



# Global Connections and Exchange

## Palestinian Territories

March, 2007

Each month, we publish a newsletter to update schools in our network, our donors and other interested readers about the activities and progress taking place within our program in the Palestinian Territories.

Do you have something you would like to add to the newsletter?

Please contact:  
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Relief International-Schools Online witnessed a busy month during March. International Women's Day, reading week, activities for youth activism and English language training were the main March activities. Also, the teachers who came back from the US having benefited from the teachers exchange program added a different flavor to the month of March.

Spring started with many interesting activities and positive energy which will continue during this summer. This month's newsletter includes articles about all of the activities mentioned above written by people who organized and participated in them, to give us an idea about their achievements and future plans.

## International Women's Day Celebration

By Khalid Massou

International Women's Day honors the role of women in society. We celebrated this great occasion in all of RI-SOL's Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in Palestine. In Bethlehem, we prepared in collaboration with the Doha Children Cultural Center and the SOS Village a

number of activities for this special day. We started to discuss the nature of the activities that could take place during this day. The students had a number of suggestions and began to rehearse poems and songs for the celebration.

Fifteen students participated and prepared this event at the Doha Children Cultural Center. One hundred women attended the event and one of the ladies who attended is em Anwar, a woman who has offered herbal treatment services free of charge for over 50 years.



The celebration started with the students welcoming the audience with speeches, then music played by a local DJ and a group of young girls reading a poem. The girls also sang and performed the dabkah, a traditional Palestinian dance. Em Anwar addressed the women and stressed the important role women play and the need for women to learn how to heal their children using herbal treatments. She offered to train women on herbal treatment methods. At the end of the event, students presented closing remarks and distributed flowers to all the women in attendance. All the women who participated were happy to be part of this event and said they were looking forward for em Anwar's training.



# Welcome Huda!!

RI-SOL Palestine is excited to introduce you to Huda Alawni, our new on-site monitor for Nablus. So far, Huda is doing a great job; she has already established strong relationships with teachers and students, and has initiated some exciting school activities, such as a planting day. Welcome Huda, we all look forward to working with you and to having you as a new member of our team.



## Working with RI-SOL

By Huda Alawni

I applied to work for RI-SOL in October 2006, had an interview, accepted the job offer...and here I am, a member of a big loving family doing our best to help Palestinian youth get better opportunities in life through multiple activities. Utilizing modern technology at my workplace makes my job easier. I can contact my colleagues at any time, which facilitates my mission; I get advice, support and make friends through the internet on a daily basis.



Working on an innovative, collaborative project at Relief International is fantastic. I can be myself, free to express my thoughts and views. This arises my creativity, making me feel that I am a giant of endless powers which I must invest for the sake of others.

Thanks to Relief International for giving me such an opportunity. I hope we achieve our goals and aims. I hope to bring relief to all those who are disadvantaged under the umbrella of Relief International.



# *Teachers' Exchange*

In Palestine, teachers participated in the RI-SOL professional development program, which aims to develop new teaching techniques by focusing on the use of technology in the classroom. This allows teachers to educate generations of students who can use technology and are in touch with the world.

After training at home, we traveled to the United States, where we participated in workshops and training courses on the same subject as part of our exchange program, where we had the chance to share our experiences with participants from around the world. We were introduced to new teaching methods and at the same time had the chance to practice the application of technology in classroom.

There are many simple methods which we can use in different classroom settings and for different purposes.



The workshops we attended during the exchange program covered many topics such as teaching development, IT skills, working in the school environment and in collaboration with other teachers. We also visited governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in education and did some sightseeing. The diversity of the exchange activities made time fly.



Now that we have returned to our schools, we are working on adapting the new teaching methods we have learned (like developing a relationship between teachers and students) to our existing curriculum.

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We have many ideas for improving our schools and making them examples for other schools with which we would like to share our knowledge and experiences.

We were lucky to participate in this exchange--it was so useful and valuable. Unfortunately, we might not return to the United States, but we wish all the best to those who participate in the next exchange.

## *English Language Training*

All of our students received English lessons through the Students' Clubs, offered by Fuad, a volunteer teacher. The English lessons were very nice and interesting; the teacher was very professional and we didn't feel bored. The teacher took us on virtual trips around the world, from America to Japan, Every day we lived and embarked on a new adventure and practiced our English communication skills. Additionally my classmates were good students and came up with new ideas each day on how to make the training more effective. The training took place twice a week and included a total of 30 students, boys and girls.

I hope to attend another training in the future in another RI-SOL center in the West Bank because we have a lot to benefit from such an experience. This was an excellent chance for us as students to speak English fluently.

*By Diana al Sharief*



# Youth Activism

## March Project

The Youth Activism lesson helped students to identify their own skills and talents; understand common methods of youth activism, such as education, advocacy and fundraising; and understand that youth can affect change on the local, national, or international levels by using these methods. Students decided at which level they would like to work and designed service-learning projects using their creativity and the youth activism methods they had learnt, aiming to benefit a cause in which they believed.

## Disney Minnie Grant

Three months ago I wrote a short proposal for Global Youth Service Day, aiming to make an activity that would benefit my community. The proposal was about an important health issue, Thalassemia.

I chose this subject because this disease is spreading rapidly in Palestine and my idea is to create public awareness, explain the dangers of the disease, how it spreads and prevention methods. In addition to activities already underway, I proposed to conduct a recreation day for children who suffer from this blood disease, which will take place on the 22nd of April, as part of Global Youth Service Day. For the activities I will be coordinating my work with the Palestine Avenir Foundation and the National Center for Blood Diseases “Hippocrates,” Thalassemia and Hemophilia units.

With the help of the Disney Minnie Grant, I hope to succeed in this activity, which will help to alleviate the suffering of the patients. Through this project we can accomplish a lot of things that match the aims of RI-SOL. We can promote the concepts of volunteerism and community service, as a major part of the activities will be done by volunteers from different schools and universities.





# Reading Week

By *Nadiah Saba'neh*



During Youth Activism Month, we organized a Reading Week at the Ramallah Basic Girls School, which included a great reading campaign. Several classes held this week were dedicated to reading and the importance of books. A painting competitions about reading was organized through the art class and the technology classes held a post card design competition. Regular visits to the school library were organized to encourage students to read and to visit the library more often, since books are a great source of knowledge--indeed, books are a treasure. Posters and paintings made by students were displayed in the school hallways. At the end of this busy week, we organized a great event to celebrate the accomplishments of this campaign--students acted out plays they had read, while others told the stories they had liked most. Some students read poems and others competed in reading poetry, which they had memorized. Winners of competitions taking place during the week were awarded some great books. This campaign lasted for only one week but its impact will last with students much longer, since it inspired students to visit the library more often than before and to read in their free time.



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