



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**4,800 WALK TO END GLOBAL POVERTY AT
DALLAS PARTNERSHIP WALK ON OCTOBER 4, 2008**

Dallas, Texas October 4, 2008 – Over 4,800 participated today in the Dallas Partnership Walk, an annual event held in five major cities across the U.S. The Walk is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) and organized by its network of volunteers across America to raise awareness and funds to alleviate global poverty and promote partnerships between America and the developing world. Nationwide, over 30,000 are anticipated to take part in Partnership Walk in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston and Los Angeles.

The 3-kilometer Walk at Dallas City Hall Plaza 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. Teams from corporations, universities, schools and community organizations took a step to demonstrate their support for ending global poverty. Dallas Partnership Walk raised over \$340,000. **100% of funds raised at Partnership Walk 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.

In a heartfelt address to the crowds, Jody Dean, radio anchor, 98.7 KLUV Morning Show said “Everything around us is not really our own. If you believe that anything really belongs to you I invite you to take a very deep breath and hold it forever. You can’t do it; eventually even you have to give your own breath of life back.” Acknowledging that we are merely stewards and custodians of the resources we enjoy in this country, he continued: “While giving thanks for these amazing blessings, it is our responsibility to share them with others wherever and whenever we can. That is what the Aga Khan Foundation is about ... to be generous, kind and thoughtful of our fellow human beings.”

Dignitaries toured interactive exhibits on site that showcased the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.’s innovative solutions for reducing poverty in Africa and Asia. Distinguished guests included Mayor of Carrollton Ronald Branson, Plano City Council Member Pat Miner, among others. The program of entertainment celebrating the diversity of world cultures was hosted by media celebrities Bob Ray Sanders, Vice-President/Associate Editor and Metro columnist of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*; Brad Hawkins, WFAA news anchor; and Seema Mathur, reporter, KTVT. Visit the Partnership Walk website at www.PartnershipsInAction.org/walk.

The 2008 theme for Partnership Walk, “*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.

... Over

An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

One of the Walk's most inspiring features was the *Village in Action*, through which participants of all ages engaged in interactive activities to learn how people in developing countries overcome the challenges of low incomes, poor health conditions and limited educational opportunities. Participants took part in exhibits as if they are traveling to Afghanistan, East Africa, India, Pakistan and Central Asia to see how the Foundation is creating hope and opportunity in poor and often remote regions.

To highlight this year's theme, "Planting Our Future," *Seed City* focused on microfinance and the innovative ways Aga Khan Foundation is alleviating hunger, disease, illiteracy and poverty. Young people from Dallas participating in Seed City attended pre-Walk workshops to become skilled in making their own handicraft products and learn about microfinance. On site they set up booths marketing self-made handicrafts and wares just as if they were entrepreneurs in Africa or Asia. *Sprout Town* introduced the youngest Walk participants (2 to 10 years old) to the concepts of hope, caring and sharing. The Chai Khanna gave participants a taste of the cultural traditions. Reflecting the theme for Partnership Walk, "Planting Our Future," the symbolic seed planting activity engaged visitors in learning about the impact of the Foundation's rural support programs through personal stories from Africa and Asia.

Partnership Walk 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 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.

For further information, please contact:

Mr. Rafiq Lakhani, Media Coordinator for the Dallas AKF USA Volunteer Team
(214) 293-2809 email: rafiq.lakani@gmail.com

Ms. Martha Sipple, Communications & Public Affairs Officer, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.
(202) 293-2537 or cell: (202) 203-0838