

روان افغان



Afghan Spirit

# PARSA *Discovering the Afghan Spirit*

*Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Services for Afghanistan*

September 23, 2007

Dear Friends of PARSA;

I returned from the US three weeks ago to our new room in Marastoon-we call the building the "Old House". We spent the summer renovating this building for a guesthouse for PARSA volunteers and staff. Our first delegates, Gennaro Buonocore, Dr. Kelly Bender, Maria Delongy and George MacDonald from Phoenix had to accommodate the construction workers showing up every morning, no windows, thick dust, and my animals getting adjusted to their new home. The kitchen sink



seemed to be on its own schedule for completion and day by day a new piece was added until we have the equivalent of a summer camp kitchen where the process seems stalled but I am quite happy to have running water. George found himself in the new bathroom, with an audience peering in the non-existent windows. Kelly, ambivalent about cats, woke up with a small Afghan cat curled up by his side. The cat and his owner, Bismullah had been displaced by our arrival and moved on up the hill but the cat is having a hard time adjusting.



George with the head of shura in a Paghman village



Maria and Kelly trying to figure out the washing machine

Our "volunteers" were gracious, interested and flexible. Touring them around our projects and including them in our work gave me a good perspective on how PARSA has developed and a good sense of how we want to grow. Having them live at Marastoon with us let them experience the lives of vulnerable Afghans first hand and they will be informed and educated advocates when they return home. Although security was a concern and we

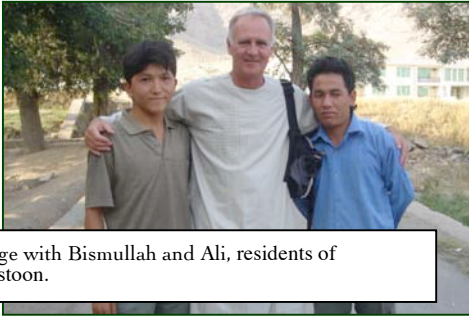
## Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan

Karte Sa-e Pule Surkh of Kabul P.O. Box 3149 Kabul, Afghanistan

Email [mgustav@mac.com](mailto:mgustav@mac.com) or [yasinfarid\\_2006@yahoo.com](mailto:yasinfarid_2006@yahoo.com)

93 (0)799 020 588 or 93 (0)70 284 286

were cautious, I enjoyed watching them immerse themselves in the experience of just getting through a day in Afghanistan.



George with Bismullah and Ali, residents of Marastoon.

As a part of our trip we traveled up to Bamyan, a ten-hour trip over abysmal roads to everyone's discomfort. I lost a certain amount of credibility by insisting that Bamyan was "quite close" for about four hours of the trip. After the second day of misguessing the distances I was lucky anyone would get in the car with me. A beautiful day at Band-i-amir lakes, and breathtaking trip up the Jawzjareen valley compensated for the discomfort

a bit.

I had the opportunity work on our strategic plan with Gennaro, our Chairman of the board while they were here and he is supporting me to fundraise effectively for the next three months so that I am able to focus and refine programs next year. Our partnership with Afghan Red Crescent Society has the potential of redefining social protection programs and long-term rehabilitation in Afghanistan, especially for the mentally ill and mentally retarded. Our Early childhood programs are some of the best in the country. The community village school in Hazarajat has the potential of transforming that community and providing an excellent model for remote rural education programs.



Swimming in Band-i-amir...

So, it is time for us to fundraise for the year 2008. To this end, I will be back in the United States in November in two cities, Seattle and Phoenix for fundraising events. We have a great grassroots funding community and I work hard to maintain personal contact with everyone. I would like to expand it so that we raise our basic operating budget for the year of 2008 that is \$332,000, which will serve over 3,000 vulnerable people in a variety of programs.

More importantly it will allow us to pilot a number of programs as models for caring for vulnerable populations, including "Life skills and job placement for disabled people", "A Safe Place" for mentally ill with the possibility of instituted individuals being reintegrated into their family. "Vulnerable Children's program's" that help professionals identify and work with learning disabilities and developmental problems, and our Community Village Schools, which combine early childhood programs with adult literacy to elevate the education level of the entire community to provide a richer environment for rural Afghan children to grow up in.

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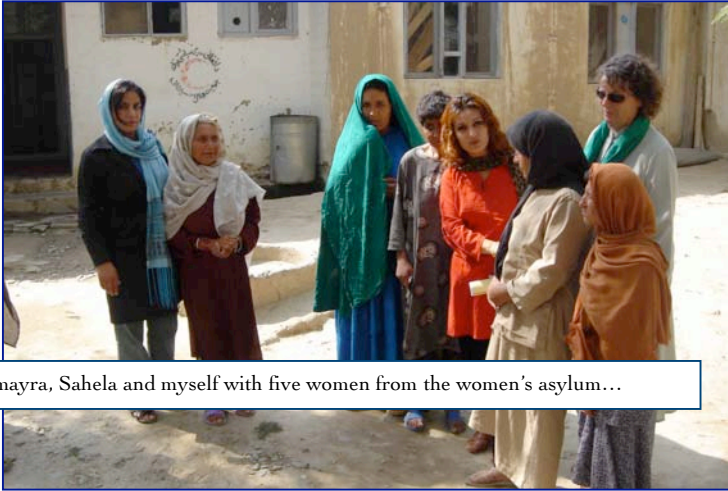
I thank all of the people who helped me with the small fundraiser in Seattle and look forward to seeing you in November.

With deepest appreciation,

*Marnie Gustavson*

## Update on PARSA Programs....

When I was in the US we received the following email from Yasin, our national Afghan director about the progress of our patients in the women's mental asylum... *"Good news to Dr. Norman, Since two weeks the female crazy women are knowing vegetables and they are asking Saleha to bring them. Before just they were eating rice, bread and some time meat, and just when they were out they were eating alfalfa.... Now they are asking Onions, Tomatoes and other vegetables..."*



Dr. Homayra, Sahela and myself with five women from the women's asylum...

Now, we *do* have to work on politically correct terminology

for our mentally ill clients, but the event of having our female patients prefer cooked vegetables over grazing in the alfalfa fields has given our Afghan staff an enormous sense of accomplishment. The five women in the picture were invited to Sahela's (our social worker) son's birthday party. I had the privilege of watching them dance and sing to music and to see their sense of awe that they experienced by being part of something normal. We have some miracles now after two months of treatment. As Sahela says, "they are remembering their history...before their treatment they could only babble...."

**Safeullah Amarkhel** PARSA's new assistant director of "well being" programs, began a mobility training program this month with 12 blind residents of Marastoon. He is training Sahela to work with the blind women. He found canes for them all in the bazaar, and for \$150, and now when I take my walk in the evening I see a large number of them out for a stroll with there new canes... One father was carrying his son as he felt his way along the road with his cane. Such a pleasure to watch our staff work so competently with the disabled.

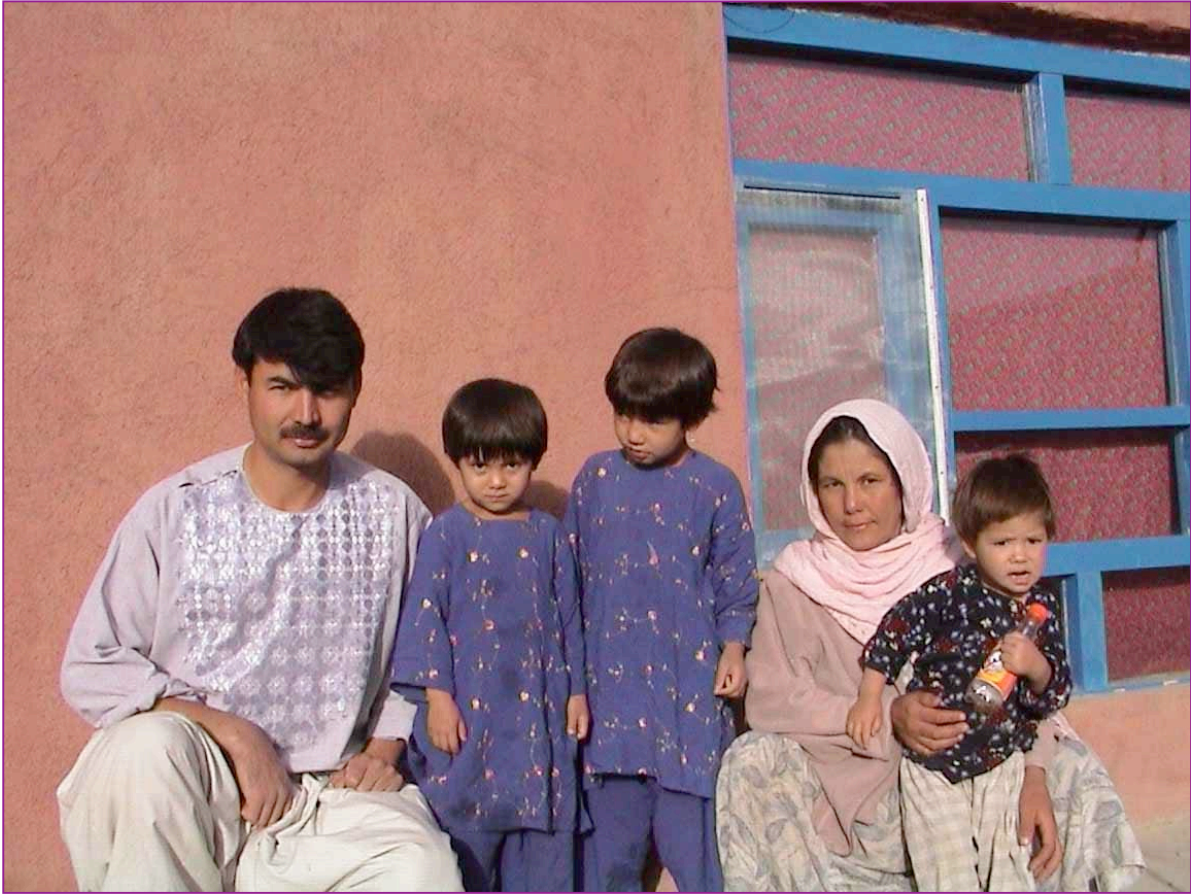


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**In Bamyan** Taher and Zahra have taken up residence in our offices with their children. They are just about to become parents to their fourth child. Zahra is a skilled project manager and artisan and will be managing and training the women in our economic programs. Taher will function as a liaison between villages and operations managers. Together they make \$300 a month. We are so lucky to have this well trained couple to start our project in Jawzjareen Valley

## Events and Announcements

### Seattle Event

Fundraising Event for PARSA  
**November 10<sup>th</sup>, 5-8pm**  
University Heights community Center  
Meet our Afghan Directors

Our "Face to Face with Afghanistan" was a success this August in that I was able to meet our donors and have a candid conversation about our work in Afghanistan. In November, four of our Afghan directors will be joining me from Kabul for their first trip to the US. Please mark your calendar and plan on joining us. For more details call or email Colin Hume at 360-319-4727 or [colin\\_hume@yahoo.com](mailto:colin_hume@yahoo.com).

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## Phoenix Events

October 30<sup>th</sup> through November 6<sup>th</sup>

We just had a visit from delegates from the Phoenix area headed by our chairman of the board, Gennaro Buonocore, including members of the Paradise Valley Methodist Church. I will be joining them with our four Afghan directors, for a series of forums and fundraising events during this week, to share our experiences of Afghanistan. Please contact Maria DeLong at [MariaDeLongy@msn.com](mailto:MariaDeLongy@msn.com) or George Macdonald at [evjenkerr@hotmail.com](mailto:evjenkerr@hotmail.com) for more details and the schedule.

## New York City

A Photo exhibition by Andy Xenios

**Including photos from Andy's visit with PARSA staff to Alluhoddin Orphanage**  
Paley Center for Media in New York City,  
**October 23rd and ending December 31st.**

The theme of the exhibition is: Documenting change in Afghan society with a special emphasis on media and women. There are portraits of children who are in the Alluhoddin orphanage that Andy visited while he was with PARSA in Kabul. Creative Visions Foundation and Caroline Firestone's foundation, New Hudson Foundation, are sponsoring the exhibition. Andy Xenios has offered to donate a portion of any photograph that he sells at the exhibition to PARSA and the Paley Center.

[Dr. Nassim Assefi](#), lived in Afghanistan for two years developing training programs for Afghan physicians, has completed her first novel, *Aria*, and will be donating a portion of the proceeds from her novel to PARSA. A fluent Farsi speaker her book is informed by her experience as an Iranian woman, and is a heartfelt statement about life in this part of the world. You can purchase her book at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

*The Kabul Beauty School*, written by [Debbie Rodriguez and Kristin Ohlson](#) is about Debbie's experiences in Afghanistan in the years just after the Taliban fell, as she worked to develop training programs for Afghan women to learn cosmetology. Mary MacMakin, founder of PARSA was involved in the start up of the first beauty school. Currently a movie is in the works, and Debbie has approached PARSA about assisting with the continuation of the Kabul Beauty School in the future. This book can be found at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Our son, [Colin Hume](#) visited my husband and I this spring and we hope that he will be joining us again at the end of November. He wrote a candid journal about his visit that we have posted at: [http://www.afghanistanparsa.org/content/colins\\_journal.htm](http://www.afghanistanparsa.org/content/colins_journal.htm) for those of you who have not had the opportunity to read it.

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## To our Donors from the Chairman of the Board

Dear Friend of PARSA,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you a formidable humanitarian endeavor:

### **PARSA, Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Services for Afghanistan.**

I have been lucky to serve with this famed Afghanistan based Non Government Organization since April 2006 and I have witnessed the amazing progress that its dedicated personnel has achieved in the name of charity, love and freedom from fear.

PARSA is not only a jewel in the desperate scenario of one of the countries most affected by conflict in the past century but also the symbol of Afghan resilience, generosity and spirit.

In the past twelve month the organization has experienced a strategic managerial change from the legendary founder Mary MacMakin to a new professional structure that meets the standards of the most exigent international donors.

It now reaches and caters for more needy Afghans than ever before. Its intervention mode has appropriately switched from an emergency one to a developmentally reconstructive model. It follows coherently the developments within its beloved country.

When asked about what the solution to Afghanistan's long lasting drama I mention two vital factors: Education and the Afghan's willingness to make a Positive Difference.

And the Difference is PARSA.

On behalf of the neediest people of Afghanistan I thank you for your interest and support.

**Gennaro Buonocore**  
**Chairman of the Board of**  
**Directors**  
**PARSA**  
**Kabul - Afghanistan**



Gennaro visiting a resident family at Marastoon.

*To Donate to PARSA send a*

*Check to:*

**PARSA**

**3246 39th Avenue SW**

**Seattle, WA 98116**

*Or go online to our website at: [www.afghanistan-parisa.org](http://www.afghanistan-parisa.org). Thank you!*

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