

## AFCECO January 2011 Newsletter

In a year when the news from Afghanistan was full of conflict, when rulers and aid agencies scrambled for explanations and solutions, when the war seemed on many fronts to stagnate or go in reverse and prospects become vague, today we feel we can be so bold as to say there is at least one solution that has been tested and is working. That is because AFCECO not only survived this tumultuous year, but also flourished: 6 new orphanages established for 300 new girls and boys and that is just the beginning. We'd like to devote this newsletter to the progress made in 2010 as a testament to the cumulative evidence that the work you and AFCECO are engaged in is in fact one model for positive change, and that if anyone is looking for answers to the short and long-term problems in Afghanistan they would do well to see what is happening in our orphanages.



2010 began with news that our Director Andeisha Farid was to receive 2010 Global Leadership Award of Vital Voices at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. This event then multiplied, because soon Andeisha received invitations to attend conferences in India, Turkey, Italy and Nepal. Every step of the way she reached out to the world, spreading news of AFCECO's children. In the middle of this she was invited at Fortune Most Powerful Women Summit 2010 where she was honored with an award from Goldman Sachs and Fortune magazine to fund a pilot program for a girl's leadership

academy. While there, Google offered to match the funds given for the Academy, to use as AFCECO sees fit. Andeisha was also invited to attend a summit on entrepreneurship hosted by Barack Obama, where the President found her story compelling enough [to mention in his speech](#) to the entire community: "Andeisha Farid, an extraordinary woman from Afghanistan, who's taken great risks to educate the next generation, one girl at a time. Together, they point the way to a future where progress is shared and prosperity is sustainable"

Recognition from abroad has translated into great things, but equally support from within Afghanistan has blossomed in the past year. A wide variety of benefactors, organizations and journalists visited our Kabul orphanages, and with each visit their commitment to supporting our programs grew. Countless boxes of school supplies, clothing and most notably 27 computers arrived at our doorstep. Every step of the way average Afghans from professionals to village elders to students have stepped in to offer the vital and practical support needed on the ground to implement any and all of our programs.

This year marked the implementation of a vibrant volunteer program. Two American volunteers lived with us and taught children English and computer skills, while several expat members of our community volunteered to visit the orphanages to share their skills. Professors from American

University and Kabul University taught courses in Sitara I and our leadership workshops, and dozens of Afghan university students volunteered to tutor our children in all the major subjects.



AF CECO's children now enjoy a vibrant extracurricular program, including professional soccer training for girls, gymnastics, martial arts, fine art, ballet, folk singing, drama, and arts and crafts. We have our very own health clinic in Kabul, which aside from providing much needed care provides educational opportunities for a group of excellent older boys and girls who are especially interested in becoming medical practitioners. Our foreign exchange programs are also blossoming. The

SOLACE program bringing children to the U.S. for needed medical attention, as well as our Italian partners hosting children in Milan to study and experience all that European education has to offer have grown. Added to that is a new mentorship program, bringing three of our older girls who are top of their class to the U.S. for three months of experiential enrichment.



Most notable is that thanks to our founding sponsorship program we have opened so many new orphanages, serving so many more children not only in Kabul, but Jalalabad and Herat. As we look ahead to 2011 there are plans in the works to create a central campus in Kabul, bringing together all our programs in a cost effective and practical manner, expanding our offerings for the children and even creating our own school. The orphanages in Herat and Jalalabad are already ahead of themselves in terms of growth, including plans for clinics, gymnasiums and resource libraries. And eventually we will need to

implement programs for older children in all our orphanages and work towards developing scholarships for these children to attend university.

We like to remind people that half the population of Afghanistan is under the age of 18. It is simple math that dictates the path of greatest positive change in this war weary country is the security, health and enrichment of its children. With every single child AFCECO raises we come decisively closer to affecting each and every corner of Afghanistan, from the mountain village in Nuristan to the desert village in Farah. To do this, to continue the trajectory of success in 2010 we face many challenges, but none more than the need to translate these indicators of success into sustained support and a platform for further growth. We rely on you to please if you can stand tall, proud and firmly behind us. We are in desperate need of more sponsors, as there are dozens upon dozens of unsponsored and partially sponsored children in our orphanages. Please spread the hope that we feel every time we step through the door of a parwarishga, or foster haven, every time we see a child come back from her school number one or two in her class, every time one of our little boys blows the candles on his birthday cake with a wish.