

A Picture of a Giving Circle

From the Executive Director

Ginna Brelsford

Please consider a year-end gift to educate girls and women in Afghanistan. Ayni Education International supports over 25,000 students in Northern Afghanistan to gain literacy and vocational training skills. At Ayni, we believe in building bridges of understanding between Afghanistan and the United States. When you give, you become an architect of understanding. Join us, please, to support girls' education.

AYNI tapped to receive significant gift from Giving Circle.

Portrait of a Giving Circle: From Northern Virginia to Northern Afghanistan

Since 2007, members of a Giving Circle in northern Virginia have been meeting each year and pooling their funds to make targeted grants for educational projects in Afghanistan. Ayni Education International is among their projects. "We look for the ability to make a significant difference in educational opportunities available to a community's children. We chose Ayni in part because they can provide such opportunities, but also because Ayni is able to verify what is accomplished with our funds," says Dave Stapleton, a founding member of the Giving Circle and now an Ayni board member.

In 2008, the Giving Circle chose to support a rural school, 20 km from Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh Province. The Giving Circle has funded multiple projects for the ongoing maintenance and expansion of the school. Over 1,440 students currently attend the school with a principal, 21 teachers and 3 guards.

The school desperately needs to be expanded to continue serving a growing population of school-aged children since its original construction in 2003. The Dawlatabad District – where the school is located – boasts a high level of enrollment in schools, especially for girls. The school needs several new classrooms, especially for its high school aged girls who are not allowed to travel to larger regional schools.

The Giving Circle, which now includes five couples, has committed to building 4 new classrooms with new desks, a library and a security wall around the school in 2012.

If you would like to form a giving circle, we would be pleased to share the experience of the Northern Virginia group. Please contact our office. Northern Virginia's circle is making a tremendous impact on the lives of 1,440 students. Their spirit of giving is crucial to the students in Afghanistan.



Ginna Brelsford with a student



A fresh classroom!

November 2011 Newsletter

Ayni Education International Wins Grant for Literacy Programming in Afghanistan

From the Executive Director:

It is with great excitement that I write to let our supporters know that **Ayni Education International was awarded a \$12,500 grant from the Seattle International Foundation** at its Second Annual Women in the World Breakfast on November 15.

The award will enable Ayni Education International to carry out a literacy course and vocational training to be offered to 150 older girls and younger women without educational opportunities in Afghanistan. The event featured Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, president and CEO of the Global Fund for Women.

“Justice is never just-us. Justice is for all... Men and women are slowly working on issues, creating consciousness, creating change, wherever they are. And we are part of the change. And we see more of that change coming. We celebrate it and hope it will continue into the future,” said Dr. Kanyoro. “When we celebrate these changes for women, we must see ourselves as a global village, and we are all part of that change every day.”

Thank you Seattle International Foundation for recognizing Ayni Education International and our mission to support education in Afghanistan.

A Story of Thanks

As November draws to a close, I wanted to share an excerpt of Mastak’s story with you. Mastak lives in a rural village in Balkh Province, Afghanistan. She lost her parents early in life and lived with her aunt. Mastak married and soon became a mother to a son.

When the Taliban came to the village they wanted to kill my husband. So my husband left the village and he went to Mazar City and then he went to the country of Iran. At that time my son was 40 days old.

I was alone with my son in the village. After several days I heard that my husband had become sick. I couldn’t do anything about him because he was far from us. After several more days I heard that my husband died and I became alone in this big world. I thought that I couldn’t live anymore.

When our teacher came to the village and she started to teach, I realized I could continue my life and it would be better than the past with my son. I spend my work time only in my house. People give me things for sewing. My son has also become young now, and we have a sweet life.

So I am thankful for you – that you helped me to improve my life.



The first step in constructing a school.



Students at a rural school.

October 2011 Newsletter

Ayni Education International Opens Two Computer Centers in Afghanistan!

Ayni and AAFF (Ayni's implementing partner in Afghanistan) celebrated the opening of two new computer centers designed to serve girls in a rural girls school in Balkh Province and at a large girls school in Mazar-i-Sharif. This milestone project represents the culmination of commitments by our major funder, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, as well as individual donors. The Ministry of Education, together with national, provincial and local dignitaries helped celebrate the opening of this groundbreaking project.

The centers will offer computer literacy to young girls who, prior to this, have never touched a computer. These girls are now able to learn critical skills that will impact their futures and their aspirations. While the rural location presented the greatest challenges for set-up, electricity and teaching staff, its effects will extend to the entire village.

Both centers are now up and running with 3 classes operating 5 days a week. Each center is equipped with 20 computers plus servers. In the rural school, a generator is used to ensure power for the computers.

The centers are the focus of national and regional attention. A palpable sense of excitement surrounded the celebration of opening the center. As AAFF's finance director noted, "the Kabul Technology Director with the Ministry of Education and his entourage

visited both computer centers in October. The 'official' nod of support was welcomed with their visits to the Roshana Balkhi center as well as Dawlatabad." The official delegation attracted quite the attention as "the lead car was a red, yes red, Hummer followed by 3 Surfs, 2 Corollas and 2 motorcycles. The entourage travelled through the market in Dawlatabad twice, creating a huge spectacle!" The thought of these dignitaries giving their approval to young girls learning computer literacy at these centers is thrilling.

Thank you to our donors for opening the door to a wider world for 240 students during each 3-month course.

Ginna Brelsford
Executive Director



Girls at computers at the Roshana Balkhi School



Anticipation at Dawlatabad Girls School