

inside **kp** Northwest search

GO TO National Hawaii California Northwest Colorado Georgia Ohio Mid-Atlantic

Work at KP
Benefits, Jobs,
HR Policies...

Communicate
Publications, News,
Community Relations...

Deliver Health Care
Locations, Directories,
Clinical Resources...

Depts. / Services
Clinical, Administrative,

Learning / Training
Classes, Education, CME...

Performance
Goals, Targets, Tools...

Policies / Protocols
Manuals, Guidelines...

Forms



Spotlight:
Building a Future for Afghanistan

With all eyes on the war in Iraq, it's easy to forget about the Afghan people who are struggling to rebuild their lives after years of warfare. One person who hasn't forgotten is Mohammad Khan Kharoti, a Nuclear Medicine employee on the Interstate Campus. He was born to a nomadic family in Afghanistan and couldn't read until he was 12 years old.



Mohammad Khan Kharoti overseeing the supplies distribution.

Although Mohammad's father respected learning, none of his family could read or write. When the first school opened in his village, Mohammad, the oldest son, wanted to attend. He made a deal with his now widowed mother: he would go to school in the morning, and work on the farm in the afternoon.

With the help of an American he met in Lebanon, he completed pre-medicine courses in Iowa, then went back to Afghanistan to become a physician. "Being trained in Western society changed my life in many ways," says Mohammad of his college years in the United States. "It opened me to the idea of creating global communities. I saw that the point of education was to share what you learned with others, to do good."

His ties to America led to harassment during the Soviet occupation. With his family, he fled the country, and eventually came to America, sponsored by his friend and his wife, Christy McGinty, who now works at KP's Regional Lab. Since 1989, he has worked for KP.



Girls opening and reading from their books in class.

Remembering his roots

The people of his homeland have always remained close to his heart, however, which is why he dreamed of opening schools in his native village. Because he felt so strongly that both boys and girls needed schooling, he traveled to Kandahar and Kabul to meet with Taliban leaders. At the time, the Taliban still ruled the country, and it was illegal for females to receive an education.

"I said to them, 'You say that under Islamic law a woman cannot go to a male doctor, only a female doctor. But if our girls don't get educated, there will no female doctors, so please, let me open this school,'" Mohammad explains. "They told me that if I did everything myself, I could do it."

According to a United Nations' report, barely 30% of the men and just 15% of the Afghan women can read or write. Mohammad established his first school in his home village of 5,000 people. It had six girls and 10 boys in the

KP Phone

Advanced Search
People

Featured
view all

CL...
AVE...
C...
Li...
L...
N...
(on...
Tools
Tell
Our S...

TIM

first grade.

To give others an opportunity to help, Mohammad established Green Village Schools as a Portland, OR non-profit organization committed to building a future in Afghanistan. Their mission is to establish schools in Afghanistan that offer boys and girls a basic education in reading and writing in both Pashtu and English, as well as in math, history, and science. Green Village Schools also seeks to create community health clinics that will be associated with the schools and serve their local communities. The organization qualifies as a 501 (c) 3 group, so contributions to it are tax-deductible. Its board meets regularly on the Interstate Campus and includes both KP staff and members.

Mohammad says, "We believe that it is only through the education and good health of youth that a real future for the people of Afghanistan can be assured."

Now that things have calmed down in Afghanistan, and with additional monetary support, the school now educates 165 boys and 65 girls. Classroom space for girls is limited, so building a school for girls will be among the first projects of Green Village Schools.

In Afghanistan, a little money goes a long way. Just \$50, for example, pays for a teacher's salary for one month. Just \$30 would purchase a chair and desk for a child.

The Present

Currently, Green Village Schools operates one school in an Afghan village. It consists of:

- A three-room school for boys, grades one to four
- A one-room school for girls, grades one to two
- Inadequate sanitary accommodations
- A ditch as a drinking water source

The Near Future

The facilities need to be expanded immediately by adding:

- A three-room school for girls
- Four grades for the boys, six grades for the girls
- Teachers for these new classes
- A security wall around the whole school
- The first health clinic
- Latrines
- A well to supply drinking water

The Future

In the next two to three years, Green Village Schools envisions new school facilities in one or two nearby villages that will include the same services, including health clinics. In the longer term, they will add one grade per school per year, to bring each school up to 12 grades.

The mission they have set is a daunting one: building an education system in a primitive country thousands of miles from Portland, Oregon. But their efforts have benefits from the knowledge and connections of Mohammad, whose family still lives in the area. This local knowledge and first-hand experience is helping them reach success despite the complexities.

Mohammad says, "We've already established a way of delivering needed resources to Afghanistan without warlords, profiteers, or black-market traders intercepting them. Less than 10% of donations are used for administrative costs. We have a network of helpers, directors, local doctors, educators, and suppliers who are giving from their hearts."

For more information on Green Village Schools, including how to make a donation, go to www.GreenVillageSchools.org.