
The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women

PO Box 47, Warren, Rhode Island 02885-0047
www.ieaw.org

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& Director*

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Dear Friend of The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women,

We are pleased and excited to announce that loyal supporters have offered a \$40,000 challenge grant to the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women. We are hoping to match this amount over the summer months, which is a very important season for us. Our new freshman students are in Afghanistan, preparing to come for the first time to the United States. We welcome them and our returning students in August when our expenses are high as the new academic year begins.

The news from Afghanistan can be disheartening. Just recently, there was a report on the poisoning of more young Afghan women who were singled out for attending school. Education is so valued by women in Afghanistan that they often risk life and limb for the chance to learn.

The Initiative is the only program that offers college scholarships in the United States exclusively for Afghan women, whose opportunities for higher education at home are extremely limited – and very expensive.

And it is true that what benefits these young women personally also benefits their country – and ours. They travel to the United States as ambassadors from Afghanistan – and return home each summer and after graduation as ambassadors for the US. They strengthen our global community by their courage, values and hard work.

Would you please consider a donation this summer? Remember it will be matched, dollar for dollar. That is each dollar you give will be doubled, thus increasing our ability to develop more outstanding leadership opportunities for the motivated young women of Afghanistan. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Paula Nirschel

P.S. An extra donation card is included; please share it with a friend who is interested in Afghan women receiving the education that they deserve.

The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women

NEWS & Events

From the Founder

The joy of seeing 15 Afghan women graduate from US colleges is pretty wonderful. That is how many graduates the IEAW had this year. Two of the women graduated as outstanding seniors in their major. Many of the students graduated with honors. We also had our first graduate from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Five of the graduates are accounting majors. That is great for Afghanistan since all the CPA's in the country are from Pakistan. These will be the first five CPA's that we know of in Afghanistan, and they are women!



IEAW Board Meeting
April 2010

This all would not be possible without the assistance of a first class Board of Directors, and all of you supporters who continue to believe in the women of Afghanistan. This year our financials are extremely challenging, therefore we have included a fundraising letter and donation card herein. Please, if you like what the IEAW stands for, give generously so we do not have to temper our momentum. This is a team effort, and all of you who are receiving this newsletter are part of a winning, and very important, team.

This past academic year, our Holy Cross students were fortunate to speak to their fellow students, alongside Greg Mortenson (author of *Three Cups of Tea*). Our students spoke about the women in their country having a "fierce" desire for education. They said that the IEAW gave them hope, and is the only program in the country offering an international higher education to Afghan women. Greg mentioned that the importance of educating women has three elements: the infant mortality rate is reduced; the population explosion will be decreased; the basic qualities of health and life itself for women will be improved. He went on to say that when females learn they pass it along, teaching their families and their communities the proper treatment of women. Also, he indicated that educated women have a direct influence on boys not joining the Taliban. Greg said, and I agree, that the long term solution to terrorism is education.

May is graduation month, and also the time when our students return home to be with their families, and work for the success of Afghanistan. January begins the countdown to how many days there are until the students return home. I hear this from so many of the women. Their excitement of seeing their families again, walking on their soil, eating their organic food, and working in challenging settings. I do hear from supporters at times that they have concerns for the students returning each summer. Know that what we at the IEAW hear is, yes, Afghanistan is volatile today, but there's no place like home! Many family-welcoming parties, weddings and engagement parties, and jobs keep the women busy and feeling comfortable at home.

I know you share in wishing our students a good summer with their families. When they return to the US we will again provide them with the education that they and their country deserve. This makes us all proud to be Americans, doing the right thing for the people of Afghanistan, participating in this dynamic cultural exchange.

I thank you all for believing in the country of Afghanistan and its 29 million people. Together we can make a difference.

All the best to you and yours,

Please continue to help us educate the women of Afghanistan and give the extra card to a friend.



In Her Words by Fazila

A successful man/woman is not the one who tries not to fall, but the one who falls and has the courage to stand up and keep walking. Afghans have fallen many times but they are not willing to give up just yet. Every society goes through failures before it produces the leaders who know how to redeem the society. The failure stage is agonizing, sorrowful, dark and pessimistic. It is true that Afghanistan lost everything it ever had during the long days of civil war and foreign invasions. However, people have learned that war is easy to start but hard to end. Our parents are one of those who saw the destruction and abasement that comes with the war. They are the ones who see us as the new hope, the seeds of peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. We, the new generation of Afghanistan, intend to empower the vulnerable in the society.

Thanks to IEAW, respectful donors, family and friends for their continuous support, love, help and trust.

Fazila will be a senior at Sweet Briar College.

IEAW Graduations

What excitement we've experienced this academic year – culminating with commencement/graduation ceremonies for 15 of our accomplished young women in the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women. This special moment in the four-year college experience is a time of joy and pride, of celebrating major accomplishments and honoring the hard work necessary to achieve this coveted goal. For students and their families and friends everywhere this truly is a memorable moment, and for our Afghani women particularly there is the additional pride of having overcome language, gender, and cultural barriers. Their determination in accomplishing this achievement makes us consider and reconsider the absolute connection human beings have in using our intellectual abilities to overcome differences. The IEAW family is welling up with proud tears of joy, beaming with the knowledge that these young women are truly the hope for the future of their beloved country.



Sofia and friend -
University of Richmond



Helay and her host family -
University of Montana



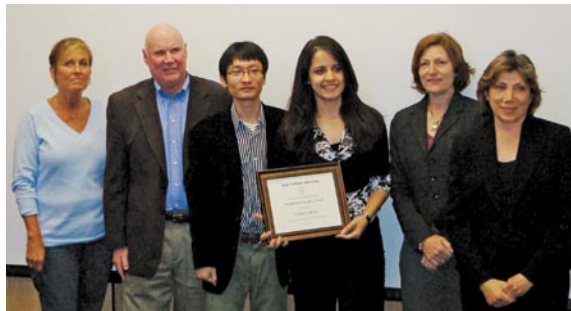
Brenau Graduation



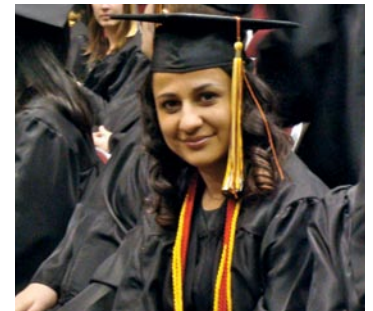
Benefsha and friend -
Meredith College

The list of graduates include:

- Brenau University, Gainesville, GA**
 - Khadija, Shamim
- Meredith College, Raleigh, NC**
 - Benefsha
- Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT**
 - Asma
- University of Montana, Missoula, MT**
 - Helay
- Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ**
 - Maryam
- Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA**
 - Khatera
- Randolph College, Lynchburg, VA**
 - Kobra
- University of Richmond, Richmond, VA**
 - Sofia
- Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI**
 - Salma, Haseena, Nadia
- Simmons College, Boston, MA**
 - Shugufa, Zala
- Tufts University, Boston, MA**
 - Adela



Nadia with faculty



Helay

Student Awards

We are proud of all IEAW graduates knowing the focus and endless hours they gave to their education. It is rare that our students take time off to “chill out” during the semesters. They are all about their studies. This year we have 2 outstanding graduates. Nadia was given the prestigious Management Faculty Award from the business school. Helay, who is our first information systems major, was hailed as the outstanding international student award. Both students graduated with high honors. Nadia will return to Herat to work for a year before attending graduate school. Helay intends also to attend graduate school and return home as one of the few top women in the country with her specialty.

Doris Buffett's Challenge Gift

Doris Buffett is one of the major “angels” of the IEAW. She heard the director Paula Nirschel and students speak at the Sulgrave Club in DC, three years ago, and decided then to fund her “Doris scholars.”

At the time she challenged the IEAW to come up with half of the money to



support her fourteen students for four years. The Buffett scholars are now going into their senior year. Doris visits with students and takes them on some glorious nights out every few months. One time they flew on her plane to see a concert! Quite a far difference than their lives in Afghanistan!

Doris has made yet another challenge for the IEAW. She will give \$100,000 each year for two years, bringing more students into the program after her original group graduates. The challenge is that the IEAW has to come up with \$300,000 in new money. This is both a challenge and an



opportunity for the IEAW to keep the same number of students in the program for at least a couple of years. As mentioned previously, the IEAW has come upon difficult financial times and is scrambling to keep educating Afghan women at the same pace as today. Doris has a heart of gold.

David Ignatius Breakfast

On Monday, April 12, 2010, IEAW Board members living in the Washington, D.C. area hosted a magnificent friends and fundraising breakfast in Georgetown.

David R. Ignatius, an American journalist and novelist, associate editor and columnist writing on global politics, economics and international affairs for The Washington Post, was the featured speaker. Mr. Ignatius co-hosts PostGlobal, an online discussion of international issues at Washingtonpost.com, with Newsweek's Fareed Zakaria. He has written seven novels.

IEAW Board member Nina Richardson introduced the work of the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women and its mission, and spoke about the thirst for education that drives our students and that is difficult to even comprehend here in the United States, where we all take access to a free education for granted. IEAW offers selected Afghan women students a QUALITY education, something still tough to come by in Afghanistan. The young women involved in our initiative are often the main bread-winners for their families.

Zohra Safi, graduate of Middlebury College and an IEAW alum, warmly introduced David Ignatius. David Ignatius then spoke to the fortunate 100 guests.

Recently returned from a journey to Kandahar Province in Afghanistan, near Pakistan, the historical region where Taliban have gathered, Mr. Ignatius related his observations, likening the reform of local government to disassembling a “pyramid of pick-up sticks.” His traveling companion was Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The situation of women in Afghanistan is one of THE GREAT causes to support today. This work, according to Ignatius, follows the current policies of the Obama administration. What are we doing in Afghanistan? Obama continues to be deeply torn between the nation building side (education for women; building schools; building roads and infrastructure) vs. the counter-terrorism side.

Regarding the counterinsurgency, Mr. Ignatius feels we must begin to take people of the country more seriously – we must make our U.S. presence in Afghanistan about protecting Afghan people. Therefore, a slow withdrawal is expected.

The highest priority problem is corruption, an issue that has been so tricky to deal with – sometimes the problems we face are more with our “friends” than with the “Taliban.”

At the heart of what we need to be thinking about – what our country can do to engage with the people of Afghanistan... people are struggling with modernity – we MUST stay engaged with local people in order to insure that Afghanistan becomes a modern country – THIS is how we will have a happy outcome – a secure country will NOT be a launching pad for people who will attack us.

Founding director, Paula Nirschel thanked David Ignatius for his thoughtful comments and spoke about how the Initiative is working with local Afghan people to insure this critical type of engagement. Paula spoke of the plight of women in Afghanistan and asked the seven IEAW students present, to speak of their personal experiences. A very moving morning was experienced by all.



Lisa Berg Photography

Intersession 2009 | December 28, 2009 – January 3, 2010 Emerald Isle, North Carolina

All roads led to Emerald Isle, North Carolina for Intersession 2009 where 42 students along with staff and volunteers came together to reflect, renew, and reconnect after a semester filled with studies, tests, and deadlines. Intersession is designed to be a time when IEAW students from all sponsoring universities are brought together to rekindle their traditional Afghan culture, rest, and make new friendships with fellow IEAW students. It is also a chance to learn more about the United States, and this year, they experienced what is known as “southern hospitality.”

While Intersession is designed for the students to take a break and rest, the week was chock full of events and activities ranging from marsh cruising in the Bogue Sound, beach combing, yoga, bike riding, bowling, nature walks, kite flying, jewelry making, and knitting. In spite of the colder than normal conditions, the students thoroughly enjoyed their time in this idyllic coastal setting.

One of the special events of the week was a visit to the local Boys and Girls Club of Coastal Carolina where the students and the children from the Boys and Girls Club had an opportunity to learn more about each other and their respective cultures. IEAW students had prepared an interesting and informative PowerPoint presentation about Afghanistan. The morning program ended with the IEAW students teaching the children a traditional Afghan

dance. The Boys and Girls Club of Coastal Carolina is supported by Ms. Doris Buffett, who is also a major supporter of the IEAW.

Intersession 2009 could not have happened without the support of an engaged group of Crystal Coast supporters who worked tirelessly to make sure that the time spent here by the girls was comfortable and enjoyable. Special thanks go to Diane Schools and Mickey Henrickson for their efforts with all of the students. Also new, and much appreciated this year, was an activities director who assisted staff with organizing and executing activities and programs for the students - Laura Lee Davis of the Emerald Isle Parks and Recreation Department was on site the entire week to lend a hand.

After months of planning and organization, Intersession came and went like a seagull taking flight, but the week certainly provided students with wonderful memories and new friendships that will last them a lifetime. An anonymous quote sums up the wishes of the volunteers and staff who had a chance to work with the students during their time on the island, “May you find safe harbor in every port ‘til the ocean winds guide you home.” Intersession is just a part of the journey and just one of the “ports” these women will experience as they work towards fulfilling their personal goals as well as renewing their energies, continuing on their paths to earning their degrees.



Sunshine Lady Boys and Girls Club



Mayor Emerald Isle with Adela



Boat Ride



Bowling



Volunteers and students



The IEAW family



Conference in Texas

Mrs. Laura Bush invited director Paula Nirschel and two students to speak at her first conference since the White House years. The conference was entitled, “Educating and Empowering the Women of Afghanistan.” The topic was on both education and literacy. The goal of the conference was to identify opportunities to promote comprehensive education and literacy training for all Afghan women and girls.

The speakers included Mrs. Bush, Ambassador Jawad and Ambassador for Global Women’s Issues, Melanne Verveer. Dinner the night before the conference was at the home of former President and Mrs. Bush. Zohra sat right near the President, and Paula was graced with sitting to the right of Mrs. Bush.

Paula and Zohra spoke on one of three panels, representing higher education in Afghanistan. Zohra expressed the following in her speech:

The IEAW has played a significant role in my life and the lives of the women it brings to the US for education. In the program we have students representing fifteen provinces and three major ethnicities, Pashtun, Tajik and Hazara. For us Afghan women, it is a life changing opportunity to be able to study in the US. This education is of tremendous value to us, our families and our society. In order to bring constructive changes into women’s lives and to improve their quality of life, we need more highly educated women that know something about human rights, constitutional rights, politics and diplomacy to participate in decision making processes. Women’s full participation in positions of power is indispensable in developing a prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan. I believe that by educating the prospective women leaders of Afghanistan the IEAW is defeating enemies of women’s freedom and progress in Afghanistan. I quote a board member who wisely said, “education is the enemy of our enemies.”



Greg Mortenson Speaks

by Hossai

On April 26, 2010 Greg Mortenson, co-founder and Executive Director of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute and Pennies for Peace, and protagonist and co-author of *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones Into Schools*, was invited to speak at Hollins University. Because his work is based in Afghanistan and Pakistan, I was also invited to join the Press Conference and present my culture (Afghanistan). At the Press Conference most of the questions asked were related to my own education, its impact for other Afghan women now and in the future, and my own future plans. After explaining my goal of opening vocational institutes in Afghanistan to educate this and future generations and paying students while they are attending classes in order to cover their financial needs, the assembled group agreed that Mr. Mortenson and my aims are the same (!) – the important need to educate our nation is our primary concern.

I do believe that education is the only key to development. After the conference Mr. Mortenson gifted his book *Stones Into Schools* to all students who attended the talk. He also gifted me an autographed copy of the book. It was one of the most amazing moments of my life – talking and having a conference with the HERO of two nations (Afghanistan and Pakistan). He is a great person and I am so thankful to Hollins for providing me, and my fellow students, with such a great opportunity.



Greg Mortenson and Hossai

Commencement 2010



1. Paula and Sofia

2. Board member Nina with Adela

3. Great friend Peggy with Khadija and Shamim

4. Board member Peggy with Haseena

5. Kobra with host moms and Kate

6. Helay with President Dennison and VP Branch

7. Shugufa and Zala

8. Benefsha

9. Kate and Kobra

10. Nadia, Salma and Haseena

11. Maryam

12. Graduates Zala and Khatera, with Risa

Participating Colleges

Brenau University in Georgia
 College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts
 Hollins University in Virginia
 Juniata College in Pennsylvania
 Meredith College in North Carolina
 Middlebury College in Vermont
 Montclair State University in New Jersey
 Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts
 Old Dominion University in Virginia
 Ramapo College in New Jersey

Randolph College in Virginia
 Roger Williams University in Rhode Island
 Simmons College in Massachusetts
 St. Mary's College in Maryland
 Sweet Briar College in Virginia
 Tufts University in Massachusetts
 University of Mary Washington in Virginia
 University of Montana in Missoula
 University of Richmond in Virginia

Contributions are received through our web site at www.ieaw.org or by mail. Requests for information can be sent to the following e-mail: info@ieaw.org

IEAW
 PO Box 47
 Warren, Rhode Island 02885
 Fax: (401) 369-7431

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Paula Nirschel, Founder & Director
PO Box 47, Warren, RI 02885-0047
Phone and Fax: (401) 369-7431
E-mail: info@ieaw.org • www.ieaw.org

*Yes, I would like to support the IEAW
in the amount of \$_____.*

Typical
Expenses

*\$20,000: Cost for one academic year
\$10,000: Scholarship supplement
\$4,000: Airfare home for summer
\$1,000: Intersession
\$700: Computers
\$500: Books
\$250: Glasses, dental care, etc.*

The IEAW is largely supported by individuals.

Thank you for your gift. All contributions are Tax Deductible.

Please provide the following information for our records.

Name _____

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E-mail address (Home) _____

(Business) _____

My check in the amount of \$ _____
is enclosed and made payable to:
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Account # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____