



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**6,000 INCLUDING GOVERNOR ROD BLAGOJEVICH
WALK TO END GLOBAL POVERTY AT
CHICAGO PARTNERSHIP WALK ON AUGUST 24, 2008**

Chicago, Illinois, August 24, 2008 – Over 6,000 participated today in the Chicago Partnership Walk, an event held annually 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, which will be held in Atlanta, Dallas, Houston and Los Angeles throughout October and November.

The 3-kilometer Walk at Millennium Park 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. Twenty-four teams from corporations, universities, schools and community organizations took a step to demonstrate their support for ending global poverty. Chicago Partnership Walk raised over \$250,000. **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.

Addressing the crowds at the opening ceremony, **Illinois Governor Rod R. Blagojevich** remarked, “You are actually doing more than just talking about addressing poverty, you are actually doing something about alleviating poverty...and I’m looking forward to joining you in not just doing the talk about poverty, but both literally and figuratively doing the Walk.” The governor toured interactive exhibits on site that showcased the Aga Khan Foundation’s innovative solutions for reducing poverty in Africa and Asia. Following the Walk, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, a long-time supporter of Partnership Walk, stated, “if there are individuals out there who need some assistance, it is through the support of Aga Khan Foundation and this Partnership Walk that we speak to fellow men and women to realize their dreams and improve their quality of life.” Other distinguished guests included Illinois State Representative Elaine Nekritz, Cook County Commissioner Tony Peraica, Mayor of Skokie George Van Dusen, President of the Village of Morton Grove Richard Krier, among others. A program of entertainment celebrating the diversity of world cultures was hosted by media celebrities Karen M. Jordan, anchor/reporter, ABC 7 Chicago; Micah Materre, anchor/reporter, WGN News at Noon; and Rehan Aslam, FOX News Chicago producer. 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

1825 K Street, N.W., Suite 901, Washington, D.C. 20006
Telephone: (202) 293-2537, Facsimile: (202) 785-1752, Email: info@akfusa.org
www.akdn.org

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. All around the Walk site, participants took part in exercises and exhibits as if they were 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. 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. The Jesse White Tumbling Team gave an electrifying performance, as they have each year since Partnership Walk began in Chicago in 2003. Other performances included Hip Hop Connexion, dancers from Xilin Art Center, Irish dancers from Rebecca McCarthy School of Dance, drummers from Malaysia and dancers from the Thai Cultural and Fine Arts Institute of Chicago.

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:

Ms. Anar Ladhani, Media Coordinator for the Chicago Partnership Walk Team
(773) 317-6022

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