



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

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27,000 AT PARTNERSHIP WALK IN ATLANTA, CHICAGO, DALLAS, HOUSTON AND LOS ANGELES HELP TO ALLEVIATE GLOBAL POVERTY

WASHINGTON DC, OCTOBER 29, 2006 – Approximately 27,000 people participated in Partnership Walk today, a national public event in five major U.S. cities, raising approximately \$3.4 million to help alleviate global poverty. Partnership Walk is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) and organized by its network of volunteers in communities across the United States.

Partnership Walk raises awareness and funds to help communities in some of the most impoverished areas of Africa and Asia create long-term solutions to poverty. **One hundred percent of the funds raised go directly to projects supported by the Foundation.** Costs for organizing the Walk are completely underwritten by AKF USA and in-kind contributors. None of the funds raised are used for administrative costs.

Since 1995, Partnership Walks have attracted 212,000 participants and raised \$26.3 million for health, education and rural support programs to improve the lives of the most vulnerable, especially women and children. Walks are also organized internationally in over 20 cities throughout Canada, United Kingdom and European cities. Visit www.partnershipwalk.org.

Partnership Walk brought together families, community members, students and leaders in government, business, media and the arts for a day of learning activities and entertainment. Speakers included U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (IL); U.S. Representatives Al Green (TX), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), Jan Schakowsky (IL), David Scott (GA), Pete Sessions (TX); and Texas Secretary of State Roger Williams and Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White; among other mayors, council members and civic leaders. News anchors and reporters from network news stations served as Masters of Ceremonies hosting a program of music, dance and performances celebrating the diversity of world cultures.

At the *Village in Action*, participants engaged in interactive activities to learn how people in developing countries create solutions to overcome the challenges of low income, poor health and limited educational opportunities. In recognition of AKF USA's 25th anniversary, the *Village in Action* showcased the Foundation's quarter century of achievements in health, education, rural development, microcredit and community organizations. Exhibits and hands-on demonstrations were planned and designed by youth from local schools and universities, whereby they gained a deeper understanding of global citizenship.

The theme for Partnership Walk 2006, "**Diversity is Strength**," highlighted the Foundation's community-based approach that values pluralism as a cornerstone for building international peace, security and development. The Foundation invests in people to help impoverished communities seize the opportunity to move toward greater choice and voice. By promoting quality education, improving health care and placing tools for economic empowerment into the hands of people, the Foundation helps them build the skills necessary to lead self-sufficient, healthy and dignified lives.

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An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

AKF USA, established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, non-profit international development organization committed to alleviating poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy in countries such as Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Tanzania. AKF USA 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. The Foundation supports 140 programs in 16 countries for the common good of all citizens regardless of gender, origin or religion. The geographic focus of the Foundation's programs is in East Africa and South and Central Asia. It works in partnership with other institutions dedicated to international development including the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. State Department, World Bank and private foundations and corporations, such as Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Johnson & Johnson.

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