



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
RAMALLAH
— PALESTINE —

Ramallah Club of Metropolitan Detroit
Community Report 2020-21



A MESSAGE FROM FEDERATION PRESIDENT Daniel Harb



The success of the American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine (AFRP), established in 1959, can be measured by the dedicated efforts of those who have given their time and talent to ensure that the sustainability of our Palestinian culture and heritage lives on from generation to generation.

Headquartered in Westland, Michigan, the AFRP was founded with the main purpose of serving as the link between all the Ramallah families in the U.S., but also to support our people in Palestine and to develop the historic city of our forefathers.

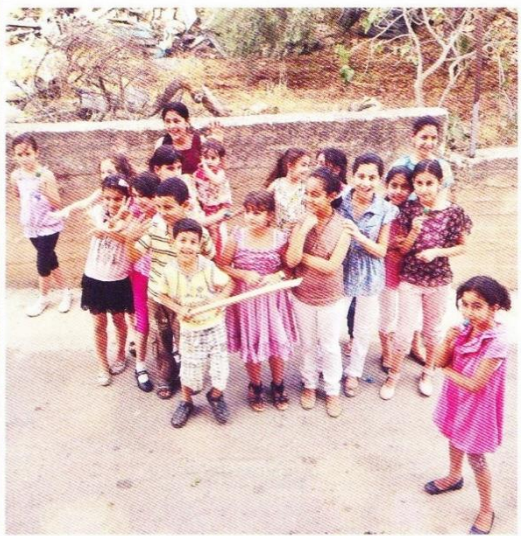
Established as a nonprofit charitable, educational, social, and cultural organization, it boasts a current membership of approximately 40,000 people living throughout the US. Members can trace their ancestry to the 1500s to five brothers whose families are the original inhabitants of the city of Ramallah, located 10 miles north of Jerusalem.

In the late 1940s, many of the Ramallah families began to immigrate to the U.S., largely due to the Arab-Israeli conflict. These new immigrants remained determined to work for the just cause of the Palestinian people. They engaged every sect of the American society demanding justice and freedom for their people, all the while supporting their people living under occupation in Palestine. They provide scholarships here and abroad, support educational and cultural institutions, and the AFRP has many worthwhile programs for its youth, young adults, and fellow Americans. They built the first hospital in Ramallah and continue to fund many of its projects, including the annual medical mission trips that are designed to work with and educate medical professionals and provide specialized treatment for patients in Palestine. They are credited to the fast economic growth their city witnessed through the different projects they invested in.

Today their sons and daughters continue to carry that mission and serve as ambassadors for the Palestinian people. They currently support the city financially, educationally and invest in diverse segments of the economy. Many of these families have witnessed three or more generations born in the U.S. and are mindful that with each new generation, cultural assimilation is a spontaneous and an expected process. The programs and initiatives highlighted in this report showcase the importance of safeguarding our heritage while assimilating in our communities.

Perseverance, dedication, education, sustainability.....

Thank you for the opportunity for us to share with you some of the highlights of the AFRP.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF RAMALLAH, PALESTINE

Westland, Michigan National Headquarters

The American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine (AFRP), is a nonprofit, social, charitable and educational organization established in 1959, whose membership descends from the original Christian family of Rashid Haddadin and his sons, who settled in the city of Ramallah, Palestine in the mid-1500s.

The mission of the AFRP is to perpetuate and promote the rich, cultural Palestinian heritage to the Ramallah family and their descendants in diaspora-estimated at approximately 40,000 in the U.S. - by providing programs that foster cultural and social interaction, as well as educational, humanitarian, civic and charitable opportunities.

These efforts are achieved through the implementation of a multitude of sources, including the bimonthly publication, *Hathihe Ramallah* magazine (This is Ramallah) - established in 1952 as the communications link among the Ramallah communities worldwide; the annual conventions/family reunions, which began in 1958; the Ramallah Business and Professional Network; the nationwide Palestine Day Celebration, Medical Mission trips and others.

Currently, in addition to the Headquarters in Westland, Michigan and the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter there are 19 additional chapter Ramallah Clubs and affiliates located in cities throughout the United States and who operate under the guidance of the AFRP. These individual Ramallah Clubs and affiliates are encouraged to promote the Palestinian cultural heritage to their members as well as to others through cultural events, civic and service-based activities, volunteerism and other events within their communities.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
RAMALLAH
PALESTINE



The theme of our new logo invokes the Palestinian olive tree which represents peace. The tree has five branches which symbolize the original five families of Ramallah, while the tree's root symbolizes our heritage and history. The "sensileh" or old walls of stones are built by Palestinian farmers to protect their land and is a method of re-use in which a farmer removes stones from the ground and builds an architectural wall, also called "Hakura." Another purpose is to construct agricultural terraces to protect the land from soil erosion.

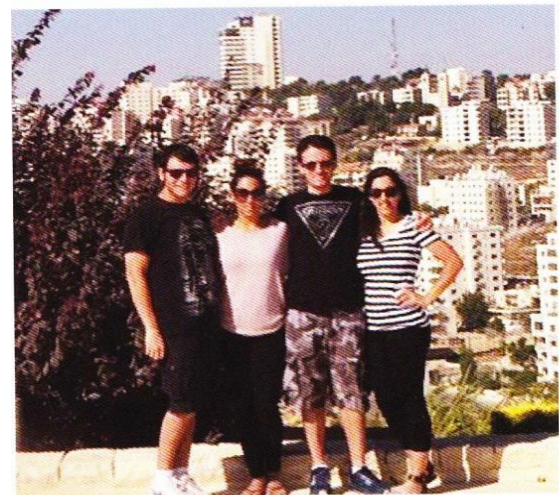
Logo design by Rami Razook; Community Report written by Joy Batteh-Freil1a and Janan Saba, and designed by Steve Gliannam

BUILDING OUR FUTURE YOUTH-FOCUSED PROGRAMS

Representing a significant segment of the Ramallah family is our youth. Realizing that for us to preserve our Palestinian culture from generation to generation, we must forge a sense of identity and community among all Ramallah people, but especially our youth. These young people have an essential role in transforming and strengthening the longevity of the AFRP and its mission. Various AFRP-supported and endorsed youth development programs help prepare our young people to become leaders and active stakeholders within their communities in the U.S., as well as in Palestine.

Project Hope

Project Hope began in 1997 as a means of furthering the AFRP's four founding principles of charity, culture, education, and society - principles that have guided the AFRP's coalition of clubs since 1958. Students and young adults from various Ramallah communities throughout the U.S. partake in a two-week, full-immersion, hands-on program in Palestine, performing service-oriented projects such as planting olive trees, helping build parks and play areas, and serving as camp counselors. To date, more than 250 young people have participated in this worthwhile project, with over 40 of the participants from the metropolitan Detroit area.





Brittany Azzouz

I participated in Leadership Ramallah back in 2015 when it was held in Houston, Texas. I had always been involved in my local club and attended conventions regularly, but had never participated in a Federation event such as this. Since attending this conference, I have been more involved in the Federation. I have attended each mid-year meeting in order to regroup with my fellow leadership alumni and have participated in the Youth Summit, which is held in DC each fall.

Leadership Ramallah has encouraged me to take on more of a leadership role within the Federation as well as in my personal life. I have had the chance to work with a variety of individuals on different projects that will benefit the AFRP. On a personal level, Leadership has allowed me to meet so many new people - I have built friendships with members from across the nation that will last a lifetime.

Leadership Ramallah allows young adults who might not have been previously involved in the Federation to get involved, meet new people and grow as a leader. The increase in participation since I did leadership is amazing. This conference opens the door for young adults to get involved, and by having regular meet ups, allows them to stay involved. Leadership was such a worthwhile experience for a variety of reasons and I encourage every young adult to attend.

Leadership Ramallah

The AFRP has always relied on the thoughts and innovation of its younger generation; their importance to our organization is immeasurable. To create future leaders of our organization and the world, the AFRP introduced this program in 2012. Geared to young adults, ages 20-40, Leadership Ramallah encourages professional development of aspiring leaders in the Ramallah-American community and helps them build-upon their present leadership skills. This two-day conference is held in conjunction with the Mid-year Meeting and includes leadership building skills, motivational lectures and peer-to-peer discussion led by professional leaders in the industry.

Since 2012, eighteen youth from the Metropolitan Detroit Club have been sponsored and participated in the program.



The Educational and Scholarship Fund

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

As a longtime advocate of higher education, the AFRP is proud to offer students financial assistance to help further their higher education goals. We are recognized as one of the largest scholarship-assistance programs among Arab American organizations. Established in 1961, the Scholarship Fund has awarded approximately \$3 million to more than 1,500 worthy students. Recipients have earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, education, engineering, science, business administration, law and many other disciplines. Approximately 10% of the scholarship recipients historically are from the Detroit area. For 2020-21, there are 4 from Detroit out of 60 recipients.

Outstanding High School Senior Award

The Outstanding High School Senior Awards program was established in 2014 as a way to recognize the efforts of high school seniors, whose parents are members in good standing with the AFRP, with a technology scholarship. Recipients are selected based on community service, leadership skills and a written essay.

Cultural Responsibility

"He who denies his heritage, has no heritage." - Khalil Gibran

The AFRP makes a conscious effort to preserve our rich traditions and heritage for future generations. One way is through the annual Youth Debke Contest. Each year during the annual Mid-year Meeting/Convention, the AFRP sponsors the friendly Debke - traditional Palestinian folk dance - Contest. Youth groups from chapter Ramallah Clubs perform routines on the final day of the Meeting, each vying for the Best Youth Debke Group designation. While the competition is fierce but healthy, the intention is to enrich and instill a love of Palestinian tradition to our youth.

As with the annual Debke competition, the Mil'aab is a centuries-old, chant-filled folk dance performed primarily by men, but some women have learned the good -wishes chants as well. It is considered one of the most treasured of traditions for Palestinians. The Metropolitan Detroit Debke troupe won the contest at the 2016 New York Midyear Meeting.



Nicholas Khalaf

I was sincerely honored and grateful to have been selected as a scholarship recipient. Your recognition of my hard work and accomplishments gives me even further motivation to continue to strive for success. I welcome the opportunity to proudly represent organizations that make these types of scholarships possible. The importance of the award goes well beyond the monetary value, as it shows that members of our community are willing to support their aspiring youth to go on to do great things. This is a symbol of their commitment to the next generation; to ensure we are successful and meaningful contributors to society. I will work hard to benefit from this award and the valuable experience that college brings. Finally, I truly believe in helping others and paying things forward and I will certainly strive for ways to have this same impact on people in the future.





CIVIC, CHARITABLE AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT



Medical Mission

Health and wellness education is an integral part of the AFRP's community outreach; the Charitable Medical Mission team promotes healthy lifestyle, nutrition and overall good health. The purpose of the Medical Mission is to bring a new level of training, education and awareness to the healthcare system in Palestine. Volunteer teams include physicians, para-medical professionals and support staff who assist in administering health care, deliver donated medical equipment, medicines and supplies to hospitals throughout Palestine.



Greening of Ramallah

The olive tree is a symbol of pride and existence to all Palestinians. The Greening Project provides an opportunity for Ramallah people living throughout the United States to plant a tree in memory or in honor of a loved one as a way to replace the thousands of trees destroyed because of the occupation. Planting trees promotes a greener, safer, cleaner and more environmentally friendly Ramallah. This project allows interested parties to adopt a tree or plant one as a way to help Ramallah expand its parks and green spaces.



Helping Hands

"No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted." -Aesop

Paying it forward is not just a statement, it is an obligation. Many chapter Ramallah Clubs around the U.S. participate in the National Day of Charity held each year in September; however, many of our chapter clubs organize charitable and civic events throughout the year, from providing tutoring services for youth, to filling backpacks for back-to-school drives, participating in the American Cancer Society's nationwide Relay for Life campaign, coordinating food and clothing drives, feeding the needy, and so much more.



Ramallah Immigrant Memory Project

Every immigrant has a unique story to tell, and that is especially true of our Ramallah family. The purpose of the Ramallah Immigrant Project is to document the unique stories and first-hand experiences of our parents and grandparents who immigrated to the U.S. These videotaped oral interviews serve as a reminder to future generations of the sacrifices made by our ancestors to make a better life for their families.

Palestine Day

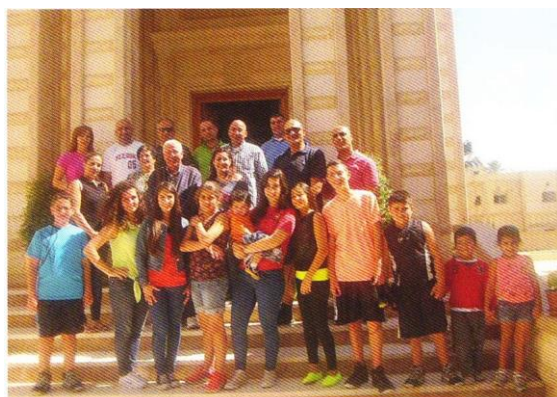
An annual event, Palestine Day celebrations are part of an international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people. In the U.S. , the events are held in various cities and organized by individual chapter clubs or affiliations and include Palestinian culture, food , dance and more. Many of the chapter clubs offer an educational element to the celebration with noted guest speakers, musicians and poets.

Business and Professional Society

The AFRP Business and Professional Society is a national network of business professionals dedicated to promoting and enhancing their businesses/careers through shared affiliation. The Society promotes professional development, management training and mentorship/shadowing programs.

The American Ramallah Federation Educational and Charitable Fund (ARFECF)

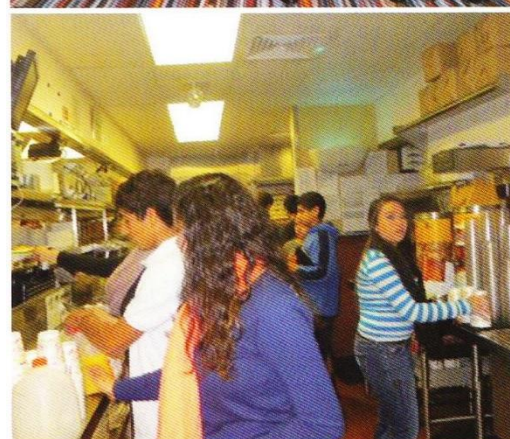
This charitable nonprofit 501c3 (ARFECF) corporation is chartered in the



state of Michigan and is a separate entity of the Federation. Under the guidance of nine board members, the ARFECF's mission is to provide financial aid for the education and training of deserving students, as well as to contribute to educational

institutions and civic organizations to further educational causes, and to provide for charitable and relief projects. Tax-deductible contributions fund this program.

2017 - AFRP
Debka Competition Winners



At some point during our mission trip in Palestine I emailed my prioress, Sister Attracta Kelly, thanking her for suggesting that I apply for membership in this mission. This is the "best Easter of my life," I said, because in so many places and in so many ways the meaning of resurrection was lived again and again. The root of the word "resurrection" means to "stand up again." Resurrection is made real when the people - young and old, Christian and Muslim alike - of a city under occupation turn out on a cold rainy day to "stand up" for who they are and are loud and proud in a parade of youth and spiritual heritage. Resurrection is real when a young man (still a boy really at 18) three months out of prison can ignore our questions about his personal pain and eagerly perform a "rap" on the oppression of his people. Resurrection is a conservatory of music teaching young people to make beautiful music in a city (Jerusalem) where the occupying force is "systematically" (illustrated by the power point presentation) trying to destroy not only the Palestinian culture but the very Palestinian presence in the city. Resurrection is a weekly demonstration to protest the land grab of settlements and the closing of roads. Resurrection is standing up again and again and again. Thank you for the experience of resurrection in the people of Ramallah and Palestine. Like the patroness of my Dominican order, Mary of Magdaia, I am committed to telling this story of resurrection.

Sister Cheryl Liske, Executive Director Gamaliel of Michigan Detroit, MI

CULTURAL AND EDUCATION MISSION

The AFRP Education and Cultural Exchange Program

Established in 2015, this important educational program offers the American public an opportunity to travel to Palestine to gain a better understanding and witness themselves the struggles Palestinians face daily. To date, three mission trips have taken place. The first was geared to members of religious communities, and the second consisted of journalists and communications graduate students. Future trips are planned for educators, public officials, and others.





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the rich cultural Palestinian heritage to the Ramallah family and their
descendants in diaspora - estimated at approximately 40,000 in the U.S.
- by providing programs that foster cultural and social interaction, as
well as educational, humanitarian, civic and charitable opportunities.

American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine (AFRP)

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