



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

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**OVER 1600 PARTICIPATED TO END GLOBAL POVERTY AT
HOOVER PARTNERSHIP DAY ON OCTOBER 4, 2008**

Hoover, Alabama, October 4, 2008 – Over 1,600 people participated on October 4, 2008 at Hoover Partnership Day to demonstrate their support for international cooperation at Veterans Park in Hoover, Alabama. [Partnership Day](#) is an event organized by Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A (AKF USA) and its a network of volunteers in communities across the United States, to involve young and old in a compassionate effort as global citizens in building bridges of hope that reach across boundaries of race, religion, creed, age and gender.

Partnership Day brought together families, friends, students and leaders in government, business, media and the arts for a day of learning activities, fundraising and culturally diverse performances. Partnership Day raised over \$95,000. **100% of donations and all net proceeds from the Partnership Day go directly to the projects supported by the Foundation.** No contributions are used for administrative costs. Over the past 14 years, 250,000 have participated in PartnershipsInAction activities across the U.S. raising \$29 million.

The keynote speaker, Tony Petelos, Mayor, City of Hoover proclaimed October 4, 2008 as the Aga Khan Foundation Day. He presented Ms. Anita Parpia from AKF USA with the key to the city of Hoover. The mayor praised the many citizens of Alabama who truly care about building a safer, healthier and more prosperous world saying “Partnership Day is an example of Americans taking action locally that leads to progress around the globe.... By investing in people and strengthening their capacity to build a better future for themselves, you honor them and respect their dignity.” Charles “Scotty” McCallum, mayor of Vestavia expressed pride on being part of such a fantastic initiative. He acknowledged the energy and commitment of the youth. Other distinguished guests included Mr. Bill Powell, Executive Director, Hoover Area Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Mark Edwad LaGory, Chairman Department of Sociology, University of Alabama at Birmingham; and Dr. Kathy Wheaton, Principal, Berry Middle School; among others. The program of entertainment celebrating the diversity of world cultures was hosted by Hanif Jooma, volunteer for the SouthEast Regional team of AKF USA.

The 2008 theme for Partnership Day, “*Planting Our Future*,” spotlighted the extraordinary success, expansion and impact of Aga Khan Foundation’s rural support programs, initiated in northern Pakistan in 1982 and expanded to nine other countries. The story of the AKF’s rural support programs brings to light the power of partnerships and reflects the Foundation’s enduring commitment to community participation and grassroots democracy. It embraces the time-tested principle of helping people to help themselves.

One of the most inspiring highlights of Partnership Day was the ***Village in Action***, where participants had an opportunity to experience first-hand the challenges faced by people in the developing nations and how AKF through partnerships with other agencies creates solutions to overcome the challenges of low income, poor health conditions and limited educational opportunities.

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An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

At the School of Hope exhibit, participants learned about the Foundation's Milk and Hope program, a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide milk as an incentive for students in isolated regions of Afghanistan and Tajikistan to attend school providing nourishment for the mind and the body. The Building Hope exhibit highlighted the challenges faced by communities in rural areas. Participants were challenged to travel through rough terrain (where tires posed as potholes) to transport bricks for construction. Participants "bitten" by children dressed as mosquitoes had to rush to the Reviving Hope hospital – where they learned about malaria and other diseases, and the solutions implemented by the Foundation to successfully combat preventable diseases. Children at the Village Well shared the importance of access to clean drinking water and how many around the world do not have access to the very basic necessity of water that Americans often take for granted. At the Microfinance Maze (which also doubled as an Art Gallery showcasing art submissions by Hoover Middle school students) visitors learned (at their own pace) how microfinance can empower people and spark economic activity. Wandering through exhibits, participants got a taste of the cultural traditions and the innovative ways Aga Khan Foundation is alleviating hunger, disease, illiteracy and poverty.

A stage program throughout the day featured a multicultural mix of music, dance and performances including Latin salsa and Western rodeo by Vulcan Performers, Irish dance by Celtic Alabama Dance and break dance by a Korean student group.

Partnership Day as well as other Partnerships*InAction* activities are initiatives of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. Partnerships*InAction* represent AKF USA's growing portfolio of programs including Partnership Walk, Partnership Golf and Tennis Tournaments, Softball Classic, corporate and professional networking events, film screenings, essay and art competitions, among many others.

Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., established in 1981, is a private, nondenominational, nonprofit international development organization committed to the struggle against hunger, disease and illiteracy. The Foundation works to address the root causes of poverty by sharing innovative solutions and by supporting over 100 programs in health, education, rural development, civil society and the environment primarily in East Africa and South and Central Asia. Using community-based approaches to meet basic human needs, the Foundation builds the capacity of community and non-governmental organizations to have a lasting impact on reducing poverty.

The Foundation is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (www.akdn.org), a network of private, non-denominational, development agencies around the world, established by His Highness the Aga Khan to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, improve living conditions and opportunities. The overarching goal of the Network's programs is to help poor communities achieve a level of self-reliance whereby they are able to plan their own futures. His Highness the Aga Khan is the Founder and Chairman of the Board of Aga Khan Foundation and 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion and its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable of society.

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