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**San Diego~Jalalabad Sister Cities**

**Minutes of Meeting and Foundation Meeting, February 13, 2013**

**Present**: Steve Brown, Susan Brown, Habib Baha, Rita Lim, Kathleen Roche-Tansey, Sadaf Amini, Mustafa Iqbal, Cindy Greatrex, Steve Gardality, Dave Warner, Fary Moini, Art Mendoza, Cynthia Villis, Mike Whipple, Katie Spencer, Esmatullah Hatamy,and David Edick.

1. Chair Steve Brown called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Introductions of directors, committee members, and guests were shared. Steve welcomed back Dr Habib Baha after his work in Afghanistan for the past three years. Dozens of slides of projects were shown throughout the meeting, taken during the most recent trips to Afghanistan (Dr Baha in many locations, Fary Moini for two months’ trip to Jalalabad and Kabul, and Dr Dave Warner’s ongoing work).

2. Dr Baha’s presentation was inspiring, and concise. In addition to his medical training and his familiarity with Afghanistan and its culture, he knows Dari and Pashtu. While he was not allowed to travel back to Jalalabad, he worked in Bagram, Wardak, Khost, Bamiyan, Mazar-e-Sharif, Helmand, Kunar and Herat, providing care to many. He trained doctors and nurses. While he worked primarily with medical professionals, he noted that in Afghanistan’s actual physical reconstruction there is an exceptional need for carpenters, plumbers, and electricians.

3. a) Fary reported on her recent trip. **Afghan Youth Connect** (**AYC;** formerly the **Global Connection and Exchange Program)**, currently serves a total of 16 high schools, including 2 vocational schools, and one hub of 4 highschools. Students and teachers communicate with each other and with students from the US via Facebook, Ning, and Skype conference calls. The program is funded through 8/31/13, and receives the highest priority of attention from SD~Jalalabad Sister Cities.

b) The **GCEP/GCEPE small grants program**, which began 2 years ago, recently provided small grants:

* 5 or 6 schools pooled their grant funds to $2000 to build a bakery for a widow with 7 children;
* Another widow was able to build a store, and
* Still other small projects included buying plants and chairs.

c) Fary reports that the **Teaching English Through Technology** program has been very successful. The *Tell Me More* software has been very valuable to teachers in training.

d) A new US Department of State grant has funded further progress for the **Jalalabad Female Sports Association**, funding table tennis equipment for eight women’s high schools and volleyball equipment for two high schools.

e) **Solar installations** are replacing costly fuel for generators that power the AYC computer labs. A converter captures the electricity and stores it.

f) Recent **Rotary School improvements** include a solar power system donated by the Rotary Club of Del Mar. There is so much progress; the new principals secured funding for additional women teachers, and for paint and repairs. Trees and plants have been added to the landscape. Finally, AYC girls have begun to take babysitting jobs. Both the male and female principals hoped to meet with Fary during her trip, but local Afghan security advised against that.

g) **Bibi Khadija Union (BKU)** women students from Nangarhar University continue in this strong group, and they’re doing a great job. Recently they provided funds to create small shops for women to operate, to earn incomes.

h) **Nasrat II** Funded through Canadian Rotarians (CIDA), the facility includes a nursery for children, sports courts (basketball, volleyball and table tennis), and teacher training. Israr, who was a Rotary Scholar learning to teach English as a Second Language in Michigan, is now overseeing the training of the teachers here.

i) **Other programs.** One GCEP/AYC student taught himself computer skills and is making $400/month. Two schools near the river received pens and pencils, and drinking water. Rick Clark recently made a generous donation in memory of his father, which provided an incubator, suction apparatus, oxygen generator and an ultraviolet bulb. Torrey Pines Bank funded boys’ cricket uniforms for two teams in our GCEP schools.

Fary reported that there were five cases of “honor” killings during her stay. She plans to bring this issue to light in the media as often as she is able.

4) **Katie Spencer** is facilitating participation in **Afghan Youth Connect.** Katie reports that there are now 7000 students in AYC, participating from 20 labs. Almas continues to coordinate from the Afghan side with IT trainers, guest speakers, and Skype conference calls. US student participation continues to present a challenge.

5) Recently **Cynthia Villis** met with fellow LJGT Rotarian **Sandra Scherf** to provide more detail about GCEP, with which Sandra then approached several San Diego area high school journalism teachers. While the teachers and students expressed desire to participate, the new connections seemed to stall at the level of principal.

Some of Cynthia’s USD TRiO Upward Bound students continue to post to the GCEP Facebook page. USD Rotaract’s new International Service Chair has plans to hold a Skype call with GCEP participants in Fall semester 2013.

Cynthia reported that the Facebook closed group that we began four years ago currently enrolls 1515 high school and college students, IT trainers, teachers, and other interested persons who may not post every day, but who keep advised of project activities via the Facebook newsfeed. About 200 of the 1515 are US members. Recent activities include posting puzzles and brain-teasers, math problems, inspirational and motivational quotations, and shared news items, etc.

Email Cynthia at villis@sandiego.edu if you’re on Facebook but are not yet a member of this group, or simply request to join GCEP: Afghan and American PreCollege Institute on Facebook (profile photo is a sideview of a girl in a pink veil seated at a computer).

6) **Steve** reported on pending proposals, first indicating that there is very little to no funding for new programs, due to US troops scheduled to return home. Within this climate, Steve shared the following updates:

* **GCEP year extension**: Steve was in DC last week and again indicated that this was an exceptionally high priority for SD~Jalalabad Sister Cities. He has been able to extend the program through allowable expenditures from the Light Up Jalalabad program through 8/31/13.
* **Teaching English Through Technology:** Is currently funded through July 2013; an extension would take the program through two additional years. Steve said that the prospect of refunding looks encouraging.
* The **Law forensics** proposal for $24,500, with programming prepared by the San Diego Crime Lab, was not funded. Major Kari Fletcher in Jalalabad encouraged this program. Mike Grubb, head of the San Diego County Crime Lab has stepped forward to activate the project, communicating directly with Kari. The program includes well-crafted videos on crime scene investigation, firearms, fingerprints, and biological forensics. The videos are intensive, contain technical terms, and need translation into Pashto and Dari.
* *Tell Me More* software, which is used by SDSU’s LARC, now has a product for Medical English; a 3-year license costs $45K. Funding is being sought.
* NATO Networking Infrastructure Grant 2 was funded for $150,000, to to distribute Internet to 20 different buildings at Nangarhar University.
* The proposal to fund a private GEVSO English Academy was not funded.
* Also denied was the $150,000 proposal submitted to the US Department of State by the La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club Foundation to create a new GCEP to encompass 5 high schools in 3 new cities (including Kabul, Herat, Laghman) and a high schools in Jalalabad.
* The Children’s Reading Competitionproposal for $300,000 to USAID was not funded. This proposal to develop an early literature program, in which students and teachers develop their own stories and illustrate them with art. Mark articulated use of iPads in the proposal.
* The Polio Partners shed to store dry goods relating to the polio eradication effort throughout Afghanistan was proposed by the La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club Foundation and approved by The Rotary Foundation. We hope to construct it before winter.

7) **Dave Warner’s** Synergy Strike Force continues to support SD~Jalalabad Sister Cities efforts. At the Taj, the International Guest House where SD~Jalalabad Sister Cities members have stayed so often, the manager was assassinated near the location of the Rotary School. Dave underwrites its operation, and had to make a decision about whether to keep it open. He decided that he would, as it is still a safe haven for ex-pats. It is semi-functional by comparison to its former days, but it’s still funning.

Dave’s work continued at the border, where he has helped many schools. In Operation Cyber Pass, he facilitated the equipping of a solar-powered school. In a recent project Dave’s group was able to bring pipes into a village that has never had fresh water – and the villagers faced down the Taliban, because fresh water was desperately wanted. This situation made the local media.

In one school that Dave’s been working with, the needs are power, more bandwidth, and female teachers, but not enough funding was received to assist with all three. Dave’s brought in batteries and is working to ensure that the US and USAID commitments are honored at least in part.

Dave continues to pick up opportunities to make exceptional improvements for small amounts of money, as with the International Women’s Day celebration last March (7000 girls attended).

Dave and his group have organized a fundraiser for SD~Jalalabad projects on April 13 near Washington DC. We are very grateful for his efforts to secure contributions.

8) Kathleen Roche-Tansey reported on the **virtual exchange between Preuss UCSD and GCEP students in Jalalabad**. Two successful Skype calls occurred between Jalalabad GCEP students and Preuss Interact and Ecology Club members (about 50 Preuss students each time). Students continue to be actively engaged. Preuss’ principal and teacher Shea Phillips continue to lend their strong support to this program.

9) **Polio eradication initiative:** Afghanistan experienced about 20 cases in 2010, 80 cases in 2011, 37 cases in 2012 and 2 cases in 2013 to date.

10) **Telemedicine** continues to be greatly supported and implemented by Cindy Greatrex, Pete Kilcommons and Steve Dorros. There is a need for a potable set-up that can do every kind of vital sign -- the key is getting this equipment into the right (trained) hands.

11) Steve attended meetings convened by the US Secretary of the Army at the **Pentagon** and **Department of Defense** in DC for two days (there were at least three generals in attendance at the meetings as well). The question was posed: How can our military directly or indirectly support the four NGOs (Rotary was one) called to the table? What are the impediments? Our troops being recalled home is one issue. Development funds drying up is another.

12) **Web page update:** The old one was defunct, here’s the new one for San Diego ~ Jalalabad Sister Cities, which Mark Burgess is still working on.

13) **PayPal donation setup:** The new website will be able to accept PayPal donations, and Steve will receive email notification of each contribution.

14) Mike Whipple announced his annual Nowruz event in the City of Orange on May 1 at 7 pm. Notification will be sent to SD~Jalalabad Sister Cities members.

15) Finally, Steve addressed the i**mportance of individual contributions to our Foundation to preserve 501(c)3 status:** Size of contributions is not as important as the number. We need to demonstrate a broad base of support to maintain 501(c)3 status.

16) **Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

*Villis, Foundation Secretary*

*May 2013*