdat El-Zuhur was one of seven schools that was involved in this project which is funded by the European Union and Diakonia, and in partnership with Saint Yves Society- The Catholic Center for Human Rights. The Association conducted a workshop to exchange experiences with the schools involved, during which Rawdat El-Zuhur presented successful cases of students who improved their academic and behavioral performances during the course of the project. Mrs. Raeda Jasser, the school principal presented the challenges encountered by the school administration, teachers and parents during the project and how they set a plan to overcome those challenges. Also, a set of recommendations were

presented to be considered as an assessment of the project from the point of view of the school administration. The project produced well-trained teachers with the necessary skills and tools to be able to manage and maintain a diverse generation by reducing the study loads for the diagnosed children according to their potential.

During the project, a well-trained team from Princess Bassma Association did some networking with the schools to develop their capabilities and several workshops were conducted to train teachers and parents to provide psycho - social support and guidance to students. Also, clinical sessions were held for that purpose at the center of the Association for the children and their parents as well.

5. Music Education:

At the invitation of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music the



children of grades 4-6 participated in a musical experience at the conservatory. For two hours they attended performances and got introduced to a variety of musical instruments, and were encouraged to try playing some along with the

performers. This was a new and an enjoyable experiment which would help develop their talents and potentials.

6. Palestinian Heritage Day:

Each year on October 7, the Palestinian Heritage day is celebrated. So on that occasion, many activities took place and students were dressed in national dresses and costumes. The day started with singing the National anthem and during the morning announcements, there was a briefing about the importance of



preserving one's heritage, and passing it on from one generation to another, so as to maintain the Palestinian identity. Also there was a presentation about popular traditions, and a show of traditional costumes after which the most beautiful dress was selected from each class. An exhibition of heritage tools and traditional items was available all day long at the school hall. A Palestinian traditional breakfast of zeit and za'atar (olive oil and thyme) was served.



7. Grades for the First Quarter of the School Year:

On October 29th, parents were invited to school to receive their children's reports for the first quarter and to meet with their teachers so as to follow up on their academic and behavioral status. Students who have obtained the highest marks and who have shown great improvement in academic and behavioral performances were recognized on that occasion.



8. Olive Tree as a Main Traditional Icon:

On the occasion of the Olive picking season, and under the slogan of the "Olive tree a traditional icon," the school organized a variety of activities for all the grades on November



1st. Some of the activities were: pressing the olives and learning how to extract its oil, and making soap out of the olive oil. The activities were concluded with eating Shrak bread baked over a special hot pan with zeit and za'atar and labaneh.

9. Father, Read for Me:



This was the title of the workshop to which fathers were invited to attend on November 4th, in partnership with Tamer Institute for Community Education. This initiative came as a gesture to encourage fathers to be active in the bringing up

of their children as well as to encourage them to spend more time with their children and to follow up on their needs and their homework if need be. Fathers who attended the workshop were invited to read some stories for the children in their classrooms.



10. Vocational Education:



On December 2, a workshop was conducted in partnership with Al-Saraya Society for Community Services in Jerusalem for the six graders and their parents to give them an idea about vocational training and help those who would be interested to pursue such training in the future.

Various Activities and Events:

11. Pinnochio (Wooden Toy):

On October 3rd, the children of the first four grades enjoyed attending a special version of Pinocchio in Arabic written especially for the National Theatre (Hakawati) by Kamel El-Basha. The children not only enjoyed watching but they interacted with the players. The well-known story of Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi is about a wooden toy made by a poor Italian carpenter which turned into a little boy, but every time he would tell a lie his nose would grow longer. So the play actually conveyed a strong message to the children about the importance of truth and integrity and the importance of having courage and avoiding being selfish.



12. Al-Bayyarah Garden, October 19:



To the melody of the traditional Dal'onah music, the sixth graders danced and enjoyed spending the day at Al-Bayyarah garden in Bethany (Izariyyah). This initiative is organized in cooperation with Al-Taawon Association, and in partnership with Bank of Palestine, and Basem & Muna Hishmeh Foundation. The project is to provide gardens for children to play and entertain them in safe spaces. The day included several activities and physical competitions, in addition to a musical show with the music teacher Samer Rashed, and story-telling with Hiba Idkeidek. The day was concluded with

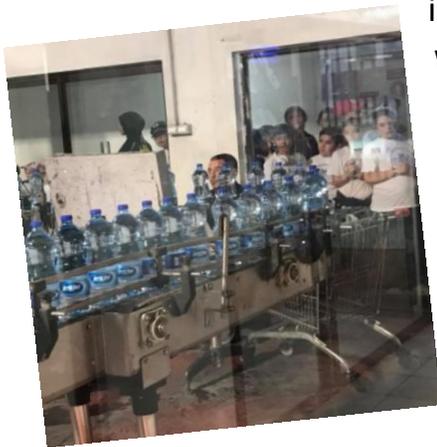
the Rainbow Stars group as they performed songs and dances with the

children and face paintings. We are so grateful for all the sponsors of this event who made the day for the children very special.

13. First Term Trip on November 9th:

The school trips are organized so as to be both educational and recreational. The Kindergarten children spent part of the day at the Boys Town in Jericho to watch how dairy products are processed, and to learn about their nutritional benefits. After the visit, the children spent the rest of the day at the Spanish Garden where they had fun playing on the inflatable toys.

Whereas, students from 1-6 grades visited the Jericho Mineral Water factory in Jericho so as to learn about the process of purifying water filtered and bottled so as to be safe for drinking. Afterwards, students went to Tiger Land for some recreational time



of fun and joy.





14. Fantasia Group December 16th:

Before the final exams that mark the end of the term and the beginning of the Christmas holidays, the school hosted Fantasia Group to perform a recreational show for the school children.



Donations:

Many thanks to all friends who continue to remember Rawdat El-Zuhur in these difficult times. The following list includes donations received from June to December 2017:

List of Organizations:

- Embrace the Middle East
- Friedrich Mulka Stiftung
- Global Ministries, The Middle East Office
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Muna & Basem Hishmeh Foundation
- Palcraftaid
- UNDP
- UPA

Donations through Embrace the Children of Palestine:

Once again, **Samia Halaby** surprised us with a generous gift; the proceeds of the auction of one of her art work. Samia was behind the establishment of Embrace

the Children of Palestine which has facilitated donations to the school. More contributions came from:

- Mr. Byron and Mrs. Betty Sherouse
- Khouri Ventures, Inc.
- Ms. Ghada Nasir
- Ms. Suheila Aziz Nasir
- Mr. and Mrs. O. Faris
- Mr. Nazih N. Nasir
- A T. Hallac
- Dr. Laila I. Kassees
- Ms. Jean Snyder
- Ms. Carol Dowdy
- Rev. M. Styron

Individual Donations:

- Mrs. Samia Khoury
- Ms. Rima Bordcosh
- Mr. Heribert Kleiber (in memory of Marie –Ann Klieber-Michon) through the German Association of the Holy Land
- Ms. Carol Haykena through Palcraftaid

We wish to take this opportunity to remind all our friends in the US that they can make their tax exempt gifts through:

Embrace The Children of Palestine, Inc.

3410 Wisteria Court

Birmingham, AL 35216

In the United Kingdom, friends who are eligible to have added Gift Aid tax onto the donation to a charity can do so through Palcrafts:

*Carol Morton
Director of Development*

Palcrafts/Hadeel, 123 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4JN

www.hadeel.org; 01312251922

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Hadeel is an importing and trading member of the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers.

And if you are shopping this summer through Amazon we would like to remind you that Embrace the Children of Palestine, the U.S. non-profit foundation that supports Rawdat El- Zuhur, is now part of Amazon's AmazonSmile program. This program donates 0.05 percent of the cost of all purchases to the customer's charity of choice, at no extra cost. If you shop at www.smile.amazon.com and select Embrace the Children of Palestine, Inc., you are helping support Rawdat El -Zuhur.

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