

روان افغان



Afghan Spirit

PARSA *Discovering the Afghan Spirit*

July 9, 2006

Dear "Friends of PARSA",

My name is Marnie Hartung Gustavson, and many of you know my family from our years in Afghanistan in the '60's. This year Mary Macmakin retired and she has turned PARSA's directorship over to me. I have been living in Kabul for the last year working with Mary on this transition as she turned 78 this year and she is ready for some fun. She has had an amazing decade in this historical time for Afghanistan, and she has made a huge difference in so many lives. I am encouraging her write about her life as she has a unique perspective. She loves Afghanistan and the Afghan people.

So now it is time for me to care for PARSA and the PARSA staff. My promise to them has been to train them to be able to run PARSA, which is registered in Afghanistan as an international NGO, and has a 501c3 status here in the US. The first part of my work has been to create systems that can manage an international agency, including financial and communication systems. I have been assisted greatly by Dawn Erickson and Van Auburn, both American accountants. We are in the final stages of this, which we need to complete before training our Afghan directors. I want to let you know about these changes.

We have a new website which we are managing from Kabul. The old website will be archived on the new website. The address for this website is:

www.afghanistan-parsa.org.

In addition to this we are keeping a web journal, which I update, frequently on the daily activities of PARSA so you can really get a feel for what our work is there and what we do. This journal can be reached at:

<http://parsakabul.blogspot.com>

We also have a new mailing address here in Seattle, which is:

PARSA
3246 39th Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98116

Bob and Mary will still be intricately involved but in an advisory capacity. This month we are welcoming three volunteers in Kabul and starting a number of new programs. Mary will be joining us at the end of the month. Highlights for this month are:

- We have started a program at Allahoddin orphanage (see attached) and hope to end up working with all 600 children by the end of the year.
- International Yoga College is sending a yoga instructor to Kabul to help us integrate yoga into our physiotherapy work and to develop a special program for children that have experienced trauma.
- Guru Sewak Khalsa, child counselor, will be joining my husband, Norm Gustavson who is a psychologist to develop psychosocial programs for children-sensitive to the Afghan culture.
- Sylvia Noble, in Arizona is developing a new product line for PARSA gift shop, and PARSA seamstresses to work on.
- We have started a new project this year called “The Widow’s Garden” which is going very well.
- Our Afghan directors, Palwasha, Zarguna, Yasin, and Naheed will be traveling to the US in September/October to join Mary in Arizona for a fundraiser and I am hoping that they will also travel to Seattle so I can connect them with US programs that work with the disabled.
- We are starting a very focused volunteer program working with the orphans, because in spite of the security warnings, wonderful and intrepid souls continue to come to assist us.

More details later in a newsletter!

A special thanks to Betty Tisdale and the “**Helping And Loving Orphans**” foundation for getting us started on our project with the orphanage. Also to Bonnie Berry and Theresa Molyneux for kindness and support in making this transition. And to all for you for your solid support over the years. PARSA would not exist without you.

Bonnie and Theresa encouraged me to ask you for what I needed. I am going to send out a very specific request for the orphanage in the fall but for right now we really need airline miles if you have any extra or know someone who might donate. All of the Americans working on PARSA are working on a volunteer basis, in fact paying for the opportunity and support on our travel makes it possible for us to do what we do longer.

Our deep appreciation for all your support.

Marnie Gustavson
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