

## Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association

### Dabke Youth Dance Visit 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018



**How could you help?** Please email if you would like to help out or just come to our monthly meeting (see Facebook and Website). Let us know if you have contact with a school, college, union or other organisation that might like to be involved.

**Registered Charity Number:** 1155620

**e mail:** [orfa\\_info@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:orfa_info@yahoo.co.uk) **Website:** [www.oxford-ramallah.org/](http://www.oxford-ramallah.org/)

**Project outline for visit** Dabke is a traditional Palestinian folk dance which is widely performed at weddings and other celebrations in Palestine. It is also popular in Lebanon and Syria.

This visit builds on the connections ORFA has developed with civil society organisations, mainly run by volunteers, in Al Amari Refugee Camp in Ramallah.

Our aim is to share the cultural experience of life in Palestine with other young people and dance audiences and dancers in Oxfordshire. The visit will provide an opportunity for young Palestinian refugees to show their creativity and hard work to UK audiences. We hope the visit will empower these young people to continue with their dancing, motivate them with their English studies and education in general, further develop their self-confidence for the future and reduce their sense of isolation. The visit will provide a great opportunity for residents of Oxford and its surroundings to share in part of the rich cultural life of Palestine.

**How the visit came about** – On a recent self-funded visit to Ramallah ORFA members were invited to watch a group of dancers from the Child Centre in Al Amari Camp. The dancers gave an excellent performance and our partners in the camp felt that it would be a good project for ORFA to arrange a twelve day visit, to Oxford, of the Dabke Dance group of young dancers from Al Amari Refugee Camp in Ramallah. We agreed that this was a wonderful idea. We will bring twelve dancers and helpers to Oxford from Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July.

**Who will come** – Seven young female dancers (aged 16 years to 22 years) and the dance teacher and choreographer. To support the group and arrange the visit in Al Amari Camp we will also welcome four volunteers from both the Child Centre and Women's Centre, making a total of 12.

**Ideas for programme and groups to work with** We are be liaising with: Oxford City Council – Dancin' Oxford, local dance groups, Cowley Carnival, Morris Dancing Groups, Faringdon Peace Fair, Oxford University Museum Service, Activate Learning and Schools.

**Agreed Performances/Workshops:**

- Wolvercote Young People's Club and BBQ – part of Village Festival – Thu 28<sup>th</sup> June Eve
- Ashmolean Museum Performance – 3-4 pm in the Atrium Sat 30<sup>th</sup> June
- ORFA Open Event - West Oxford Community Centre – 7-10pm Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June
- Cowley Carnival Procession – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July
- Dancin' Oxford World Dance Stage (at Cowley Carnival) – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July
- Marhaba Café and Workshop at Richard Benson hall (at Cowley Carnival)
- Refugee Resource – Women's Group 12- 2pm Shared lunch+Performance+workshop
- Oxford Youth Dance Company Workshop in liaison with Oxford City Culture Team – Claire Thompson - Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 5.15 to 7.15 pm
- Faringdon Peace Fair – pm Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July

Others performances/workshops to be arranged: Schools, Activate Learning, local dance groups.

**Background** Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association (ORFA) is a charity which builds links between civil society groups and individuals in Oxford, UK and Ramallah, Palestine. ORFA started in 2003 and became a charity in 2014.

ORFA raises awareness through bringing groups and individuals from Palestine to share their stories with residents of Oxford and its surroundings. Through this we hope to reduce the sense of isolation that comes from life under occupation. We also organise self-funded delegations to visit Palestine and support projects in a refugee camp in Ramallah eg initial funding for cameras for a video project. ORFA also organises meetings with other groups in Oxford providing information and speakers to inform the public about human rights issues and environmental justice in Palestine.

**The visit is supported by: Oxford City Council Culture Fund, Unite The Union, Palestine Unlocked, Doris Field Charitable Trust plus general fundraising and individual donations.**