HEAD OF SCHOOL - RITA ZGHEIB

Dear Wellspring Learning Community Families, Students, Faculty, Staff, and Board Members,

Allow me to start my communication with a reflection that has stayed with me for many, many years.
In his semi-autobiographical trilogy, *Tant que la terre durera*, *Le sac et la cendre*, and *Étrangers sur la terre,* Henri Troyat poignantly portrays the condition of *les apatrides* (stateless people): the White Russian émigrés who fled the Bolshevik Revolution and settled in interwar Paris. Stripped of their Russian citizenship by the Soviet regime, they held only Nansen passports (documents that permitted limited travel without conferring a nationality). Consequently, these exiles lived in a permanent state of suspension between a vanished homeland they romanticized and a host country where they remained legal and cultural outsiders.

« Les apatrides, ces gens de nulle part, sont soumis à une enfance en double version, de façon permanente et simultanée. »

("Stateless people, these people from nowhere, are subjected to a dual-version childhood, permanently and simultaneously.")

Unlike typical immigrants who can look back to an existing country, the Russian *apatrides* were citizens of a ghost nation, living simultaneously in two worlds, neither of which fully belonged to them.
Troyat captured the quiet vulnerability and profound rootlessness of existing without a nation to claim, without institutions to shelter one's rights, and without a collective home to anchor one's identity. His words serve as a powerful reminder of what we must never take for granted: having a homeland is both an extraordinary privilege and a demanding trust.
This November 22, Lebanon's 83rd Independence Day, we celebrate not only a defining moment in our history, but the enduring meaning of belonging to a sovereign nation. Independence is far more than borders on a map or a date on the calendar; it is the living covenant between citizens, sustained every day through shared responsibility, mutual respect, and collective hope.
Our "Lebanonship" does not begin and end with nationality; it lives in how we show up for one another and for the common good. Especially in moments that test our resilience, active and conscious citizenship is what transforms even the most barren land into a true home.
On this November 22, let us honor the generations who forged our independence by renewing our commitment to Lebanon - not merely in words, but through everyday acts of integrity and unity.
Wishing you and your families a proud, reflective, and meaningful Independence Day.
Warm regards,

Rita Zgheib, Ed.D., NPQEL
Executive Leadership National Professional Qualification Awarded | Department for Education
Head of School
Director of Learning & Teaching



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