

Wish List Items For 2010



The economy has, as everyone is painfully aware, been downsizing for a long time. We may need to do likewise. After all, humanitarian aid organizations are subject to trickle down economics. They generally receive the last check, not the first.

As a consequence of all the forecasting, I've been declining to become involved in a number of very worthwhile projects. The two described below have been added to the wish list for 2010. They are ambitious undertakings, but clearly worthy of a try. You'll understand why, after discovering what I learned.

The timing of this newsletter has been carefully planned. It's going out in time for you to add these projects to your last minute holiday shopping list or to your New Year's resolutions. Actually, that's not true. I'm just running behind, as usual for this time of year. How many of you have bought a Christmas tree the night before Christmas? Been there, done that, more than once. You can't beat the prices, but you lose more than half the needles dragging the tree into the house.

ZOHRA'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

About three months ago, Shane, my assistant, handed me a message from Zohra Aziz. Zohra had called asking whether TIE could help her build a school for girls. I asked Shane to call Zohra and tell her we couldn't take on any more projects. We both began working on other things and later I decided to call Zohra

myself. Big mistake, or not, depending upon your perspective. I am, however, becoming " just a guy who can't say no".

Zohra and her family left their village, Farza, when she was 10, to escape the war between the government and the mujahedeen ("freedom fighters"). In 1993 they came to Alameda, California, as refugees. Fourteen years later she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from California State University in Hayward. Three years ago she returned to Afghanistan with her father to visit Farza. She was surrounded by young girls who were surprised to learn she could read, had graduated from college, and was working. Zohra was inspired by the girls and her father to build them a school. The boys already have a school. The school will be dedicated to Zohra's father, who passed away following their trip to Afghanistan.



Zohra holding Ehsan's daughter

Zohra bought land for the school (\$7,200), and has saved a considerable sum from her earnings to contribute to the project. She is, as she describes herself in her resume, a "self-motivated and hard-working" individual. So, for starters we have an accomplished, dedicated, passionate, young Afghan woman, from the village, who brings much more to the project than a good idea. She also personifies the role model that young Afghan boys and girls need to experience.

The village is close enough that our program directors can oversee the construction. Nabi and I met with their project foreman, Ehsan, when we were in Afghanistan. This is another partnership project. TIE will supply the materials, and the villagers will donate their labor.

The Ministry of Education has approved the project. Therefore, the school will be accredited and the operating costs of the school, once opened, will be paid by the Afghan government. This is a significant advantage over other school

projects.

Best of all, it's in a "safe area". You'll be able to visit the school. I should write "relatively" safe. In the interest of making full disclosure you should know the State Department considers the entire country unsafe.

I should also advise those of you who are inclined to go, that your spouse won't let you. I can't count the number of times people have asked, if they could come with us, only to inform me later that their spouse wouldn't let them. If your spouse is willing to let you go, you probably need to work on your relationship. You're in real trouble if they buy your ticket.

The budget for Zohra's school: (\$75,000 for ten classrooms, playground equipment and separate bathroom).



Waiting patiently for Zohra to succeed

NABI TO THE RESCUE

While in Afghanistan, the General Program Manager, Nazar, told Nabi and I about a program in Parwan, Aschiana has been coordinating, for the past two years. It had been funded by a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). PRT teams are teams established by Nato countries in Afghanistan. They are the "good guys" with money to spend on reconstruction aid. Each PRT team has a designated territory in which it operates. As fate would have it, the PRT team, that had been funding the program, has been assigned to another territory. It can no longer fund the program because Parwan is outside its territory. The contact information for the PRT assigned to Parwan this year hasn't been disclosed. I've never been able to find contact information for the PRT teams myself. Nabi has decided to champion this cause, and for good reason.



120 girls entered into an accelerated education program two years ago with the understanding that if they completed the three year program they would be admitted to high school in the spring of 2011. These girls were too old to attend school at their proficiency level. They were "aged out". If they are not ready to enter high school by the spring of 2011, they will be "aged out" permanently. The program has closed. If it is not reinstated, their education is over.

The budget for 12 months is \$28,000 (\$2,333/mo or a little less than \$20 per month per child). Time and time again we are confronted with how little it takes to alter lives. Above and below are photos taken before the program closed. Note that their education includes learning how to sew. Many of the better education programs include teaching a skill.



Acquiring skills and obtaining an education, a perfect combination!!!

The year is coming to a close. As most of you realize, we have come a long way, in six years. Each year is better than the year before. This year is no exception. Notwithstanding the military draw down that will begin in 18 months, we have no exit strategy. We will do as much for the Afghan people as we can, for as long as we can. They deserve no less.

To make a donation please [CLICK HERE](#)

HAPPY NEW YEAR --

Budd

p.s. If you would like to earmark a donation for one or both of these projects just indicate your preference/allocation on your check, or send us a note.

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