

Afghan Coalition

Monthly Newsletter of the Afghan Community in Northern California

Empowering the Afghan community and building bridges to Afghanistan

Member organizations: Afghan Women's Association, International, Society of Afghan Professionals, Society of Afghan Engineers (NCA chapter), Afghan American Entertainer's Association, Virtual Nation, Afghan Student Union (Berkeley), Afghan Domestic Violence Prevention, San Francisco Friends of Afghanistan, Institute for Afghan Studies

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Editorial

March 21 marked the year 1382 of Islamic solar calendar. Nowroz (New Year) has difference significance in Afghan culture. First, it is the first day of the year. Second, it is the first day of spring. Third, it is the equinox. It is one of the major festivals in Afghan culture. On behalf of Afghan Coalition and the whole Afghan community, I wish everyone a happy new year and peace for the world.



Farid Younos

News:

February 27: The second community wide dialogue was held at the Fremont Senior Center to discuss social issues and problems facing the local Afghan community. More than 60 community members attended this dialogue. During the 3 hour-long meeting, participants created a list of issues and recommendations for their resolution. The Afghan Coalition in collaboration with the Human Relations department of the City of Fremont and Partners for Democratic change will develop proposals to find the necessary resources to resolve these problems.

March 2: The Afghan Women's Association, International, in conjunction with the Women's International Network, held a fundraising reception at Zazoo's Restaurant in Oakland. This is part of the Calling the Circle of Women from the US and Afghanistan. They had a good turnout with wonderful food and entertainment. Rona Popal presented the history of women in Afghanistan showing their progress and accomplishments. Funds raised will be used to promote networking between Afghan and American women leaders.

March 6: The Afghan Coalition met with Shiyama Rickford, Director of External Affairs for SBC, to explore a possible grant to educate youth about domestic violence.

March 9: The Afghan Women's Association International (AWAI) and In the Name of God held an Afghan Cultural Faire to raise funds to support the Women's Training Center in Jalalabad. Food, music, drama and dancing were provided for the 150 attendees. Thanks to everyone for their hard work.

March 18: The Harvard Alumni consultants who have been working on strategic planning for the Coalition presented their findings to the board. Their recommendations are being implemented and strategic planning is continuing.

March 26: The Afghan Coalition staff attended a press conference organized by the Interfaith Freedom Foundation. During this press release, local elected officials from the Tri-city area and law enforcement officials emphasized their strong support for the interfaith communities and the policies of “zero tolerance” for hate crimes and harassment. Some issues related to public education regarding these issues were raised by Dr. Farid Younos which was extensively discussed by several officials. Dr. Waheed Momand gave an overview of the relationship between local government, law enforcement agencies and community and interfaith organizations which will help promote closer cooperation in fighting hate crimes and harassment.

Welcome

We are honored to welcome the Institute for Afghan Studies (IAS) as a new member to the Afghan Coalition (AC). The cooperation between IAS and AC will open a new chapter in Afghan community relationships and will promote collaboration for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. For more information about this new member organization, please check the Afghan Coalition website: www.afghancoalition.org

Afghan Coalition Activities for March

The Afghan coalition staff and volunteers helped: 5 families with school registration, 6 people to make doctor’s appointments, 6 people with social service needs, 25 people with translation problems, 8 people find housing and/or jobs, including assisting with home deposits. Counseling both in the office and during home visits was provided to 12 people. Additionally, on Friday March 14, an Ashura was held to commemorate the martyrdom of the prophet Mohammed’s, blessed be his name, grandson at Karbala; 45 people attended.

Of particular note, the Afghan Coalition staff successfully placed a mother with 3 children who arrived unexpectedly from Vermont. We were able to find them permanent housing, access social services and health providers and get the children registered for school within 3 days. We would like to thank International Rescue Committee for working closely with the Coalition to help this needy family.

The Stanford ACT Project is working with the Afghan Coalition on finance and fundraising. We would like to thank Mr. Seth Fearey and his group for their assistance in facilitating this collaboration.

Good News/Congratulations

We are happy to announce that \$1.5 million worth of relief supplies, including an ambulance, ultra sound, computers, baby bundles and a lot of clothes, has been finally shipped to Afghanistan. These supplies were collected by Assist International, Afghan Coalition, and Sunrise Rotary Club and the Department of Defense will transport these supplies to Afghanistan within a few weeks. We would like to extend a special thanks to Assist International and Sunrise Rotary Club for their hard work, persistence and dedication to this project.

The Afghan Coalition has received funding from the NCCJ as part of the September 11th Anti-Bias Project, sponsored by the Chevron foundation. This project is designed to promote cross-cultural unity through education and relationship building, stimulation of meaningful dialogue and increasing understanding and respect for local communities that have been victims of heightened discrimination after September 11th. We wish to thank NCCJ for their leadership in helping us perpetuate the ideals of justice and fairness in our community.

Announcement

The San Francisco Bay Area Friends of Afghanistan invites you to “Building Knowledge and Capacity in Afghanistan” on April 8th. This event is to celebrate their accomplishments, particular the training visit of Mr. Janbaz. Letitia and Milan Momirov have donated their home to hold this event: 2808 Vallejo Street, San Francisco. Event entry is \$30.00 and proceeds from this celebration will fund a 6-week training course for Kabul city planners. You can RSVP at www.Acteva.com.

Funding Needs:

The Afghan Coalition is seeking funding to bring modern COB housing to Afghanistan. COB housing uses an amalgam of earth, clay, sand, straw and water, hand worked into monolithic earthen walls that require no forms, cement, ramming, or machinery. There are 2 COB housing engineers willing to volunteer their time and go to Afghanistan to explore the feasibility of developing a program to train Afghans in constructing these houses. We need funding to send these 2 experts to Afghanistan. Interested in donating or questions, call (510) 574-2183.

We need volunteers

Afghan Coalition needs volunteers for a variety of domestic and Afghanistan based programs. Need skills include computer competency and organizational skills.

Here is how to get in touch:

The Afghan Coalition

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510-574-2184 or afghancoal@aol.com

Please check out our website for more information: www.afghancoalition.org