



Young dancers in traditional costume,
'An Evening in Afghanistan 2010'

JEWELS FOR SCHOOLS to raise money for education in Afghanistan

"The current status of education is a tragedy and if some deliberate measures are not taken soon, then catastrophic illiteracy could threaten the coming generation."

Qais Maher Aian, Steering Committee Member, Balkh Provincial Education Department.

According to the Afghan constitution, education is free from primary school through to university.

However, education across Afghanistan, including in Balkh Province (home of Mazar-e-Sharif) is characterised by a serious lack of books, stationery, tables, chairs, and inadequately educated, inexperienced and underpaid teachers.

Schooling may take place in tents, even in 40 degree heat, and in some areas children attend school in shifts and have a two-hour 'school day', due to lack of resources.

Proceeds from the Auburn Uniting Church's Jewels for Schools will enable the Mazar Development Fund to begin its work in the area of education.



Support the development of education in Mazar-e-Sharif and replenish your jewelry box at the same time!

The Auburn Uniting Church is holding a huge costume jewelry sale (also known as a 'bling fling') on Saturday, April 30 at the church hall. All proceeds will go to improve educational opportunities for children in the Mazar-e-Sharif area.

The jewelry will be amazingly varied, plentiful and sold at very reasonable prices. The church tower will be open for wonderful views of the city and surrounding

suburbs. Food for morning and lunchtime snacks will be available, as well as freshly made scones for afternoon tea.

Please come and bring your friends. We want to sell everything and need lots of buyers. If you'd like to make a donation of jewelry, please drop it off at Najaf's shop at 461 High St. Prahran ASAP!

JEWELS FOR SCHOOLS!

**Saturday, 30 April 2011,
10am to 4pm**

**Auburn Uniting Church, 81
Oxley Road Hawthorn**

After a long period of negotiations, Najaf will head to Afghanistan in May to purchase our first ambulance!



STOP PRESS



Mazar Development Fund

*"We say this about our women:
an uneducated father is a pity,
but an ignorant mother is a
tragedy"*

- Najaf Mazari: The Rugmaker of
Mazar e Sharif



Najaf, Hakima and Maria Mazari with Andrew Wilkie MP & Afghan Ambassador Dr Amanullah Jahoon

An Evening in Afghanistan 2010

- Rod Parnall

On the evening of October 23rd 2010 a grand celebration was had by nearly four hundred people to celebrate the culture and people of Afghanistan. Welcomed by the Master of Ceremonies, Mr Arnold Zable, the evening commenced with the introduction of the Ambassador of Afghanistan, His Excellency Dr. Amanullah Jahoon who spoke about Afghanistan and thanked the people of Australia for their continuing support for Afghanis. This was followed by the recently elected independent, Mr Andrew Wilkie MP, who spoke passionately of his determination to change the situation for asylum seekers coming to Australia.

MDF Founder Najaf Mazari then addressed the audience, giving an overview of the aims of the Mazar Development Fund and to give an update on project initiatives, particularly actions taken to secure an ambulance for his home village near Mazar-e-Sharif.

The Mazar Development Fund aims to raise financial and practical support for health and education programs in Mazar-e-Sharif. Through partnerships with local and international non government organisations that work with local communities in Mazar, the Fund seeks to improve available health services and educational resources. The major project at the moment is the funding and provision of a fully equipped ambulance, which will be purchased by Najaf during an upcoming trip to Afghanistan in May 2011.

This year's fund raising will continue to support the upkeep of the ambulance and to fund new educational resources and opportunities for the Mazar region.

A sumptuous main meal followed finger food which set culinary expectations for the curries, subzi and chalu that followed. The kitchen was abuzz, with aromas emanating into the main hall. The waiters, in traditional costumes, were made up of former Afghani refugees who chatted to the guests as they served the food. The food was completed with hearty servings of angel noodle pudding and cardamom tea.

Traditional Afghan music and dancing punctuated the evening air with much enthusiasm from the children as they performed in traditional costume. The musicians came from across the Afghan community in Victoria and their expertise and skill brought a heightened appreciation of Afghanistan as a culture, place and people.

By 11.30 the last of the guests spilled out into the St Kilda night air, the rather large task of clearing up began. Every person who attended has made a direct contribution to the people of Mazar-e-Sharif. This event was a wonderful opportunity for already Australians, newish Australians, about to be Australians and new arrivals to share the joys of music, food and dance for an excellent cause.



Right: Andrew Wilkie MP with a young Afghan guest during 'An Evening in Afghanistan'

6 things...

...you might not know about Afghanistan

1. Afghanistan's area is 647,500km² Its population is around 29 million, and it shares a 76km border with China!
2. It is rich in natural resources ...including natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, uranium, iron ore, salt, precious & semi-precious stones.
3. Afghanistan has the world's highest infant mortality rate... More than 1 in 4 Afghan children die before reaching their fifth birthday.
4. English shares linguistic roots with Afghanistan ...including words such as alcohol , balcony and candy!
5. Afghanistan is among the poorest countries in the world More than 53% of the population lives day to day below the poverty line.
6. Afghanistan's national dish... ...is Qabuli Palau, a delicious rice and meat dish topped with fried raisins, slivered carrots, pistachios.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MAZAR DEVELOPMENT FUND!

Support MDF in its work towards increasing access to education and medical care in Afghanistan.

www.mazardevelopmentfund.org.au

