

The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women

NEWS & Events

From the Founder

When I think of how brave the women are in this program, I feel more inspired to do our part in ensuring that Afghan women receive the higher education they deserve. This summer the women returned home to fewer jobs and more danger. The country was preparing for the Presidential election. The economy is struggling just as it is here in the US. Many of the students who are relied upon to work during the summer were instead responsible for watching over the females in their family in order to keep them safe. Random rockets were happening fairly often in Kabul, which has not been the case for many years. Families chose to stay together in their apartments, to shelter all from harm.



Freshmen students with Alicia and Jenna

Fewer women worked and freedom of movement was restrained. Many students were in the home for much of the summer.

The women travel back to the United States for school around the time that the elections occurred this year. We changed many of their air reservations, and hoped that they were safe while traveling. Everyone did make it to the US safely, bringing stories of a difficult and, at times, scary summer. They hoped they would make it back to their colleges. Fortunately they are all with us now.

Indeed, we are together giving hope to many Afghan people. The younger generation is the generation of hope for Afghanistan. Positive programs like the IEAW and many others are helping to give people better lives in their country of need. Many times students say that they have never known their country to be stable for years at a time. Turmoil is the way they feel life was meant to be lived. They are learning through this experience that there is more to life and that we are all deserving of peace in our lives. The good news is that, culturally, the students are

taught to give back and to be grateful and feel blessed for all that they are given in life. Fortunately, we are in the position to give the gift of education to these faithful and strong women.

Each day the students check the status of life in Afghanistan by reading news articles and searching the internet for information about their homeland. They worry about all the people in their country, including their family and friends. Not only do they have to fast for Ramadan for a month while keeping up with their studies, but they also have to hope that the people they love at home are not harmed. We hear this from them often and feel so sorry that they have so much worry on their shoulders at such a young age.

These are the women we are educating. The IEAW is grooming pioneer women of Afghanistan. It is an honor and a pleasure to help these women on their journey to a better life.

Let there be peace and hope here and in Afghanistan.

Most sincerely,

Paula

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



In Her Words by Marzia

I believe that to educate a man is to educate only one person, but to educate a woman is to educate a family. Women make up more than half of Afghan society and are the ones who shape the minds and lives of future generations. From my work experience with women I have a deep understanding of their pain and problems. When I have less energy for my studies I remember the stories of these women, who need a helping hand, and regain the courage and energy to go on so that I can help them through my education. I admire Mrs. Nirschel and the IEAW for giving Afghan women the chance to study in a diverse environment. I believe that this program is not educating 42 women, but rather 42 families.

Family Emergency Fund



Kathy and Steve Worm, from Raleigh North Carolina, continue to show their support of the IEAW and its mission by establishing a student family emergency fund. Many IEAW students are the primary supporters in their family, which can cause financial hardship while the student is away at college. Sometimes, there are extreme family emergencies that arise, and students are not able to assist. These situations need assistance from the IEAW so the students remain focused on their studies. Kathy and Steve have risen to the challenge

of raising money to fund the student family emergency fund, and the IEAW is very grateful for this caring support.

Kathy and Steve came to know the IEAW in 2007 through their son Thomas' school, when IEAW student Benafsha visited to give a presentation. Since then, their commitment to the program has steadily grown, and today, they are a friendship family to all four IEAW Meredith College students. Kathy and Steve's favorite activity with the students is hanging out in the kitchen and cooking together. The students couldn't be more content than when in the kitchen. Thank you Kathy and Steve for your wonderful support of this program!



Ginger Garner



Local Emerald Isle Supporters

Vitamin Project a Success

The IEAW has been working to provide multi-vitamins for each IEAW student, and this February, that work came to fruition. Ginger Garner, Intersession 2008 Yoga Instructor, contacted the IEAW and asked how she could help. She wanted to help in a very tangible way, and we had the perfect project for her – providing a year’s supply of multi-vitamins to every IEAW student. Being an advocate of health issues, Ginger immediately went to work.

Ginger wrote a proposal to a top-of-the-line vitamin company, New Chapter Organics, and within a short time, her proposal was met with positive results. New Chapter immediately sent a one-year

supply of their Every Woman’s One Daily, valued at \$11,000.00, and they have already agreed to consider an additional one year’s supply beginning next February.

Ginger also gained the support of local Emerald Isle, North Carolina supporters who pooled funds to pay for the shipping of the vitamins to each student and who gave their time to pack, label, and ship them out. The IEAW students have some vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and are very grateful for Ginger and New Chapter’s support. The vitamins will ultimately help the girls achieve their highest academic potential.

Mortar Board National Conference

By Helay

Mortar Board is a national honor society that recognizes college seniors for their exemplary scholarship, leadership, service, and distinguished academic achievements. There are currently 227 chartered collegiate chapters in 47 states, including The University of Montana’s chapter. Mortar Board members represent the top scholars and leaders on their campuses. Its motto is Pi Sigma Alpha (ΠΣΑ), letters that correspond to three Greek words representing the ideals of Mortar Board: scholarship, leadership and service.

Being elected as the President of Mortar Board’s chapter at the University of Montana is one of my biggest and most valuable academic achievements. This summer I was invited to Mortar Board’s most celebrated annual event “The Mortar Board National Conference,” which was held in Chicago, Illinois. It was an honor for me, being an International student from Afghanistan, to represent our university, The University of Montana. This year’s theme was “Taking Mortar Board to New Heights,” encouraging members to reflect upon the society’s unique traditions while looking forward to a continually-evolving future. As a president of our Chapter, and an official delegate, I had the opportunity to participate in numerous valuable sessions, hear amazing speakers, meet with collegiate members, national leaders, and regional representatives from across the nation, take part in business meetings, and make vital governance.

As an official delegate I was given the privilege and power to vote at the annual conference to make changes in the national governing documents, including the current Bylaws and Standing Rules. This year, the national governance committee was presenting recommendations for changes to the governing documents.

I am glad that I participated in this conference and gained much more appreciation from our university. I look forward to fulfilling my given responsibilities and taking our chapter to new heights.



From a Father

The IEAW has opened the road for some fortunate Afghan women to attain higher education, enhance their intuition, and awaken their abilities. Women of the IEAW bestow upon us the hope to take Afghanistan to a new phase—phase of success, glory, and accomplishment. Women can build a community just as well as men can, if given the opportunity. The IEAW has taken the initiative to grant Afghan women the chance to play a part in constructing a new Afghanistan and finding roles in leadership. I am happy that my daughter, Wadia Samadi, is a part of this program. The IEAW's support, and her hard work, will definitely lead her to make a difference in her country.



From a Mother

As a mother, I appreciate the opportunity that has been given to my daughter by Initiative to Educate Afghan Women. I am proud of Huma for being in this program and all the other girls for keeping in mind that each one of them will become a future leader of their country. Thanks to the IEAW and all the supporters for bringing a positive change in

Afghanistan by educating the young women of this country. This program is very unique because it not only provides an opportunity to these bright students, but also allows students to return home each summer. I, as a mother, see a positive change every summer that Huma returns home. Her confidence and leadership skills have grown so much in the past two years. I can easily picture Huma as a successful woman leader in Afghanistan, and this is because the IEAW has given her the opportunity to study in the US.

In addition to the IEAW, I would also like to thank Sweet Briar College and Mrs. Anne and Bob Schmalz, who helped make Huma's dream come true. Huma was an exchange student in the US in 2004-2005 and was eager to return to the US for higher education. I greatly appreciate the fact that the IEAW program and colleges, such as Sweet Briar, work to make these dreams come true. I thank the IEAW once again and wish the program all the very best in their coming years. I wish the IEAW continuous success with their graduates and selected freshmen. Thanks for the kindness and for giving us hope of seeing Afghanistan in peace once again. I wish Huma the best of luck with her junior year as well.

From a Brother

I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Nirschel, the IEAW staff, and Roger Williams University for offering this precious opportunity for my sister. It was Haseena's dream to accomplish her higher education overseas. I remember when she got the acceptance letter from IEAW and Roger Williams University; her eyes were full of tears of contentment and hope. I could see a bright future in my sister's tears, which I will never forget. Those tears made me optimistic that my sister will be a successful leader for our country and for Afghan women in the future.

This summer I noticed that my sister has grown a lot. Besides her studies, other activities at the university have added to her strength. She is more traditional and tries to learn more about her religion and culture because she wants to help educate her classmates. I think the IEAW offers not only educational opportunity, but also gives students a chance to



get involved in university activities and learn more about their leadership abilities.

I am indebted to the IEAW and Roger Williams University for making my sister's dreams come true.

Haseena's brother is the head of his family of 12 siblings since their parents are deceased.

Summer Jobs



Zala: This summer I did my internship as an accounting intern with Explorica Inc. Explorica was founded in 2000 by Olle A. Olsson with the mission of providing students and teachers with the best educational tour experiences. Explorica competes with Educational Tours (EF), National Educational Travel Council (NETC), The Premier Educational Travel Company (ACIS) and Passports in providing customers with high quality, safe and low price tours.



The teachers are offered free tours as long as they are able to introduce at least a group of six students to Explorica's tour sales department.

The students' payment for their trip covers roundtrip airfare, hotels, transportation, breakfast and dinner, full-time services of a Tour Director and a Guide, entrance fees and some other expenses incurred by tour director.

As an accounting intern I was responsible for assisting with accounts payable and receivable. I also helped reconcile bank accounts and assisted in our month end close activities. I was given a project by our CFO regarding trademarks that I successfully completed and I also was responsible for a project analyzing old outstanding checks.

I was exposed to foreign currencies and had the opportunity to work with people from around the world. Throughout my internship I had the opportunity to apply the theory from the courses I have taken so far in the field of management and finance, and put my knowledge to practice. I also had the chance to apply my knowledge from my past work experience. It was really a rewarding internship and I learned a lot from it.

Helay: Professionally and academically, this summer was busy but fruitful for me. I served a multipurpose role at my internship with the Soft Tech Company, located in U.S.A. From this experience I was able to learn new technical terms, gain familiarization with various types of programming languages, research, software development guidelines and best practices. In particular, I learned a lot from my research regarding Cloud Computing. My undertaking projects were in:



- Cloud Computing Research
- Performance Tools Research and Verification for Linux (Ubuntu) and MySQL
- Wireless Data and Netbook Research

One of my most enjoyable experiences was communication with cloud vendors. Communication via email and telephone was very professional and collaborative. To define in its simplest form, cloud computing consists of shared computing resources that are virtualized and accessed as a service, through an Application Programming Interface. Additionally, virtualization is the technology and cloud is the business model.

My internship also helped me to see the connection between real world applications and the knowledge I gained from the classroom and books. Based on my previous work experience in a different country, I could evaluate the difference in working environments and use of technology. This gained knowledge can be transferred and shared in developing countries like Afghanistan. This internship gave me an opportunity to become familiar with business outside of an academic setting and to witness how Information Systems and Technology serve a vital role in today's business environment.

Having studied business-oriented technology, I believe that in business much of the discussion has focused on the future role of Information Systems and has been speculative and dim in its predictions. Technology directly and/or indirectly induces social change; because of this, there is a need for sufficient technological and business oriented

skills in Afghanistan, and I am looking forward to sharing my knowledge and experience in my beloved country, Afghanistan.



Zahra: I am currently a junior at the University of Mary Washington, where I am majoring in Economics. My goal is to become an Afghan woman economist to participate in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan's economy and its sustainable development.

This summer, I worked for the Economic Section of the US embassy in Kabul as an Economic Assistant. I worked on different projects related to Afghanistan's governmental agencies. For example, I recently completed a project called "Afghanistan Economic Development, 2004 to 2008," under the direct supervision of The Embassy Economic Counselor in Kabul. This project along with the other projects that I have been working on at the US embassy has helped me not only understand Afghanistan's economic growth level but also recognize the economic challenges that Afghanistan has been facing since 2004.

I am grateful to the IEAW for providing me with a scholarship to attend the University of Mary Washington, where I have become more determined and empowered as an individual, and learned different skills that I am able to use in performing my duties and tasks effectively at the US embassy. Thanks to the IEAW and the University of Mary Washington for helping me realize that every Afghan woman needs to have access to higher education in order to become a productive member of the Afghanistan society.



Khatera: I worked as business development officer for Salar Business Consulting Group. Salar Group is a newly established for profit business organization that provided business development services to clients in the nascent



private sector of Afghanistan. Some of these specific services included business plan writing, marketing materials development, organizational development, web page development, trade fair preparation and participation, communication management and translation services. The clients included business associations, individual private businesses, and other nongovernmental organizations.

The group had recently been awarded a project to develop Afghanistan relevant case studies for a business book series titled Start Your and Grow Your Own Business. I was tasked to develop some of these case studies for the business concepts of the book titled "Becoming Entrepreneur" in the series.

In addition, it was my job to translate the completed one hundred page English book to local Afghan languages (Dari and Pashto) so that it can reach a wide variety of audiences in Afghanistan.

I took both of the tasks and completed them on time. I was very proud that my education, particularly the college education under the generous Initiative to Educate Afghan Women (IEAW) program, had enabled me to do the job properly. I felt empowered to be able to write the case studies, and to translate even some of the complex business concepts in the book successfully.

I am appreciative of my education and the opportunity I have in the US for my college education. Throughout the summer, I was wondering that had I stayed in Afghanistan and did not have the education, I could never ever do so. So, I want to thank IEAW and thank all those that contribute to the IEAW program. It is changing the life of us Afghan women positively and enabling us to do the same work that was thought to be for men only.

IEAW Alumni Association Established

The IEAW Alumni Association was established in September 2008 with the goal of helping the IEAW alumni play a significant role in strengthening the core aspects of the IEAW. The Association will achieve this goal by: (1) increasing funding and engaging in strategies that will ensure continued academic success and financial stability such as encouraging the alums to make voluntary contributions to the program, (2) sharing experience and expertise and providing career guidance, networking opportunities and encouragement to the IEAW students during the academic year, (3) creating a platform for networking and providing opportunities for professional development and for networking locally.

With these objectives in mind, the Alumni Association took its first steps by forming its Executive Committee, which is comprised of an Executive Director (who leads the Association and has the overall responsibility) along with a team of three other individuals (Program Director, Program Coordinator and Events Coordinator) who support the Executive Director with her responsibilities for the Alumni Association's communication, events and others. The Alumni Association's second step was hosting a kick off event in July 2009, where most of the IEAW current and former students were invited and introduced to the Alumni Association and its Executive Committee members. The Association's next step is having the Executive Committee meet in Kabul in order to establish guidelines for the Association and to develop an annual plan. Their priority would be drafting a constitution for the Association and outlining the laws that will govern it.

Summer ESL

By: Alicia Baucom

This summer, the IEAW freshmen class of 2013 spent their first few weeks in the United States living with host families while attending ESL writing classes. Host families were a new, successful part of the summer ESL program. Living with host families gives students the advantage of having direct exposure to US customs and culture, continuous exposure to English listening and speaking, and a nurturing environment in which to transition into the US. It also allows for a very rich cultural exchange between the host families and the students.

The Crystal Coast area of North Carolina was the home for this year's freshmen, and the students spent their first night together in the home of Marcie and Sid Briley. The following morning the students ventured off to their respective host families. The families and the students bonded almost instantly, and long lasting relationships were off to a meaningful start. This year's host families were Art and Diane Schools of Emerald Isle, Kelley and Mike Maroules of Cedar Point, Pat and Janet Thomas of Swansboro, and Tina and Brian Siegel of Swansboro.

The IEAW could not have asked for more from this year's host families as they provided very nurturing environments and homes, and connected the students to members of the community. The families themselves are well connected in their communities with positions such as Mayor of Emerald Isle, Swansboro Town Commissioner, Swansboro Town Manager, Pine Knoll Shores City Clerk, and Swansboro Rotary Leader. It wasn't long before community members became interested in meeting these amazing women from Afghanistan. They were invited to attend and speak at many area meetings and events, and were treated to outings such as boating, kayaking, turtle hatching watches, and the North Carolina Aquarium.

This was a meaningful experience for the host families as well, and, in the words of Mayor Art and Diane Schools, "The fact that she was born in a country where the freedoms that we take for granted are non-existent made it even more meaningful to us. Things like being able to walk freely around your neighborhood, ride a bicycle, vote without fear of physical harm, and most importantly the chance to develop personal skills to their full potential. We felt very fortunate to be the host family for Zuhra for her introduction to the United States."

The host families were a very big and important part of the summer ESL and orientation, but we cannot end without some words about the ESL classes. I had the fortunate opportunity to teach academic ESL writing classes again this year, and the students continue to impress me with their dedication and eagerness to learn. Every student worked diligently to complete their homework assignments, which included academic vocabulary, journal article research, writing assignments, daily reading, and study of grammar and punctuation. The classes culminated with each student writing one mini research paper and then preparing a PowerPoint Presentation for the final class.

Along with the ESL lessons, there were daily discussions about US culture and college life, and at the end of the ESL classes, the students were treated to an afternoon tea that ended with some fun card making. The overall goals of the IEAW Summer ESL and Orientation Program were met, and at the conclusion of the ESL classes and their stay in North Carolina, the students were ready to travel on to their respective colleges. With high hopes for the future of their country, the women are now on their paths to success, and without a doubt, they will succeed.

Summer ESL 2009



1. Caring host parents with student
2. At the aquarium
3. ESL Class
4. Boating

5. Host Families and IEAW Freshman
6. At the beach
7. In the classroom
8. Aquarium Host with enthusiastic students

9. Sharing time for host family and students
10. Major and wife host IEAW student
11. Rotary Gathering
12. Tea Party

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 addressed to Paula Nirschel at the following e-mail: pnirschel@ieaw.org

IEAW
PO Box 47
Warren, Rhode Island 02885
Fax: (212) 954-5567