

## Another Wish Fulfilled

Today we're compound bound. The roads in and around Kabul are closed and no one seems to know when they will be opened. Yesterday, people knew the roads would be closed, but not when. Traffic was horrendous. It took us three hours to cross town, a distance that would normally be covered in 40 minutes. Some people were forced to sleep in their cars overnight. On the bright side we didn't worry about being kidnapped. The getaway car wouldn't have been able to get away.

When the trip to Tangi Saidan was cancelled, we drove to another village. Some of you know the history behind this project. Others don't. I'll summarize and bring everyone up to the present.

The home schooling classes have been very popular, thereby creating capacity problems. In April we agreed to fund the construction of a classroom on Wahid's property in Qala Esfandyar. Wahid and TIE entered into a 10 year no rent ground lease. Wahid would have agreed to a longer lease, but we didn't want to take advantage of him. We agreed to supply the materials and the villagers agreed to build the classroom.

Pictured below are Wahid and Zeba, his wife, the old and new classrooms, and photos taken during construction. The new classroom was completed a few weeks ago. Since arriving, we've added carpet and purchased 20 desks that will be delivered next week. Each desk seats two children. The classroom will therefore hold 40 students. That's enough capacity to accommodate all of the classes previously taught in the old classroom.

We asked Wahid to allow TIE to provide computer classes in the old classroom. As you can see from the photo, the old classroom needs work.

Again, we'll provide the materials and they will do the work.



*Education for Zeba and Wahid is a high priority--  
They gave much more than they were asked*

*The old classroom --soon to become  
the new computer classroom*

The net effect of this undertaking is that over 100 children will no longer be required to sit on the floor, won't be crowded into a small room, and will soon be able to take computer courses. Check out the response, pictured below.





When Nabi and I arrived, many of the students were assembled inside the new classroom. Their greeting was deafening. I only wish that those of you who have made these projects and programs possible could have experienced what we encountered upon entering the room. I've never experienced such unbridled joy before. It was overwhelming. Several times I was told by the students and teachers to deliver this message, "Thank you American families."



*The question was asked, " Who wants a computer class?"*

The benefits of the classroom are so compelling we agreed to fund the construction of a classroom in Farzana's village in the Spring. She's a passionate, dedicated, creative teacher whose living room runneth over. She's

the teacher who said, "As long as there are children who want to learn, I will be a teacher". We jokingly told her that before she marries we want her husband to sign an agreement in keeping with her commitment. She laughed. Given what I've observed of Farzana, we needn't worry.

I'm pleased to report that a more subtle change has taken place. When I first visited girls' classes several years ago, many of the girls looked down or away. It was difficult for at least a third of the girls to make eye contact. Not any longer. They were seeking eye contact rather than avoiding it. Ok educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, and observers of human nature, isn't this phenomenon at least in part a byproduct of their education? The girls are more confident and self assured each year.



*Nabi and I hand out the sweets--Starbursts and Granola bars*

It's around 6 PM and still no one can go out. I think I'll have that last Snickers bar. Who told Nabi? Now, I'll have to offer him half.

Budd

PS Yesterday we visited Aschiana and met with the street children sponsored through TIE. Tomorrow we distribute clothing and rice to refugee and internally displaced families living in Kabul. Two more days and reports to go and we're on the plane home!!! Inshallah.

PPS Total cost for new classroom, rug, and desks \$4,840 proving once again how little it takes to make a substantial difference.

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