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**The SHARE Institute Newsletter- Summer 2002**  
**(Social, Health, Assessment, Research, & Education)**

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A quarterly newsletter written for The SHARE Institute Community.

The SHARE Institute would like to thank retiring Board members for their hard work and devotion. We would also like to welcome new and continuing Board members: Soheir Stolba, President, Peg Scott, Chairperson, Shaku Shankar, Financial Officer, Margaret Scott, Board Member, and Liz Torrano, Secretary. We look forward to the rewarding and successful year ahead.

We were visited on June 3, 2002 by Ms Najat AL-SAKAF from Yemen. She holds many titles including: program officer for the Social Fund for Development, Assistant for Student Affairs at Sanaa University, and Secretary of the Supreme National Committee for Human Rights. She is visiting the United States to become familiar with civic leadership programs and human rights (particularly women's and children's) advocacy groups. She also hopes to increase her knowledge about educational services for disabled children, and NGOs.

Yemen is a society in transition and an emerging democracy. The country's educational sector is an extremely important aspect of this development. There is a great need for young leaders such as Ms. Najat AL-SAKAF, to encourage new initiatives, collaboration and civic responsibility. By promoting the role of effective and influential student leaders, particularly female leaders, her visit will support Yemen in its efforts to bring about change in civic life.

Soheir Stolba is off to Yemen to continue her work against FGM as a violation of human rights and the work of SHARE in funding initiatives which support the health and well-being of Yemeni women and children. She will update us on her work in the next issue.

This Summer issue reflects our interest in literacy in Afghanistan. We all worked very hard this last quarter to raise funds to allow young Afghani women to get an education. Many of you may find the fundraising tips useful. Please send us your comments and have a great summer!

Feel free to share this newsletter by forwarding it to those who may be interested in learning about making a positive difference in people's lives. We are proud to include you as part of our community and plan on incorporating you in future SHARE Institute mailings. We respect the privacy of your email address and do not share such information with any other organizations. If you wish to be taken off the mailing list, contact sstolba@theshareinstitute.org.

Liz Torrano
SHARE Associate

SHARE's Mini-Grants

Afghan Girls Literacy Program

“Every little bit helps” is the motto of the SHARE Institute’s Mini-Grant Program. Our Mini-Grant program has been growing steadily. Recently, the SHARE Institute funded the Afghanistan Feminine Association who specialize in teaching girls basic sewing and tailoring skills. The initial funds were raised through a speech given at the University of California, Davis. This NGO received two mini-grants. The first grant was used to provide vocational training to girls. We have received thanks and many photos of this successful project.

The SHARE Institute is proud of the latest addition to our Mini-Grant Program. This summer the SHARE Institute will be funding a fast-paced literacy program for young women in Afghanistan. The funds raised by American River College Students and students from Mar Vista Elementary School will be going to a worthy cause. The young women targeted in the program are between the ages of 13-14 and have not been able to receive education because of the Taliban’s ban on girls’ education. The home-based Literacy program will provide basic education to young girls who will be too old to attend grade school with young children, or they are not able to attend school due to having to earn income for their families. The SHARE Institute would like to continue funding this program. If you would like to help us, please contact the office. All donations are tax-deductible.

The School-to-School Program

By: Jennifer Laskin

Reading Specialist

Mar Vista Elementary School

Aptos, California

Even with the Taliban gone, Afghani women and children still have little hope for their future. The one hope they have is in education. This February, I heard Medea Benjamin (founder of Global Exchange) speak about her recent trip to Afghanistan. When she spoke about the schools, I immediately thought of my own students and knew that they would help me to help the children in Afghanistan. I began the School-to-School program one month later.

So far we have raised over \$800 for our “sister-school” in Afghanistan. The money was raised through “Popsicle Fridays” and a student art sale at an Open House. Our kids are not rich. Popsicles cost 50 cents each, and the pieces of art sold for \$2 a piece. EVERYONE in our community was aware of what we were doing and became involved in some way.

A primary goal of School-to-School is for two schools to have a lasting exchange...of money, letters, pictures, drawings, of cultures. The premise is that American schoolchildren have more than most children in the world. They should be aware of that fact and ACT to make things more equal. If they do not have this awareness and the conscience to change it, the world will never be a safer place, especially for Americans.

Our students have learned that there are children in the world who love school tremendously, but need things like chairs and windows and pencils. We emphasized the daily lives of kids and how our students would be supporting them. We have taken pictures to send to “our school in Afghanistan.” We hope that very soon our little friends will think of us as “our school in America.”

The SHARE Institute was selected as a non-profit organization to receive funding from the School-to-School activities to promote literacy among young Afghani girls age 13 and 14. These girls were denied the opportunity to go to school when they were children. Now they cannot join others in public education because of their age and other reasons including being married, having families, and laboring to make a living. SHARE has funded several Afghani refugee schools in the past. The woman who sponsors these home-based literacy schools is devoted to her work. SHARE hopes to continue our relationship with the staff of the home-based schools. We hope that our school children will learn the value of giving and having a better world through communication and love.

A Public Speaking Event at the Rotary Club of Sacramento

On Thursday, May 2, 2002, Dr. Stolba spoke to the Rotary Club of Sacramento. The title of the talk was “Women in Afghanistan and War.” After the 30 minute presentation, there was an active question and answer period. After the discussion, many Rotary Club members expressed their desire to help through giving generous donations. The SHARE Institute would like to thank all who gave generously.

A Public Speaking Event at California State University Stanislaus
By: Heela Rasool, SHARE Institute Intern

I had my first opportunity to engage in public speaking along with Dr. Stolba when she was invited to speak about Afghan Women and War at California State University Stanislaus on April 11, 2002. I spoke briefly about the situation in from my perspective as a young Afghan woman raised in the United States. I had not formally prepared for the speech; I had simply thought of a few things that I might mention that would be of relevance. We had an audience of about 70 people and I was incredibly nervous and upset with myself for not being more prepared. Dr. Stolba spoke for about 20 minutes and then she introduced me. I spoke very rapidly and reiterated that the abuse of Afghan women did not begin with the Taliban; it was only exacerbated during their rule.

After the talk, many people from the audience approached me and told me that they appreciated my coming to speak. Many did not realize that Afghan women had survived under such conditions. I was a little more at ease after the talk and able to converse freely and better inform people one-on-one basis. It was wonderful that so many people came up to me and asked how they could do their part to help SHARE with the new literacy program. The donations of the audience were greatly appreciated.

Afghani Children Through the Eyes of U.S. Elementary School Students
By Heela Rasool

One of the requirements of graduating from the SHARE Institute's Leadership Program was to engage in public speaking. An opportunity arose when a Program Director of an after-school program at a local elementary school read an article about the SHARE Institute's work with Afghani children. She immediately contacted the SHARE Institute's office to arrange for a speaking event for the children of the school. She stated in her letter that a presentation would be a wonderful opportunity for the children, who were doing a project about Afghanistan, to learn more about the culture of the country.

On April 25, I set out for the school, not really knowing what to expect. The after-school Program's Director had related to the SHARE Institute staff that some of the children had expressed negative sentiment when they found out that they were to do a project about Afghanistan. One girl who is usually shy had said that Americans should kill as many Afghans as people who had been killed in the World Trade Center. Knowing about these feelings I was determined to make a positive impact on the children about Afghanistan and its people.

Because the children ranged from the ages of 5-13, I knew I could not bore them with a long lecture. I decided that the presentation should be mostly a question-answer session. I had been warned that there would be some odd questions, and there were many, such as "do Afghani children play tennis or golf?" However, there were also many insightful questions that showed the children's capacity for empathy. Many of the students expressed concern for the children of Afghanistan. They expressed special interest in the condition of women who wear the "Burqa" and their ability to breathe underneath it. The students were interested in the sports and recreation of the Afghani children. Many of the girls in the group were enraged that young women in Afghanistan were prohibited from attending school under the Taliban regime. They were also quite upset to learn that women were regularly beaten for acts that Americans overlook, like wearing noisy shoes and for attempting to educate their daughters. The students had great difficulty understanding the fact that many children in Afghanistan do not have anything to eat and that many others have to work for a living.

Overall, I had the impression that my presentation made some difference in how the students perceive Afghani children. Many students came to the conclusion that Afghani children were not the perpetrators—they were victims. By educating and reaching out to children and young adults in the community we can hope to create well-informed and open-minded citizens.

**Sherry McGrath Scholarship
Awarded to Heela Rasool**

One of Dr. Stolba's favorite sayings is "Its not what you know, its who you know." She firmly believes that if you know the right people, you can get ahead in life. This proved very right for me recently because through my association with Dr. Stolba, I received a scholarship for \$1250 from the Sherry McGrath International Scholarship. I did not know about the scholarship until Dr. Stolba told me that she had recommended me for it. The money will help me a great deal when I transfer to the University of California, Davis. Like many other students, I had been worried about my financial situation and I did not want to build a mountain of debt so early in life. With this scholarship, I could concentrate on my studies rather that working 30 hours per week. I hope to go to law school after getting a B.A. in Political Science and concentrate in International Law.

My First Fundraising Experience **By Maha Sweis**

This was my first experience working on a fundraiser; and I have to say that it was not as simple as I originally thought. Going to the first meeting I had a wealth of ideas, thinking that they could all be accomplished in the short period of time we had. I volunteered to solicit people for donations in the surrounding community; later publicity would be added to my responsibilities.

Going from shop to shop soliciting the owners, managers, and employees was not working out in my favor. I had the idea that once the owners of these shops heard about our noble cause they would immediately come to our assistance. I soon realized that was an idealistic view I had of business owners. The first day my partner and I went out in search of any type of donations. We went to about fifteen shops before we received anything, which was of little value. I realized that receiving donations from a business was a long process; we had to provide the business with a few things. First, an information letter on SHARE letter head was necessary so the business owner could be sure that this was a legitimate cause. Second, the business had to send the letter to their corporate offices. Lastly, the business would respond to our request in their own time. There were businesses that only donated to specific organizations, or others that only donated to organizations that fell within their regulations. For example, Krispy Kreme has certain rules about to whom they will donate. Krispy Kreme only donates to local non-profit organizations, which we are, and it had to be a beneficial cause. Since we fall in that category, we received six-dozen donuts free of charge. After weeks of soliciting big business and small shops we finally had enough donations use in the fundraiser.

My next task was to publicize the event. I made posters that I displayed around American River College. There were some steps that had to be taken before I actually put the posters up. First, I had to make sure that somewhere on the posters was written who was sponsoring the event. Then I had to have the posters stamped by Student Services; finally, I could hang the posters up.

Finally the event! Set-up time began for our fundraiser. I was in charge of selling jewelry. In order to answer the buyer's questions, I had to know about the pieces I was selling. Selling the product was easy because I had practiced talking to people when I went out asking for donations. After the fundraiser was over, we had to do inventory and to count our cash profits.

I have learned a lot about fundraising from this experience. I feel I can now plan and run a fundraiser on my own. I also overcame my fear of going out in the community and talking to complete strangers. I learned that when counting the donations you sometimes get a different number every time, which is frustrating. In conclusion, the fundraiser was a good exercise of my communication and organization skills. After it was over, I realized that the hard work was worth it; we made over \$1600 which goes to educating Afghani women. Planning a fund raiser takes time, an outgoing personality, and energy. At the end of my experience, I feel as if I benefited from contributing to a good cause.

Fundraising to Help Others By Rachelle Tarifa

I have been an intern in the Leadership Program at the Share Institute for about a month and have had the opportunity to help organize a fundraiser for the education and health of Afghani women and children. I chose to be a part of this fundraiser because I felt that I was going to be a part of a positive experience benefiting women and children in Afghanistan who are not as privileged as I am. I have not helped out people from a different country before, so I decided that it was time to reach out.

Starting out with little fundraising experience, I did not know where to begin. There were so many tasks which needed to be done within a month. Luckily, many students from American River College volunteered to work together to accomplish some of the tasks. A fellow student and volunteer, Maha worked with me to solicit donations from community businesses, and help with the publicity for the event.

We both agreed that it would be simple to go out to the community and ask for donations, but we were wrong! This process was somewhat difficult, but beneficial in the long run. Many people were truly affected by the September 11th tragedy and wanted to support our fundraiser for Afghani women and children by giving generous donations. Others were angered by the horrific events and did not want to support Afghanis at all. As a result of our campaigning we managed to obtain six dozen donuts from Krispy Kreme, a cake from Cakes and Candy, and other donations from smaller businesses. After collecting donations, I made two posters advertising our fundraiser on campus. The two posters did not last very long on the walls of the campus buildings, but our determination to raise money was still very strong.

On the day of the fundraiser, I helped set up and answered customers' questions and tended to their needs and wants. We sold samosas, various cookies, chocolate covered strawberries, nachos, jewelry, and miscellaneous items from the Middle East.

Our fundraiser turned out to be quite a success. We raised over \$1600 within that short period of time.

This particular fundraiser not only benefited Afghani women and children, but it benefited me as well. After helping out with the fundraiser, I have realized that I have made a major impact on many Afghani women and children. I also learned the various tasks needed to set up and run a successful fundraiser. I hope to continue supporting women and children in the future by making a difference and getting involved in future fundraisers.

Kudos to American River College Fundraising group!

The SHARE Institute would like to thank the American River College fundraising group for their extensive help in fundraising for the Afghan Girls Literacy Program. Without their support and hard work, we would not have been able to fund this program. Thanks Again!

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Gift Donation Cards

Many friends of the Institute sent holiday gift donation cards to family and friends. Gift donation cards are a great way to celebrate a holiday, accomplishment, or special occasion by giving to those who are less fortunate. By giving a tax-deductible gift donation, the “gift recipient” will receive a beautiful card acknowledging the donation in her/his name, and health and well-being projects around the world will receive the funds that they so desperately need. Gift donations can be earmarked for a certain project, or be used for the projects that most need funds.

Other ways to help:

**Donate money to the mini-grant program. Tax-deductible donations of any amount will help local people further improve their lives. Contributors may suggest types of projects for the Institute to launch.

**Spread the word. Let others know about the SHARE Institute and how they can help.

**Get involved. We would love to have you make a difference in international and domestic issues. Let us know your interests and how you can share your skills.

The SHARE Institute

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