

# Afghanistan Relief Organization

A non-profit 501c3 humanitarian non-governmental organization

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*THE ARO E-NEWSLETTER UPDATE*

*APRIL 2007*

## ARO Relief Team prepares to leave for Spring 2007 Relief Trip

(April 2007) – ARO volunteers will depart mid May for the Spring 2007 relief effort. A major focus this year—in addition to a needs assessment for the ARO education center in Kabul—will be relief aid for refugee camps, as well as assisting several orphanages.

In a joint effort with a sister NGO, Afghans 4 Tomorrow (A4T), ARO collected over 500 blankets to send to Afghanistan through A4T for distribution. Separately, funds have been raised by ARO to purchase tents for existing or returning Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran. Distribution of winter relief is critical for residents enduring refugee camp conditions.

You can help the ARO relief team by donating online at [www.afghanrelief.com](http://www.afghanrelief.com).

## Relief Distributions in 2006 included Badakhshan and Takhar

(August / September 2006) – The ARO-Kabul relief team distributed winter relief, school supplies and hand-knit clothing from American knitters to remote mountainous areas in the Badakhshan and Takhar provinces. Hand-knit items were donated to ARO by “Afghans for Afghans”, a humanitarian and educational people-to-people project that sends hand-knit and crocheted blankets and sweaters, vests, hats, mittens, and socks to the people of Afghanistan.

ARO is grateful to the many donors and contributors who provided supplies and funds for the 2006 relief effort. Read more about the 2006 relief distributions at [www.afghanrelief.com](http://www.afghanrelief.com).



Residents of Kalafgan, in Takhar Province, receive winter clothing and supplies from ARO.

## ARO's Technical Education Center serves over 1100 Students

(April 2007) – The ARO Technical Education Center (TEC) now provides academic and vocation programs for over 1100 youth and adult students. General youth academic programs include reading and writing in native languages and English, mathematics, basic computer use, with special lectures or program as available. Students also participate in sports, including boys' soccer and girls' karate. Other TEC programs include:

- **Afghan Native Languages:** The Dari and Pashto classes opened in late 2006, with adult students enrolled in a one-year program to learn to read and write Dari. After one year, students are introduced to advance schools to continue their education. Most of these students are intermediate and high school students who come from low-income families and face language problems in school.
- **Women's Literacy Program:** In May 2005, ARO established the first of a series of women's literacy classes. The classes are designed to fast-track women who desperately need literacy and vocational training to support their families. In order to make it possible for these women to attend class, they are paid \$50.00(US) / month for family support.
- **Vocational Program-The Sewing Initiative / Micro Business Development:** The Sewing Initiative teaches Afghan women sewing and business skills (along with literacy training), and then empowers them by providing the tools they need to establish a home-based business. Utilizing the traditional intricate craftwork of Afghan embroidery, the women of the Sewing Initiative create beautiful shawls, dresses, tunics and household items for sale in the United States. They may sell to whomever they wish and establish a neighborhood tailoring business.
- **Vocational program-Nursing:** In May 2006, relief volunteers inaugurated a new nursing program at ARO's educational center, funding initial supplies, textbooks, equipment and instruction for the next two years. There is a shortage of healthcare workers with basic nursing skills and the Afghan population has significant public health needs. Students from this program are now receiving additional training and employment at Maiwand Hospital.
- **Vocational program-Auto Mechanics:** A mechanical shop area was created to provide training for approximately thirty students in engine diagnostics and repair, auto body dent repair and painting. Private donors provided approximately \$5,000.00 (US) of mechanical shop equipment. Adult students receive instruction in basic tool usage, welding, basic repair and part manufacturing. These skills are needed in Afghanistan, will allow them to gain employment and become self-sufficient.
- **Vocational program-Plumbing:** In May 2006, volunteers inaugurated a plumbing vocational program, with initial two-year funding of \$6,000.00 (US) from volunteer donation efforts. Funds were used to prepare a new classroom area for the program and pay for a qualified instructor. Plumbing skills are in high demand, and graduates of the plumbing program are employable, allowing them to become self-sufficient.
- **Vocational program-Carpentry:** Graduates of this one-year program—now in development—will be able to make chairs, sofas, tables, doors, windows, cupboards and other cabinetry of furniture items. Similar to graduates in the Plumbing Course, graduates of the Carpentry Course are needed as part of the country-wide reconstruction effort.

- **Vocational program-Electrician:** Students are enrolled in the Electrician Course for one year. Graduates of the Electrician Course find work opportunities in private houses for rewiring, wiring and other electronic work. Students acquire skills allowing them to own their own business, or find employment repairing TVs, radios, irons, computers, washing machines and other electronic equipment.
- **Medical, Dental, and Hygiene Program:** In 2006, ARO allocated \$5,000.00 (US) to establish a health center serving student and the underserved community in the surrounding area. Volunteer donations raised funds to pay salaries for visiting doctors for the first two-year period, as well as basic equipment and a pharmacy supply. As of April 2007, ARO is working with a visiting dentist from Colorado to begin regular dental care for students.

## Students Graduate from University Preparation English Program

(March 26, 2007)—Twenty-five students graduated from the Test of English as a Foreign Language™ (TOEFL) class at ARO's TEC. The three-month class provided student instruction in Grammar, Listening Skills, Reading and Writing Essays. Additionally, students practiced "conversational" English on a regular basis.

The TOEFL students—including three young women—were mostly university and graduate students seeking scholarships for their studies abroad. Most of the students' scores were above 500 out of 680 and two students achieved over 600. ARO teachers are pleased with the students' English knowledge and overall academic progress during the three-month program. Also, teachers showed students how to conduct internet research for scholarship opportunities at universities and institutions.

"The class was very tough but the students attended the class regularly on these cold, wet days," reported ARO chairman, Abul Fazil Khalili. ARO applauds the dedication and hard work of these promising scholars!



**Afghanistan's Future –TOEFL class graduates included 22 young men and three young ladies (not pictured).**

**What is TOEFL?** The Test of English as a Foreign Language™ (TOEFL) measures the ability of nonnative speakers—at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level or above—to use and understand English as it is spoken, written, and heard in college and university settings. TOEFL tests all four language skills that are important for effective communication: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

The test helps students demonstrate that they have the English skills needed for success. The test scores provide institutions with information about students' ability to communicate in an academic setting and their readiness for academic coursework. The TOEFL test is offered in 180 countries around the world, usually at colleges and universities. More than 6,000 institutions and agencies in 110 countries rely on TOEFL scores to select students with the English skills needed to succeed.

**Scholarships:** If you are associated with a college or university that may offer scholarship opportunities to Afghanistan's future leaders, please contact us at [info@afghanrelief.com](mailto:info@afghanrelief.com). Help us help by opening a door!



**ARO nursing students receive additional hands-on training at Maiwand Hospital in Kabul.**

## **ARO Nursing Students Continue Studies and Gain Employment**

(March 2007) – In January 2007, thirty students in ARO's Nursing Assistant program—in what ARO Chairman Abul Khalili calls “a great achievement”—were accepted for hands-on medical training at Maiwand Hospital in Kabul. The Nursing Assistant program was initiated with funds raised by ARO volunteer Nadia Maiwandi during the 2006 relief trip.

Women enrolled in the program were recruited from low-income families. The program provides skill training that allows them to become employable and self-sufficient. The program also responds to Afghanistan's critical need for additional healthcare workers. In March 2007, the Ministry of Public Health registered ARO's program, and will provide ARO with an enhanced nursing curriculum. Donate online at [www.afghanrelief.com](http://www.afghanrelief.com) to help ARO continue this successful program.

## May 26 – 28 Tournament benefits ARO Relief and Education Afghan Sports Network Organizes “OC’s Tournament of Champions”

Mark your calendars for a weekend of Basketball, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Flag Football, Bowling and Chess at the Southern California Basketball Academy (SCBA) in Cypress, CA. Once again, tournament organizers have designated ARO as a recipient of tournament fundraising.

The Afghan Sports Network (ASPN) is an Afghan sports show that airs weekly on satellite television. Its hosts, Edriss Miskinyar and Qayed Shareef, have put together the “first ever All-Afghan Six-Sport Tournament”, anticipating a crowd of 2,000 to 2,500 from the Afghan community. To-date basketball teams are expected from Canada, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Tournament Registration closes May 16, and there are opportunities for all ages.

This promises to be a great family weekend showcasing Afghan athletes at their best! Sign up to play, cheer on your favorite team, and see players from Orange County’s Afghan Basketball National Team who recently beat Hong Kong in an international match in Qatar. Your participation helps ARO! This tournament will also facilitate the formation of the Afghans National Table Tennis Team, featuring former Afghan Champions and new talent that will be participating in Asian Games later this year.

Learn more about the tournament and Afghan Basketball at [www.afghansportsnetwork.com](http://www.afghansportsnetwork.com), and about the SCBA at [www.scbabball.org](http://www.scbabball.org). The SCBA tournament center is located at 6125 Chip Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630.



***Tashakur!***  
***Thank You to ARO’s***  
***Friends, Contributors and***  
***Supporters!***

Our work is not possible without you. Thank you to just some of the extraordinary people who help. Although there are more than we can list, all of you are in our hearts!

- **Ayres Hotels** – Donating bedding and pillows for winter relief
- **Be The Cause** – Organizing the annual Walk for Hope and assisting with relief packing
- **Jennifer Braun**, midwife and philanthropist – Hosting former ARO student, Ghaffar Langary on scholarship at the Alexander Dawson School in Colorado
- **Mike Flinn**, Scope Packaging – Boxes for relief shipments
- **Hafif Family Foundation** – Hosting the annual Concert Under the Stars
- **Homira Koshan**, Jacuzzi Brands – Providing graphics assistance for ARO events
- **Omar Ghaznawi**, Carnegie Mellon University student – Raising funds to build a rural school
- **Thomas Grams, DDS** – Working with ARO to establish a free dental clinic for students and staff
- **Jean Haider** – Printing and production of ARO event materials
- **Saboor Hamidzadah** – Raising money for refugee camp and orphanage aid
- **Andrea McNeill**, starynites.com – Donating new infant clothing and bedding for Afghan children
- **Edriss Miskinyar and Qayed Shareef**, Afghan Sports Network – Sports tournaments helping ARO’s work
- **The Yusuf Family**, Pacific Hills Banquet & Catering, Laguna Hills – Hosting ARO’s annual events



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<http://www.giveline.com/default.asp?v=V007371163>, or select ARO before you shop. To get free shipping, use discount code NCD07 during checkout.

**ABOUT ARO:** Afghanistan Relief Organization (ARO) is a non-political, secular (non-religious), 501c3 nonprofit, humanitarian organization. Our mission is to provide education and deliver relief aid, guaranteeing the distribution of contributions directly into the hands of the intended recipients throughout Afghanistan. Founded in the United States in 1998—and registered in both the United States and Afghanistan—ARO is a volunteer humanitarian organization open to people of all backgrounds and faiths.

ARO distributes food, medicine, school supplies and basic relief supplies on relief trips. Volunteers pay their own way on relief trips. ARO has no paid staff in the U.S., employs Afghans in Kabul, attempts to ship supplies via humanitarian transports, and utilizes donated warehouse space to collect and sort supplies for shipment. Our efforts are to maximize donor contributions by operating in a responsible and cost effective manner.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP!** ARO relies solely on volunteer help and donations to accomplish our mission. Funds are always needed to help with shipping costs of high-value or hard-to-obtain items, and for the purchase of additional relief supplies in the local region. Funds are needed for educational and vocational programs, and school building maintenance. Your contribution can help continue the efforts of ARO to provide relief and self-sustainability to people throughout Afghanistan. For more information, please contact ARO at [info@afghanrelief.com](mailto:info@afghanrelief.com) or visit our website at [www.afghanrelief.com](http://www.afghanrelief.com).

**DONATIONS:** ARO is a registered 501c3 non-profit, and your financial donations are tax deductible as allowable by the federal IRS tax code.

Your contribution can be made online at [www.afghanrelief.com](http://www.afghanrelief.com).

Or, by check or money order mailed to: Afghanistan Relief Organization, P.O. Box 866, Cypress, CA 90630. A receipt will be mailed to you, if you provide a return address.