

# Green Village Schools

P.O. Box 80061, Portland, Oregon, 97280-1061 USA

[www.GreenVillageSchools.org](http://www.GreenVillageSchools.org)

Building Hope Through Education

## GVS DOCUMENTARY PREMIÈRES IN ALBUQUERQUE

In late April, Dr. Kharoti participated in the first showing of a documentary about GVS. This documentary is part of a Rock Creek Productions (of Asheville, NC) project called "Peace through Education." The film will focus on three rural schools in different parts of the world. The segment about GVS, called "Stealing the Light," premièred in Albuquerque, NM with promotion by local organization Project PeacePal.

Albuquerque is a city of rich arts and cultural history. It is a community that embraces diversity and warm-heartedly welcomes travelers. It is no wonder that the documentary about Green Village Schools was such a success in the community. The film was shown at the historic KiMo Theater located in the heart of downtown, a preserved treasure of the Albuquerque community from the 1920's.



Mira Kharoti, DMD, Aimie Burns, Homa Kharoti, & Rachell Shapiro at the Premièred

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## WHAT DO YOU SEE ?

I am often asked for pictures by organizations putting on programs in the US to further GVS' work in Afghanistan. This task is a bit daunting with hundreds of photos taken in and around Shin Kalay and Lashkar Gah mostly of the children and our school. When we look at the selected photos of impoverished youngsters what do we see? The photos might evoke different emotions if we focus on potential. So recently I find myself asking a new question: "If given the opportunity, what would the child in this photo become? A farmer? Engineer? Nurse? Artist? Midwife? Scientist? Writer? Mechanic? MD?" These children are just as capable of success as any other child in the world, if given the opportunity.

Dr. Kharoti is an example of what an education can do. From an illiterate family and tribe where the verbal tradition was still relied on, he became an MD thanks to the help of others. And what about his children? What would have become of them if not for Dr. Kharoti's and his wife's sacrifices to provide them with education? Would one daughter be applying to law school? Would his son be a doctor? Would another daughter be a dentist? Would his eldest daughter be an interpreter fluent in English, Pashto, Urdu, and Hindi?

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## MIAMI SCHOOL GETS INVOLVED

Over the years we have appreciated the involvement of several schools with GVS. It has been heartening to see the students' desire to help less fortunate children around the world. Most recently the 5th grade class of Alexander Montessori School in Miami, Florida decided to raise funds to support GVS' educational efforts in Afghanistan.



5th grade class

These fundraising events are an annual tradition at the school, with students choosing the charity they want to support. This year's theme is "We Are the World," which they felt was consistent with their own three mottos: "Help me to help myself," "Help me to help myself that I may help others," and "To learn to love to learn." This is all imbedded in their belief that people throughout the world have similar desires, including access to education.

With the support of the head master, Mr. James McGhee, the class decided on two fundraising events to be held on campus.

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## SEEKING EDUCATION

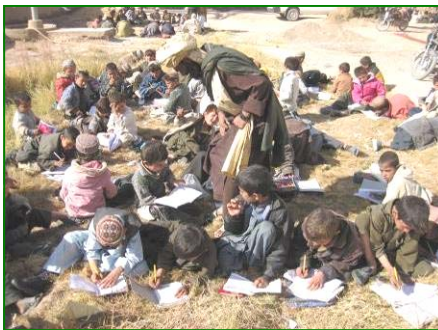
### New Boys' School in Shin Kalay

In the 1950s the US built a large mosque in the center of Shin Kalay as part of a larger development program. In 2008 when our school was destroyed, the large mosque and several smaller ones opened their doors as a temporary means to continue education for our students.



Student Enrollment

Demand soon grew beyond the capacity of the mosques and the elders decided that classrooms would have to be built to accommodate the growing enrollment.



Too many students  
Results in outdoor classes

The large central mosque in Shin Kalay had the land, was central to all, and was felt to be safe from vandals. Construction started, the mud-brick classrooms were completed, and enrollment soared to nearly 600 as of May.

The school, open only to boys, teaches grades 1 through 7 and follows the Government of Afghanistan's curriculum for general education. GVS continues to support this effort by paying the teachers' salaries.

In the long term we are thinking that the new school could provide coeducation for 1<sup>st</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup> grades and the original school could be re-built and enlarged to accommodate high school education for both boys and girls utilizing split sessions.

### Girls' Education Starts Again

Because the girls are excluded from the classes at the Mosques, classes for girls have started in homes. GVS is paying regular teachers to teach the girls and we expect enrollment to grow.

### Education Opportunity For "Older" Girls

A female teacher in Lashkar Gah felt that many women, who were too old to attend school, should be given the opportunity to learn to read and write.



Older girls learning  
to read and write

She quit her job at the public school and started teaching adult classes for women in Pashto, Farsi, and Arabic. GVS provided furnishings and other supplies for her classroom.

### Shin Kalay Advanced Girls

Several girls from Shin Kalay are continuing their education in Lashkar Gah. This fall, four of them will enter their senior year of high school. We are providing them with extra instruction so that they can excel in their college entrance exams. There are several girls in lower grades as well. GVS continues to support all of these students with room and board, extra classes in English and sciences, and safe transportation to and from the public school.

### News update:

Summer School  
for both boys and girls  
just started in Shin Kalay.

### Other Independent Studies

This widening desire for literacy is a radical break from the oral tradition people have relied upon for centuries. Since the destruction of our school, many children have found ways to continue the learning process by attending schools elsewhere.

- About 35 boys went to Kabul and attend two different schools there.
- The families of 20 girls moved to Lashkar Gah to attend public school. They are presently in grades 5 through 9.
- Several boys have travelled to Pakistan in pursuit of education.

We feel that our original school was the impetus for this change in priorities and a new expectation that education should be provided for all is growing.

## NOTE OF INTEREST

Misunderstood word: maddrassa/  
madrassa/madrassa/madrassah/  
madrassah.

This is an **Arabic word** which  
Webster's Dictionary defines as:

“A Muslim school, college, or  
university that is often part of a  
mosque.”

As such, most madrassas are  
involved with legitimate education  
of their students and are not centers  
for training radical groups, which  
all too often is the use found in our  
media.



*If you give someone  
an Education,  
no one can take it away,  
and it can be  
shared for a lifetime.*

## LASHKAR GAH ADVANCED EDUCATION CENTER DELAYED

We reluctantly have delayed the  
opening of the advanced  
education center in Lashkar Gah.  
Lack of funding to equip and  
furnish the center, and concern  
for the ongoing operating  
expenses, drove our decision.  
We are hopeful that before long  
funding will become available to  
provide advanced specialized  
education currently unavailable  
in other area schools.



## A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We are putting out a call to those  
who might like to join GVS as we  
expand our efforts. In order to do  
this, we are looking for volunteers  
to join us.

Help is particularly needed in these  
areas:

- **Research.** For those of you  
who like to find resources;  
associations, institutions, and  
funding sources which might aid  
with GVS' mission, we can put  
your skills to use
- **Organizing.** If you are the go-to  
person among your friends,  
someone who can organize a  
function and bring people  
together, GVS would appreciate  
your energy and verve
- **Writing and editing.** If you  
write stories, have experience  
working up press releases, or  
have a good eye for layout and  
editing, we would like to hear  
from you.
- **General teamwork.** Sometimes  
the most valuable help requires  
no particular expertise. We have  
lots of short term but essential  
projects like folding, stamping  
and preparing mailings, or  
cataloging our hundreds of  
images, or indexing GVS'  
archives as well as a dozen other  
projects to help further our  
mission. If you like working side  
-by-side with others, GVS has  
plenty to do.

Volunteer work toward GVS's  
mission can be tremendously  
fulfilling. If you are interested in  
working with us, you are welcome  
to use the enclosed envelope to let  
us know your name and contact

information (address, telephone  
number, or email), or email us at  
[Jeannie.B@greenvillage-  
schools.org](mailto:Jeannie.B@greenvillage-schools.org)

One of our coordinators will follow  
up to discuss opportunities.

Hundreds of children in  
Afghanistan can read and write  
because of the dedication of  
volunteers. The work is fun and  
rewarding. Although sometimes  
hard, it means so much to so many.



## Green Village Schools is a non-religious and apolitical 501(c) (3) Charity.

We support private schools which  
are free to anyone who wishes to  
attend. These schools follow the  
Afghan government's curriculum  
although additional classes in  
computers, English, and sciences  
may be added.

We support other educational  
opportunities so long as they are  
consistent with our guidelines.

Donations are deductible  
under U.S. Federal Tax Code.  
Please consult your tax advisor.

Questions or Comments may be  
addressed to:

[Info@GreenVillageSchools.Org](mailto:Info@GreenVillageSchools.Org)

- Or -

Green Village Schools  
PO Box 8006I  
Portland, Oregon 97280-106I USA

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## GVS DOCUMENTARY PREMIÈRES

As the warm sun slowly approached the horizon, the theater's grand doors opened, welcoming guests to the Friday night première of *Stealing the Light*.

Over three hundred guests filled the lobby and strolled through neatly arranged tables of local and international art pieces. A line began to form along the lobby's back wall and wrapped clear around the hallway as the savory and mouth watering aroma of Afghan cuisine filled the air. Among the guests were the film's production team, from Rock Creek Productions Inc., and a few members of the cast and board of directors of Green Village Schools.

After a social hour of enlightening conversations about Afghanistan's educational system, guests were ushered to their seats. The film began with a powerful look into how Dr. Kharoti's struggle of illiteracy was over-come by the opportunity to attend primary school miles away from his home. It followed with an inspirational story of how he realized there was still a need for schools in rural areas and the journey in which he vowed to accomplish that goal.

The film was followed by a musical performance from the world-renowned oud virtuoso and Grammy nominee Rahim Al-Haj. The eventful evening progressed with an \$8,000 check given to Green Village Schools from the audience's donations. It was an amazing ending to a wonderful beginning.

GVS hopes to see this documentary shown at theaters and schools nationwide.

*This film will be shown in  
Portland's Bagdad Theater on  
September 22nd at 7 PM.  
Tickets are available at the  
theater, the Crystal Ballroom,  
or Ticketmaster. Tickets may  
also be purchased at the door,  
if they are not sold out.*

This debut would not have been so memorable without all of the planning and coordination by Sarah Wilkinson from Project PeacePal. Green Village Schools is also thankful to Amie Burns' team at Rock Creek Productions Inc. for putting together such a powerful film.

Finally, to all donors of that evening and prior, the organizations efforts in planning, building, and sustaining the schools are a result of your generous contributions.

Homa Kharoti  
Member of the Board



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## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Now I see the pictures of the children in Shin Kalay as those of individuals who, if given the opportunity, will become the leaders of a new country in which decades of war can be a thing of the past. Without education there is little chance the conflict will end.

In a land where those alive today have never known anything but conflict, providing fundamental education for everyone is not just a nice thing to do; it is the key to providing hope for a life without conflict, for a better living standard, and for their children's future.

You, the supporters of GVS, are doing just this. Progress has appeared to be slow at times, but significant advances in reducing illiteracy have been achieved and continue today. Your efforts are already bringing hope to the people of rural Afghanistan. The literacy rate is rising quickly and fewer are cultivating opium, but there is much yet that needs to be done. Yes, this "war" is winnable with your help. You can help build hope through education by joining us as we pursue educational opportunities for the children of rural Afghanistan.

Now when you look at the photos, I hope you too will see untapped talent.

Kent F (Rip) Van Winckel,  
Exec. Dir.



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## MIAMI SCHOOL GETS INVOLVED

The first was a game night open to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their siblings. It was an astounding success and there are thoughts of continuing this event in future years. In early June they also held a Sports Day fundraiser.

We appreciate the \$3,582.50 of donations raised for GVS, and we admire the maturity of these young students as they work to help others who do not have the same advantages. Certainly these are the children we should admire the most in our schools, and who will hopefully become the future leaders in our own society.

Our gratitude and congratulations to the children and staff at Alexander Montessori School.

