

المدرسة
الوطنية الأرثوذكسية
الشميساني



The National
Orthodox School
Shmaisani



EVOLVE

NOS Students' Newsletter & Podcast

Dec. 2025 | Issue 1 | Year XI | No. 19



LAST ISSUE OF OUR FIRST DECADE



NOSEVOLVE



EVOLVE:NOSStudents'Newsletter



NOS Students' Newsletter & Podcast

WELCOME TO ISSUE 1 | YEAR XI

Q: What is 'EVOLVE'?

Evolve is the National Orthodox School-Shmaisani (NOS) student-based newsletter & podcast. The newsletter was started by a student (Majd Muna) in 2015, and the Podcast was started by a student (Mariah Manneh) in 2022. It's a space where students can express their thoughts and feelings and share their take on what's happening at school and beyond with our school community and the world.

Q: Who can join and how?

The EVOLVE team consists of Grade (9-12) students. A detailed announcement is sent out to all student and family emails during the first weeks of each school year. Anyone from Grades (9-12) can apply to join, by a certain deadline. This year, our team has filled up; however keep an eye out for future announcements for vacancies! Moreover, any student from any stage who is interested in writing is most welcome to contribute an opinion piece. You can pitch your ideas for contributions by sending an email to: editor.newsletter@nos.edu.jo

Q: Where can I find the previous issues & podcasts?

Our school administration sends Evolve to NOS students, families and staff by official email. So, you can look for it in your NOS school email inbox. Additionally, the issue is posted on our socials, and you can find a link tree in our Instagram (NOSEVOLVE) bio. There, you will also find the links to the NOS website, previous issues, and our Podcast; or you can find us on the NOS website (www.nos.edu.jo), under News & Publications.

Message from EVOLVE Advisor Dina Ra'ad-Yaghnani:

Our Dear EVOLVE Readers,

As 2025 comes to an end, EVOLVE folds the page on its first 10 years of the newsletter publication, having put out 19 issues, rich with student-led stories, and forging ahead into a New Decade with new-found enthusiasm. With it begins hopefully a journey that will continue not only for another 10 years, but as long as NOS Students are eager to hold the reigns and lead this vital outlet for their voices. Judging by the increasingly growing number of students that are applying and joining EVOLVE year after year, it looks like EVOLVE will be around for a very long time.

For this Final Issue of the First Decade, the EVOLVE Team has cooked up and served more interesting and diverse articles (and a beautiful poem) on topics that they felt the urge to write about, with the strife of our brothers and sisters in Palestine continuing to be a major one. These brilliant young journalists put together yet another permanent document that will live on in NOS's memory long after they have graduated. Kudos and huge thanks to all the EVOLVE members who worked on this issue, and to all our EVOLVERs, in all teams (Newsletter, Design, Photojournalism, Media, Podcast and Secretariat), past, present and future, for their contribution to EVOLVE throughout the past 10 years. They deserve a big thank you for contributing to NOS history; and you, our dear readers, deserve a very big thank you for all your support and encouragement over time.

Till we meet in the 1st issue of EVOLVE's 2nd Decade, we wish you pleasant reading.

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أطفال في الذاكرة

ماريا عوض

كل صباح أستيقظ على صوت المنبّه، أنظف أسناني، وأجهّز حقيبتني للمدرسة. أحياناً أقلق إذا تأخّر الباص، أو إذا كان زيّ المدرسي غير مكوي. لكن في مكان قريب مني، في غزة، هناك طفل في عمري لا يستيقظ على صوت المنبّه، بل على صوت القصف.

أنا أحضّر كتبي، وهو يُحضّر ذكرياته.
أنا أغضب من الواجبات، وهو يخاف من الهدم.
أنا أخشى من العلامات، وهو يخشى ألا يعيش إلى الغد.
وأنا أكتب عن أحلامي، وهو يكتب وصيته الأخيرة.

كان اسم ذلك الطفل عزمي أبو الشعر، عمره 10 سنوات، فلسطيني من غزة. في دفتره الصغير كتب كلمات مؤلمة لا يجب أن يكتبها أي طفل في العالم:



"السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، إذا نمت وذهبت النون فسامحوني أمي وأبي وأخواتي نعيمة وشهد ومريم ومحمود."
"أمي وأبي أنا متأسف جدا إذا أغضبتكم يوما، أنا عزوز حاسس حالي مش مطوّل."

"أمي، أرجو منك أن تنتبهي لمحمود، نعيمة: أنا متأسف على الإزعاج، وشهد كذلك مريم ومحمود، يشهد الله أنّي أحبكم كلّكم، وستي، وسيدي، وأعمامي وعمّاتي وكل الناس، أرجو أن يسامحوني."



أطفال في الذاكرة

تكملة...

ماريا عوض

هل يمكن أن تتخيلوا طفلاً في العاشرة من عمره، يجلس على الأرض ودفتره ممزق بين يديه، وصوت القصف حوله، وهو يكتب آخر كلماته لأهله؟

هل يمكن أن تتخيلوا يديه الصغيرتين ترتجفان وهو يكتب أسماء أحبائه؟ هل يمكن أن تتخيلوا أن يكون النوم بالنسبة له نهاية لا بداية؟

لكن قصة عزمي ليست الوحيدة، بل هي قصة العشرات من آلاف الأطفال في غزة... أطفال كان لديهم أحلام مثلنا تمامًا. كانوا يريدون أن يصبحوا معلمين، أطباء، فنّانين، كما كانوا يحلموا أن يلعبوا بعد المدرسة، وأن يحتفلوا بأعياد ميلادهم. لكنهم اضطروا أن يكبروا في عالمٍ يحرمهم من المستقبل الذي يتمنّونه.

حتى أن بعض الأطفال أصبحوا يكتبون أسماءهم على أذرعهم حتى يتعرّف عليهم المسعفون إذا استشهدوا. كل هذا يحدث والعالم يشاهد بصمت دون أي حراك. تمر نفس الغيوم فوق رؤوسنا، لكن ليس كلنا نشعر بالسلام تحتها.

بالنسبة للأطفال في غزة، حتى السماء تبدو غير آمنة، تذكرهم بما قد يسقط منها.

وبرغم كل هذا، أطفال غزة ما زالوا يبتسمون، يلعبون بين الركام، يتمسكون ببعضهم، ويحلمون بالمدرسة، بالأمان، وبأن يروا الشمس دون خوف. أملهم بسيط، لكنه حقيقي.



عزمي أبو الشعر يشارك الألم نفسه مع آلاف الأطفال الذين فقدوا حياتهم في غزة. العالم عرف قصتهم بعد 7 من أكتوبر 2023، لكن الحقيقة أن معاناتهم بدأت منذ أكثر من 77 سنة.



Uninterrupted

This Isn't War; It's Genocide

Samir Asad 8F

I plead before the most powerful people on this planet for an end to a horrific genocide—the genocide in Gaza. Palestinians live in agony and pain, from whom? The Zionist occupation causes this horrific genocide. I cannot put into words the suffering of losing your entire family in a blink. I cannot describe the heartache of holding your lifeless 4-year-old child in your arms. They are killing innocent souls. It seems impossible that anyone could endure such pain. This isn't war; it's genocide.

Envision waking up to the sound of screams and sirens. You hear gunfire coming from nearby. You leap out of bed to search for your two children; they're not there. You rush outside and see blood soaking your laundry. You can't process what's happening: bodies strewn everywhere like discarded debris, bombs falling relentlessly from the sky, and your children, lying on the ground, dead. This is the reality Palestinians face every day. This isn't war; it's genocide.

Do you know what's worse than the massacre of innocent, pure, and guiltless souls? Lying about it. The deceptive Israeli "Defense" Forces have never been honest with you. This is not their land—we've been planting roots in it for thousands of years. More than Sixty-eight thousand people have died in the past two years alone. Is that not enough for you? This isn't war; it's genocide.

We aren't terrorists; we have humanity. As people, you must have humanity, you must have a heart, mustn't you? Everything great has been built on humanity, kindness, forgiveness, and -most importantly- peace. When will you recognize that this isn't right nor just? This isn't war; it's genocide.

They have killed innocent men, women, and children—none of whom ever harmed anyone—for their own gain. These pure-hearted innocents deserve a better life. This is terrorism. This isn't war; it's Genocide.



"Uninterrupted" is the space where you can share your opinions on whatever is on your mind. You don't need to be an EVOLVE Team member to send in your writings for this section. Email us your idea or what you wish to write at "editor.newsletter@nos.edu.jo" for consideration.



10 YEARS OF EVOLVEing

The Man Behind EVOLVE

Daniella Sweidan

This year marks 10 years since the first EVOLVE issue got published back in 2015: it has been “10 years of EVOLVEing”. To celebrate this special occasion, a fellow EVOLVEer, Yanal Hussein and I decided to do a podcast interview with the one who started it all: Majd Muna, NOS class of 2018. We greatly appreciated that Majd stayed up to join us in an online session from where he is currently working as a data scientist in San Francisco, to tell us how EVOLVE started, what it took to get the first issue out, and so on. Here are some highlights from the interview:

How did the idea of EVOLVE first come about and what inspired Majd to create it?

Majd dreamt up EVOLVE in 2015, as a freshman in high school. He said a lot of students, even alumni, were achieving many great things within and outside academics, but nobody really knew about them, only through word of mouth. At the same time, he wanted to do more extracurricular activities; so he thought of EVOLVE.

What is the meaning behind the name EVOLVE?

Majd stated that when it comes to any idea, it shouldn't have a complicated or long name. If you capture it in one very simple way, people are more likely to remember it. He said “EVOLVE is nice; we as individuals need to keep growing and progressing. So EVOLVE really captures that.” The idea of EVOLVE is that we as humans and individuals are constantly changing and growing.

What is Majd's message to all EVOLVEers?

Majd said he is very proud of each of the past, present, and future generations of EVOLVEers. Being part of the team is no easy task. He said he finds the issues interesting and that he reads as part of the audience and finds it amazing to see how much EVOLVE has grown and what it's doing.





10 YEARS OF EVOLVEing:

The Man Behind EVOLVE

Daniella Sweidan

continued...

Majd's message to all EVOLVEers is "Be curious. Be curious about information, about knowledge in general. Try to seek information out and think about things in that way."

His other tip is, "Try to be innovative in what you do, whether it's in a professional endeavor, or whether it's in your day-to-day life."



My personal favorite quote he said is, "Take the moment in," since we are always so worried about the end result.

I want to give a big thank you to Majd for creating EVOLVE and for being our special guest and making time for us to interview him on this special occasion. This interview is one of the last things I did at school before graduating from NOS last June.

To say that I'm proud of everything I did at school and at EVOLVE but sad to be leaving is a huge understatement. EVOLVE changed my life in ways I can't even express or imagine; it allowed me to share my love for psychology and journalism with our community, and it was a huge honor to be part of it. I wish EVOLVE and NOS the best of luck.





Beyond the Pink Ribbons

Kareem Karadsheh & Salma Hantoush

Every October, pink ribbons start to appear around us, symbols of strength, hope, and awareness. However, behind those ribbons are real people, whose courage goes far beyond a symbol. “Beyond the Pink Ribbons” aims to share some of these voices and shed light on what breast cancer truly means.

Before hearing their stories, it’s important to understand what breast cancer is, and how it affects millions around the world. Although it mainly affects women, men can also get breast cancer, but rarely, accounting for less than 1% of all breast cancer cases. Factors affecting lifestyle, such as diet, exercise, and stress play a role in the development of breast cancer. However, genetics and hormones also play a huge role in its development. Symptoms may include fatigue, swelling, and unexplained changes in the body.

Treatments like chemotherapy and radiation are often crucial for survival; however they also have cons. Hair loss, skin changes, tiredness, nausea and a weaker immune system are all side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. Beyond the physical effects, patients also face emotional struggles, especially with body image and confidence.

To understand breast cancer from a different point of view other than statistics, we decided to interview two incredible women whose journeys show what strength truly means. It was eye-opening, a reminder to pause and take it all in. Each is at a different stage in her battle with cancer. One is just beginning, unsure of what lies ahead; the other has finished her treatments and continues with hope and strength.





Beyond the Pink Ribbons

Kareem Karadsheh & Salma Hantoush

continued...

Diana Aref, who has just begun her journey at 42 years old said, “Hearing the word ‘cancer’ was definitely unsettling, but I knew I had to stay strong for my family and friends. Despite the fact that my life’s been an emotional rollercoaster, hearing the news still made me afraid, however it wasn’t such a shock for me since it runs in the family. I had to remind myself that it’s okay to be scared but that fear is not bigger than my strength.” Her words carry a quiet strength, reminding us that even in moments of fear, if you’re stronger than your fear you can keep going no matter what.

Dr Shatha Haddad, a dentist who was diagnosed 3 years ago and is now cancer free, shared her struggles during treatment. “The fear before the surgery, before every lab result, the radiation, the pain, the thought of death, and worrying about how my kids would survive without me. I had to stay strong because if I fell apart, my kids would too.” When asked how her battle changed her life, she said, “It made me stronger and more grateful. I wouldn’t have faced breast cancer without my faith. My scar reminds me every day of how strong I was during that stage of my life and of the love and support my family gave me.”

Dr Haddad’s story shows that even in the darkest times, faith and family can give us strength. It’s a reminder that resilience and hope can guide us through anything.

Breast cancer can be a painful and life-changing experience, but it can also bring growth and reflection. It can inspire healthier habits and stronger faith.

The women we spoke to faced their fears with courage and love, showing that even through pain and uncertainty, hope and support can make any challenge brighter. Both incredible women emphasized the importance of early detection, healthy living, yearly scanning, and spreading awareness. Their battles against breast cancer remind us that strength comes from within and from those who stand beside us.



It takes great courage to fight cancer, and it takes great courage to talk about your journey . Our sincerest thanks to Dr Shatha Haddad and Ms Diana Aref for generously agreeing to share their stories so we can shed light on this important subject and help spread awareness about it.



The United Nations

From Relevance to Redundancy

Nicola Faraj

The UN, once the proprietor of peace in a torn world, now drifts like a ship that has forgotten its captain. In the corridors of New York, speeches rise and fall like smoke after a fire, while beyond those are wars, walls, rage, and genocide. How can an organization like the UN that was built to protect humanity stand so still while humanity is begging for hope?

In the year 2025, as the world watches crises rise, the United Nations carries the weight and burden of history and the eyes of expectation. Founded October 24, 1945, the UN has grown to acknowledge and encompass 193 member states. Despite its vast and modern collective logistics, with billions spent annually on peacekeeping and growth, there are over 1.1 billion people still living in extreme poverty, 600 million of whom are under 18. Conflicts have become more complex than ever, with more fragility than ceasefires, peacekeeping that's receding, and shattering political union.

As a whole, the UN has Over 30 affiliated organizations, programs, and agencies, including the 6 main principle organs: UN General Assembly, Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice, the Secretariat, and the Trusteeship Council. The UN also Includes funds or programs such as the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Of all UN agencies, the Security Council is most concerned with the original goal of keeping world peace, but the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5) haunts resolutions to this day. The P5 (USA, UK, China, France and Russia) have the power to veto (reject); they can change the dynamic of diplomacy within the fingertips of a delegate.





The United Nations

From Relevance to Redundancy

Nicola Faraj

continued...

Over 300 drafts have been vetoed since the inception of the Security Council, 30 of them related to crises such as Gaza or the Russo-Ukrainian War, even in the face of overwhelming demand for change in humanitarian concerns. Sierra Leone has also been a prime victim of veto power; according to OXFAM, it hasn't received proper aid, and has had inequality within the nation which has sparked significant outrage and conflict.

A striking example of how the United Nations' authority has been overruled is the post-October 7th US-led ban on UNRWA, one of the UN's most crucial humanitarian agencies. Established December 8, 1949, UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency) supports nearly 5.9 million registered Palestinian refugees in places such as Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, providing access to education, healthcare, and social services.



Despite its long, historical, crucial humanitarian role, UNRWA has lately faced scrutiny and financial cuts, particularly from the United States of America, following unverified Israeli allegations against its staff. The U.S. explicitly signaled that the ban on financial provision could be permanent, described as a prohibition, not a suspension (US funding to UNRWA will stop).

A Second Wind for the United Nations

The UN is pushing for a renewal of relevancy, with a spark of hope. In countries like Mozambique or The Ivory Coast, its peacekeeping operations have aided in the protection of civilians and the safeguarding of trust in the transition between peace and war. It is also integrating data systems that respond to crises in real time, in its efforts to enhance credibility and accountability for peacekeepers. While the UN may not have succeeded at being the proprietor of peace or the shield of diplomacy, it remains the only global forum capable of gathering every nation in one chamber and mandating resolutions that are the future of diplomacy. If the UN ceased to function, the world as of today wouldn't have order. As Heraclitus said, "The way up and the way down are one and the same."



Behind the Product

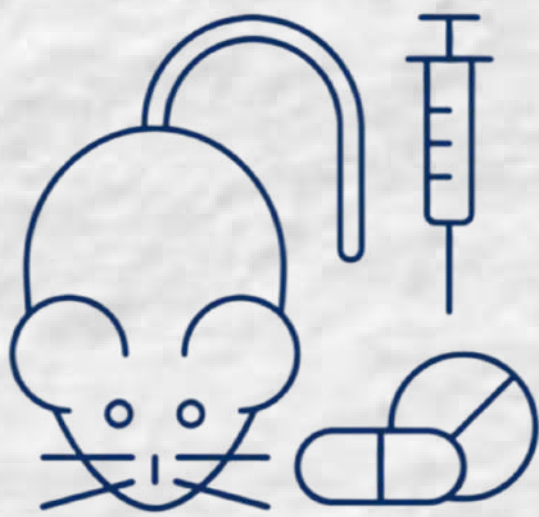
Alba Lara

We are often excited about getting something new, a new perfume, a new cosmetic on skin, or new clothes. However, behind products in a bag, there is usually a sacrifice: deaths of animals in the hands of some of the most famous companies ever. Most people claim how much they love animals, but still choose to close their eyes and not speak up about the aching of millions of animals in the world suffering for the sake of a product.

The existing laws for the protection of these animals aren't that helpful. About 45 countries banned testing on animals, but that is out of 195 countries in the world; is this good enough to affect animal testing and have more cruelty free products?

Some scientists claim that animals do not have feelings, do not feel pain or anything at all. They use vague excuses to cover up the horrors they do in laboratories, injecting drugs, toxic liquids into animals' skin and eyes and leaving them suffering.

It could be any pet you yourself have at home: a dog, a cat, even a rabbit. Now imagine your pet going through such pain and suffering cruel experiments involving drugs and needles, just to make a cosmetic work.



The point of this article is to address the cruelty that is happening in front of us and is simply not right. Although this is just an article, it is a plea from me to you, as I speak for those with no voice. Stop using brands that use animal tests; instead use cruelty free products and raise awareness about it.

Behind many products, there is the massacre and torture of animas. Look for cruelty-free icons in the cosmetics that you buy. That may be the best we can do, but we are not going to stay silent. We are not going to stay silent, are we? We are not going to become part of it, right?





The Leaves of Autumn

Natalie Al- Sahouri

My smile is faint as I stare at the autumn leaves,
Gliding down from the branches of the trees.
I pull down the cuffs of my sweater and twirl my hair,
My heart swells with more than I can bear.

Autumn is calm, it's sweet, it's serene,
The absence of life, and the absence of green.
The taste of pumpkin spice lingers in my mouth,
Tears pool in my eyes as the peace drifts south.



Autumn is treasured though the leaves start to die;
Their fading holds beauty beneath the gray sky.
Of all the seasons' motifs of life, it reminds
That death can be special, not always unkind.

The wind sweeps over me, the leaves scattering,
Pulling me from thought, the moment shattering.
Orange, brown, red warm colors and hues
Helping me forget the scars or the bruise.



NOS HIGHLIGHTS

September



آخر آوّل يوم مدرسة | خريجو عام 2026
Last 1st Day of School | Class of 2026



أول يوم من العام الدراسي الجديد 2025-2026
1st Day for the New School Year 2025-2026



حفل تكريم الطلبة المتفوقة أكاديميًا
Academically Outstanding Student Award



جلسة الإرشاد الجامعي | الصف (12)
University Counseling Session | Grade (12)



نادي المناظرة | الصف 8
Debate Club | Grade 8



حتفال عيد رفع الصليب المُكرّم
The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



رحلة مدرسية موسيقية إلى لندن | جوقة الوطنية الأرثوذكسية الصفوف (7-12)
Musical School Trip to London | NOS Grades (7-12) Choir





NOS HIGHLIGHTS

October



تشرين الأول الزهري | المرحلة (6-8)
Pink October | Stage (6-8)



بطولة الوطنية الأرثوذكسيّة السنويّة للسباحة 2025
NOS Annual Swimming Championship 2025



2026 جاكيت الخريجين | خريجو عام
Senior Jackets | Class of 2026



نشاط عالم الحيوانات المرحلة (1-3)
Zoo Day Stage (1-3)



يوم الطفل العربي في الوطنيّة الأرثوذكسيّة | Arab Child Day @ NOS



يوم المُعلّم العالمي في الوطنيّة الأرثوذكسيّة | World Teachers' Day @ NOS

NOS HIGHLIGHTS

November



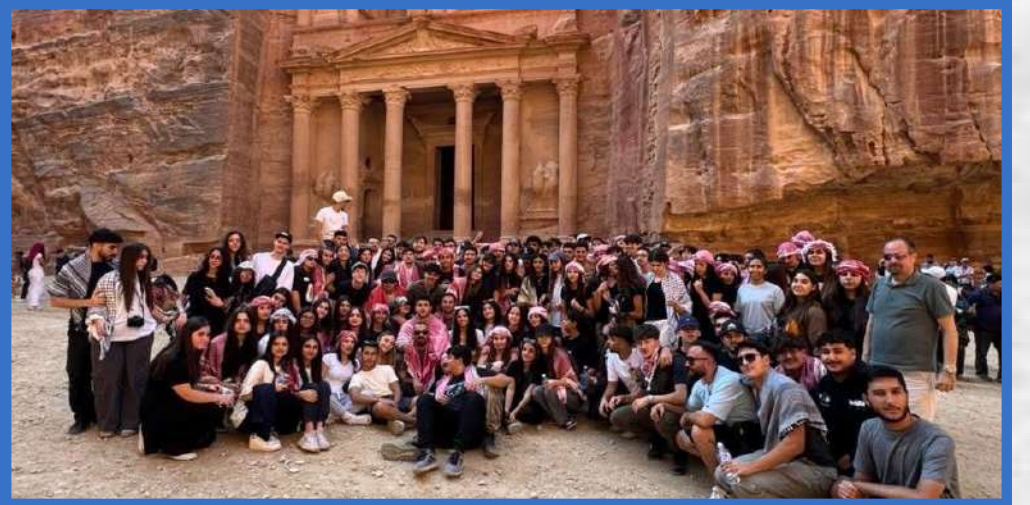
ورشة عمل بعنوان "كيف تختار تخصصك الجامعي"
"How to Choose Your Major" Workshop (11-12)

وعد بلفور المشؤوم
The Ominous Balfour Declaration



زيارة إلى بنك الملابس الخيري | المرحلة (6-8)
Visit to the Charity Clothing Bank | Stage (6-8)

بطولة الأيدي الواعدة الثالثة لكرة السلة (ذكور)
3rd Promise Welfare Society Basketball Tournament
(Males)



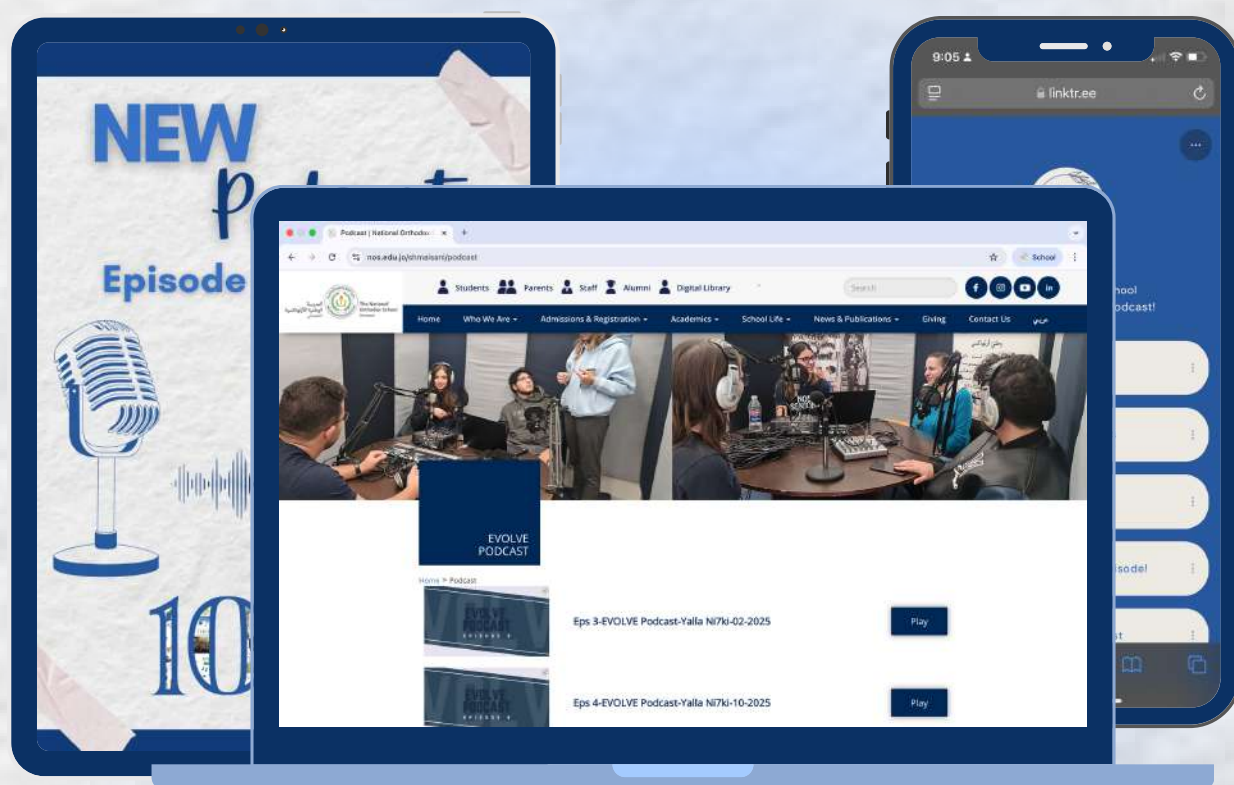
خريجو وخريجات الوطنيّة الأرثوذكسيّة 2026 | رحلة مدرسية إلى البتراء ووادي رم
NOS Seniors 2026 | School Trip to Petra and Wadi Rum



المدرسة الوطنيّة الأرثوذكسيّة تعقد مؤتمر اللّغة العربيّة الخامس (بالعربيّة نبدع)
NOS Holds the 5th Arabic Language Conference (In Arabic We Excel)



Check Out Our Podcast



**Listen to the 4 episodes
already available online!**

<https://nos.edu.jo/shmaisani/podcast>

**& on EVOLVE Podcast Playlist
on the NOS Official YouTube Channel**



NOS- National Orthodox School- Shmaisani

Stay tuned for more!

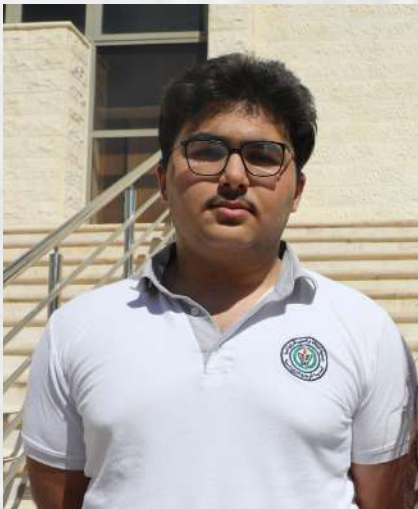
MEET THE TEAM



LEADERSHIP TEAM



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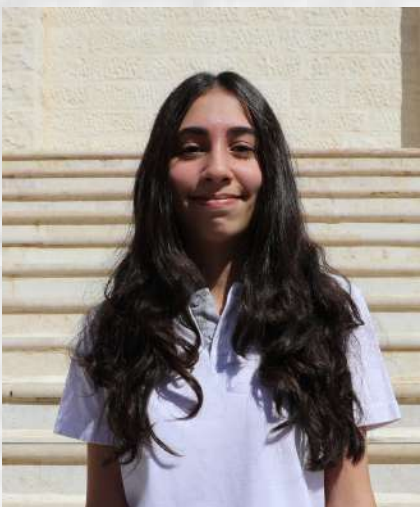
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