

The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women

NEWS & Events

From the Founder, Paula Nirschel

Hello to all of our IEAW supporters. The IEAW “family” has grown with new people coming into our circle after a number of community events in 2010. Whenever I look out into the audience each time I speak with IEAW students by my side, I see people sitting on the edge of their seats. They are amazed with our students and program. Participants are expecting to see women looking stressed and maybe leery of Americans. Instead, our students shine! They love to connect with Americans, and are ready for the challenge of college, and life in the US. All said, they are grateful to Americans for making this critical difference in their lives, and all the lives they will touch when returning home each summer and after graduation.



Thank you Debbie Wiley and Drue Gensler



Today we get many women applying through our website since we are the only female international higher education program in Afghanistan. We do not advertise this opportunity since it could endanger the women or their families. The IEAW is popular with Afghan families, especially the fathers. Parents know that we respect Afghan culture and religion.

This year we have the largest group of highly qualified candidates waiting in Kabul and throughout Afghanistan. The IEAW is needing new colleges able to give full scholarships. We encourage all supporters to contact us if you find a college that is interested and has full funding. Also needed is IEAW direct funding of \$15,000 per student annually. This covers the airfare for our student to return summers, intersession, school costs and healthcare/dental. There is also the opportunity to sponsor a student. If a donor or donor group gives \$10,000 annually

for four years, you can sponsor an IEAW student. We will cover the rest of the cost to encourage this one to one relationship that you will have with a woman from Afghanistan.

Presently the IEAW has thirty three students at fifteen colleges across our great country. Thirty three students have graduated. This year twelve women will graduate from our generous US colleges. Hopefully we can educate a large population of Afghan women so they can make the needed change in their country.

In closure, I must thank our active Board of Directors who give much of their time and resources to lead this effort. I also thank Doris Buffett for her invaluable mentoring, and for the twelve Buffett scholars who will graduate this year. She has given higher education and a fresh start to twelve Afghan women.

And to all of our supporters. Thank you for being a part of this village effort.



In Her Words by Anita

I was a girl with dreams to live my life and not to be just alive. I come from a simple family background.

My parents have never been to college. I will be the first female in my family who has a chance to get higher education. This was just a dream that suddenly turned into reality through the IEAW.

Coming to America means that I am not worried anymore that I would get killed by someone because of going to school. Even though the fear might still follow me in the future, I will be more prepared to fight it with a great tool- my education. Educated women will make a difference in my country.

New Villages

Two new colleges joined the IEAW family this year – Bucknell University and Russell Sage College. The generosity of these schools is much appreciated.

Colleges that continued to offer scholarships for freshmen this year, were; Mt. Holyoke College, Meredith College, Montclair State U., and Brenau U. We brought seven new students into the program for fall 2010.

We at the IEAW believe that our students are a benefit to any US college. They bring needed cultural exchange that helps us all to understand each other better. Living and learning together can give

perspective on the connection of all humans, regardless of country of origin, religion or any other characteristic that may divide people. Our students participate in many activities on their campuses – initiating Afghan and Muslim cultural clubs, where they welcome American students interested in learning more about Afghanistan and its heritage, involvement in model U.N., Students in Free Enterprise, International and Business Clubs. We are proud to say that we believe in Afghanistan, and the importance of higher education for Afghan women. We believe that this is at the heart of why so many people support the IEAW, and why many colleges give scholarships to these deserving, strong, capable young women from Afghanistan.

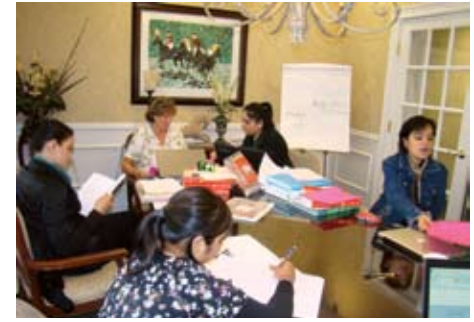
Please see the back page for photos from our hosting schools.



First day in Providence



At WaterFire



Working in the classroom

ESL/America 101

Our Freshmen class of seven bright, well-spoken, and talented young women arrived in Providence, RI in July for the IEAW's ESL/America 101 period of instruction. Led by veteran teacher Mary Goodman (English) and Kathy Sanford (Math), and orchestrated by Program Coordinator Risa Gilpin, these students enjoyed a rich variety of exposure to the cultural, educational, and amusing aspects of their hosting country.

Instruction took place daily from 9-1 pm; afternoons were spent with visiting professors who talked about life in the American College classroom, and a variety of intriguing topics. Teachers focused on writing and communication skills, grammar, study strategies, research papers, the language of math, and cultural intersections in English.

These young women visited WaterFire, a Rhode Island tradition,

lighting 100 bonfires on downtown Providence's riverside, accompanied by music, mime and performances; beaches, the RI Statehouse, places of worship, Brown and Harvard campuses, farmer's markets, and artist's studios; took in an International film festival, shopping, minor league baseball game; home cooking, and dining at homes of supporters of the IEAW. Advisory Board member Trish O'Shea visited our students accompanied by her two daughters and a friend – daughter Caroline, and friend Sam were so inspired that they went home to raise funds for our organization.

This month-long session provided a valuable bonding period for these students who went off to their schools well-prepared to face the challenges of freshman year at Brenau University, Meredith College, Montclair State University, Mt. Holyoke College, and Russell Sage College.



Russel Sage College



St. Timothy's School



Bryn Mawr College

Founder Speaks

Paula Nirschel was the commencement speaker in the fall at St. Timothy's school in Baltimore, MD, and Russell Sage College in Troy, NY. St. Timothy's headmaster, Randy Stevens, invited Paula to speak at his school as this year they welcomed 2 young women from Afghanistan into their own student population. Susan Scrimshaw, President at Sage, wanted to welcome her students in a special way by having their program director give the convocation speech. Through interactive discussions at both locations, students got the message that we really can make a difference in our world.

Bryn Mawr College had Paula on a panel during their conference "Heritage and Hope: Women's Education in a Global Context." Convening were women leaders, scholars, students, alumni, and activists from around the world, coming together to celebrate the empowering heritage of women's education, and charting a course for its future.

Paula and her panel discussed how women's colleges can connect to international human rights and social justice organizations, working to promote women's rights and educational opportunities.



Weekapaug, RI:
Students and staff with the Duffys



Weekapaug, RI:
Mary, students, guests



Matunuck, RI:
Freshmen in Afghan regalia



Matunuck, RI:
Paula and students speak



Matunuck, RI:
Board members Peggy
and Eric Smith with students



Wheeler School:
IEAW students, staff and
board members

Gatherings

Weekapaug, Rhode Island

In August, ESL Teacher Mary Goodman, and her husband Toby, invited our Freshmen students and 40 guests to a lovely gathering at their gracious home in South County, RI. It was a beautiful day spent at the beach, and sharing food and stories with guests.

Part of the joy of being involved with the IEAW is to begin to unravel the negative focus of our media, and understand Afghan culture based on aspects of civility, hospitality, warmth, and

family. These young women represent the real hope for positive change in their beloved country. They are all devoted to working for this change and they all understand that the key to reconstruction is in gaining a quality education and in sharing this knowledge back at home. Paula asked each student to relate a story representing this strength to share with guests. It is always a moving experience.

South County Land Trust Barn, Matunuck, RI

On August 12, 2010, Kate Richardson, Program Coordinator and Development Officer for the IEAW, organized a fund-raising event at the South Kingstown Land Trust Barn in Matunuck, RI. 150 guests attended and learned more about the work of the Initiative. After refreshments were served outside, guests were invited to watch a short video and to listen to Paula and the students reflect on the importance of this work.

August 12th also marked the first day of Ramadan - all of our students were fasting until sunset, when we all sat down

together to break the fast. We served dates, the traditional, and highly nutritious food that harkens back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. All enjoyed an elaborate feast provided by Rasoi Restaurant of Pawtucket, RI.

Generous contributions were made by Belmont Market, Wakefield; Deborah and Lee Stallwood; Eastside Marketplace; East Side Prescription Center (wine); Kinkos Printing; South Kingstown Land Trust Barn; and Sweeney's Wine & Spirits, Wakefield. Needless to say the success of this event was dependent on the generosity of our donors.

Wheeler School Event, Providence, RI

Wheeler School, a nursery-12th grade private school, had a school-wide read of Greg Mortenson's "Three Cups of Tea," and invited the IEAW to present at their Fox Family Day. Students from Mt. Holyoke and The College of the Holy Cross

were in Rhode Island to present, along with Paula at an evening event, "The Transformative Role of Women's Education – Courage, Culture, and Country: the Importance of Educating Afghani Women to be Role Models and Leaders."

New Villages



1 University of Mary Washington



2 Hollins University



3 Juniata College



4 Russell Sage College



5 Meredith College



6 Mt. Holyoke College



7 Brenau University



8 University of Richmond



9 Bucknell University



10 Sweet Briar College



11 Randolph College



12 College of the Holy Cross

1. Martin Wilder, Zahra, Rita Thompson, Alaha, Nilab, President Hurley
2. Kristen McKinney, President Nancy Gray, Hossai, Brent Stevens, Jeri Suarez
3. Razma, President Kepple, Basira
4. Meena, President Scrimshaw, Yagana
5. Marzia, President Hartford, Khatera, Sharifa

6. Kay Altoff, Getti, Ellaha, President Pasquerella, Tahmina, Anita, Gladys Moore, Carolyn Dietl
7. Basima, Scott Briell, Zuhra
8. Dr. Ulana Gabara, Wadia, Krittika Onsanit, Dr. Joseph Hoff
9. Dr. Kurt Thiede and Najia

10. Rob Shetterly, President Jo Ellen Parker, Fazila, Viola Baskerville, Shannon Valentine
11. Wazhma, President John Klein, and Career 15 Team
12. Kate, Anita, Uzra, Yalda, Risa

Participating Colleges

Brenau University in Georgia
 Bucknell University in Pennsylvania
 College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts
 Hollins University in Virginia
 Juniata College in Pennsylvania
 Meredith College in North Carolina
 Montclair State University in New Jersey
 Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts

Ramapo College in New Jersey
 Randolph College in Virginia
 Russell Sage College in New York
 St. Mary's College in Maryland
 Sweet Briar College in Virginia
 University of Mary Washington in Virginia
 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: pnirschel@ieaw.org

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