

18 February, 2010

Dear Friends,

Wistfulness fills my heart as I write this letter. Last October 3<sup>rd</sup> I began a very long and very winding tour around this country, speaking to thousands of folks about the lessons I learned from the children of Mehan and Sitara orphanages and the Afghans who direct them. This was something I had not planned. In fact, upon my return from Kabul I had no plan at all. The speaking tour seemed to take on a life of its own. You are the people who made it happen. Sixth graders to a room full of octogenarians, Democrats to Independents to Republicans, rich people and poor, you showed me what is universal about our identity as Americans. We are not, by and large, who they say we are in the news. I did not see the so-called cultural war. You are thoughtful, caring, giving and inquisitive. You are warm of spirit, funny and feeling. You inspire me to do more, to walk forward, or as Farzana would say to fall, and in falling to be given wings.

Now that part of this journey is over. I prepare to leave March 11<sup>th</sup> for Italy where I will give a presentation to the Italian supporters of AFCECO. I will also visit Mahbooba and Farzana who are going to school in Milano. I will proceed to Kabul on March 17<sup>th</sup>. I will bring with me the money you gave, \$15,509 (though checks are still coming in) that will go toward educational needs of the children.

Please feel free to join me by reading my journal. You can go to this link:

[tinyurl.com/iansjournal](http://tinyurl.com/iansjournal)

There you will see the entries from last April to present, as you navigate the various pages. I will continue to add an entry once a week from Kabul. Please note that Omprakash Foundation is in the process of updating its web site. This may change the way you navigate to my journal. Should you lose the link, simply find your way to their site at [www.omprakash.org](http://www.omprakash.org) and search for "Ian in Afghanistan" on their message board.

And please do encourage anyone interested in volunteering anywhere in the world to glance at the resources available on the Omprakash network.

I have many memories swirling through my mind from these talks. A list of the venues I attended on this tour is on the back of this letter. Please accept my most heartfelt thanks. You are a part of a broader, deeper family.

Sincerely,

Ian Pounds

Presentation Venues included the following:

Mansfield Middle School, CT  
EO Smith High School, CT  
Brookfield High School, CT  
Hamden Hall Country Day, CT  
Frontier Café, Brunswick ME  
Pacific Ridge School, CA  
Francis Parker School, CA  
Club Excel, San Diego CA  
Kearny High School, CA  
Alpine Middle School, CA  
*Addison Independent* newspaper full article Oct. 29th issue  
Casa de las Campanas senior retirement community, CA  
Middlebury College, Middlebury VT  
Bonny Eagle Alternative Education, Hollis ME  
Longfellow Elementary, Brunswick ME  
Brunswick High School, ME  
Riverview Topsham ME  
Bowdoin College, ME  
Granby High School CT  
Granby house lecture with the Bracket family, CT  
University of New Hampshire  
Taft School, CT  
*The Sun*, Westerly news article, Dec. 7th issue, RI  
Westerly, RI Library  
Charlestown, RI Chamber of Commerce  
WBCQ Radio interview, RI  
St. Pius School, Westerly RI  
Rotary Club of New York City, at the Harvard Club  
Pomperaug School District #15, CT  
Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, NY  
Summit School, Winston-Salem NC  
Whitestone Retirement Community, Greensboro NC  
Quail Village Retirement Community, Pinehurst NC  
Cypress Village Retirement Community, Raleigh NC  
Flagler College, St. Augustine FL  
Stetson University, DeLand FL  
Interview for *Orlando Sentinel*  
Home gathering at Pauly's in Lake Worth FL  
Night Heron Grassroots Activist Center, Lake Worth FL  
Orange County Library, Hillsboro NC  
Full interview on *The Bill Press Show*, Capitol Hill, Washington DC  
Hotchkiss School, Lakeville CT  
Litchfield High School, Litchfield CT  
Edgewood Retirement Community, N. Andover MA  
Tulane University, New Orleans LA  
Bainbridge High School, WA  
Evergreen State College, WA  
Bainbridge Island Library, WA  
Philips Exeter Academy, NH