

Information on Ramallah Friends School in Palestine



Ramallah Friends School

Founded by Quakers, Ramallah Friends School has played an important role in Palestinian education for more than 150 years. Today it is one of the premier schools in the Middle East, offering curriculum in both Arabic and English, and an International Baccalaureate program that enables its students to continue their education at colleges and universities in the United State and Europe.

In 1869, Quakers from New England started a number of small schools for girls in the villages around Ramallah, followed by the “Girls Training Home of Ramallah” in 1889. In the first year, 15 students were from places as far away as Beirut and Jaffa as well as Ramallah. Today the school has almost 1,200 students, both girls and boys (kindergarten to pre-university), 90 teaching staff and about 40 support staff. Over 90% of students go on to further their education.

The life of the school is firmly based on Quaker principals, in particular:

- *Excellence in education* that calls for high academic standards and a willingness to experiment with new methodology and curricula.
- *Development of the whole person*, helping each member of the school community to realize his or her physical, mental, spiritual and social potential.
- *Helping each person to recognize her or his responsibility to society* and become aware of their responsibility as caring members of the school community, and the

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national and global family where “each lives for the other and all live for God.” The school nurtures character traits such as integrity, simplicity, honesty, cooperation and compassion, and advocates non-violence as a viable option for resolving conflict in every aspect of life

- *An emphasis on equality* that recognizes that all people are considered equal before God regardless of gender, creed, culture, color or social status. Quaker education in Palestine has focused from the beginning on the education of women to develop their potential and
- *Realize their opportunity* to be equal members of their community.

The school also has a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including sports, drama, folk dancing, and organic gardening. Student are encouraged to become involved in the local community, visiting the homes of disabled people and making gifts from their own pocket money.

Today all students live in Palestine. Some 65% of students come from a Muslim background and 35% from a Christian background. As there are now not many Quakers families in the Ramallah area, only a few students are Quakers. However, the school's Trustees are appointed by Friends United Meeting, based in Richmond, Indiana, so the board is majority-Quakers.

School fees range from USD 1,900 to 2,800 and the school has an extensive program of financial assistance for students unable to afford these fees. The school wants a student body that is representative of Palestinian society and to which no student will be denied access for the sole reason that he or she cannot afford the tuition. About 17% of students are supported by grants, which are funded by donations from Friends, particularly in the United States and Europe.



For more information about Ramallah Friends School

see the school website at: <http://www.rfs.edu.ps/>

or their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsRamallah/>

Bethesda Friends Meeting supports Ramallah Friends School via an annual spring fundraiser

See <https://www.bethesdafriends.org/>