The Character Tree

Rawdat El-Zuhur (Garden of Flowers) is a non-governmental non-profit elementary school and kindergarten for Palestinian children in East Jerusalem. It was established by Palestinian Christians and today is in partnership with Global Ministries. Rawdat el Zuhur aims to bring up a generation of young people that practice good citizenship, have concern for the environment; are capable of thinking creatively, and analyzing logically; and who are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to assume leadership in a democratic society which they would develop and preserve. Imagine, this vision becoming a reality in Jerusalem!

Well aware of the importance of trees for shade and food, Rawdat el Zuhur created the “Character Tree” project to challenge young students to bear the fruits of practicing good values. The image of the tree includes many branches representing various values that children can choose to live by. In this season of harvest, the school year has borne fruits in character-building. Two students received special recognition for living up to some of those values.

Shihab came to school on a Friday morning to participate in the huge fund-raising event that the school was holding that day. Seeing the playground filled with dry leaves and garbage from the storm of the previous night, his commitment to the value branch of public welfare urged him to do something about it. Working like a storm himself he got busy cleaning up the playground so that when the guests arrived the area was spick-and-span.

Forgiveness and humility are other values hanging on the Character Tree. Mohammad’s classroom “friends” committed a grave offense against him, yet he so humbly forgave them that the offending children were embarrassed realizing how wrong they had been.

The name of the school challenges each of us to work hard to reflect a budding and flourishing spirit, while radiating the odor and colors of the Garden.

Let us pray for Rawdat el Zuhur and their continuing work toward reconciliation of a nation through character building of young people. We share the prayer of the school, “May God bless your days and nights, while also blessing this ministry to children.”

You make the difference...

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