

December, 2016.

AFGHAN EMBASSY GATHERING FOR AFGHAN DIASPORA



Mrs. Nillab Pazhwak and Ms. Hannah Hopkins participated in the dinner event hosted by the Afghan Embassy in Washington D.C on January 14th, 2016. This was a welcoming initiative by his Excellency, Ambassador Mobeen, who wanted to meet with the various Afghan agencies in the area and encourage partnerships beneficial to the nation building efforts within Afghanistan. A-AWA took the opportunity to network with other community-based organizations and expressed willingness to be part of any follow up actions.

A-AWA GRAND OPENING GATHERING

AAWA's Board of Directors and members gathered for a grand office opening on March 13. The volunteers formed groups to identify the community needs and sign up for committees. Unfortunately, this space became unavailable in a few months due to its sponsor/owner withdrawing his offer. For information on volunteering and internship opportunities, please email shalee2009@yahoo.com



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A-AWA HOSTS SUGHRA HUSSAINY, TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN

In March, 2016, A-AWA President, Mrs. Shahla Azizi hosted artist Ms. Sughra Hussainy, who was one of the guest participants at the Turquoise Mountain Exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC.



Mrs. Sughra and her fellow artisans are skilled to create intricate jewelry, tapestries, and pottery which was on display at the museum this spring. Read more about the exhibit here: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/women-artisans-transforming-afghanistan-major-booster-former-first-lady-180958523/?no-ist>

A-AWA VISITS US INSTITUTE OF PEACE (USIP)



On March 15, A-AWA Board Member, Ms. Hannah Hopkins was in attendance to a panel discussion at USIP where former First Lady Laura Bush spoke on women's progress in Afghanistan. Several advocates for women's rights were also in attendance including education rights activist Ms. Sakena Yacoobi.

Read more about the event here: <http://www.usip.org/publications/2016/03/16/laura-bush-urges-sustained-support-afghan-women>

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A-AWA PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

In April, A-AWA's President Ms. Shahla Azizi spoke alongside Ms. Alicia Shepard, Senior Press Liaison in Kabul for USAID and former NPR journalist, at "The Untold Story of Women in Afghanistan:" a conversation on international women's rights at the American University.



The event took place to support female craftsmanship in Afghanistan. Read more about the Afghan Rug Project here:

<http://www.theeagleonline.com/article/2016/04/restoring-womens-rights-in-afghanistan>

A-AWA VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

Ms. Mariam Rusta, Ms. Malal Nezam and Ms. Neelab Yousefzai were formally recognized as Ambassadors of Peace. Thanks to Ms. Fawzia Etmadi's support to nominate these ladies as A-AWA volunteers. Our volunteers continue to lead the way in our community as messengers of peace and charity. Thank you all A-AWA volunteers for your tireless efforts!



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GOLD CUP FUNDRAISER



On May 7, some of the A-AWA members attended The Gold Cup Race as a fundraiser for A-AWA. Thanks to Ms. Shahla Azizi arranging this effort. The race is a time-honored tradition in Northern Virginia gathering over 50,000 people yearly.

To get involved with A-AWA fundraising, email shalee2009@yahoo.com or visit our website: <http://a-awa.org/how.html>

A-AWA PRESIDENT PANELIST AT INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT

On July 10 and 11, A-AWA President Shahla Azizi sat on the panel of The International Summit to End Sexual Violence at Fordham University in New York. The Summit addressed sexual violence in communities, on college and university campuses, and in K-12 schools. Shahla spoke from years of experience as an advocate of women's rights and wellbeing. She joined researchers, authors, activists and experts on sexual violence incidence from around the world.

A-AWA CELEBRATED EID WITH THE NEW REFUGEE FAMILIES

A-AWA celebrated Eid Fiter on July 10th, 2016 together with around fifteen new refugee families and community members. Participants enjoyed networking and socialization with A-AWA members and volunteers. Children enjoyed activities such as: face painting, crafts, tree house games, henna, Snow-cones, moon bounce and received Eidee at the end of the event. Everyone was greeted by the A-AWA board members. A-AWA would like to thank Dr. Homaira Behsudi in particular for offering her beautiful house to host this warm gathering. Thanks to all A-AWA volunteers



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for their help in organizing this event from invitations to decoration, refreshments, and cleanup.

A-AWA WELCOMES NEWCOMERS IN INTERFAITH EID GATHERING

The Afghan-American Women’s Association, in collaboration of LDS volunteers under the leadership of Ms. Donna Doll, welcomed over 200 guests to an Eid al-Adha potluck dinner celebration on September, 17th this year. The participants shared a meal and enjoyed various cultural activities including appreciating Afghan trade and craft and games for kids. This event is part of a wider effort to connect newcomers to community resources, and promote interfaith events.

A-AWA is looking forward to more collaboration with the LDS volunteers who were so generous to the refugee families in offering their time, compassion and professional services. A very powerful event!

Very big thanks to Ms. Tricia Gallagher, A-AWA volunteer, for her efforts to make this possible. A-AWA would like to thank all its volunteers who made this possible and the LDS church for the event space.



If you want to become more involved with A-AWA, please email us at shalee2009@yahoo.com, or send us a message on [facebook.com/supporta-awa](https://www.facebook.com/supporta-awa).

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A-AWA HOLDS LIFE & COPE TALK SERIES

A-AWA launched its Life & Cope talk series in its effort to promote mental health awareness and coping mechanism sensitive to the community needs. The Afghan community is facing multiple challenges like any other growing and productive community trying to find its place in society. A-AWA believes it is critical to identify those issues and



discuss them openly and seeking for solutions. The events on April 10th and September 25th, especially addressed some of the social and emotional issues within the Afghan Diaspora community. With open and honest discussions, we can thrive as a community ready to face the real challenges

and prevent our members (youth to seniors) from feeling helpless or making wrong decisions.

The panels have included a number of speakers: Dr. Homaira Behsudi-Wali (Vice President – AAWA, Founder of Vienna Integrative Healthcare, and a board-certified member of the American Academy of Family Physicians), Dr. Nahid Aziz (Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at Argosy University) Mrs. Suraya Sadeed (Founder and former Executive Director of the Help the Afghan Children), Mrs. Mariam Rashid (Chair of Annual Afghan Arts and Culture Festival-the largest Afghan-American event) and Mr. Mulwand Gulban (Deputy of Advocacy for the Alliance in Support of Afghan People). Hannah Hopkins moderated the discussion. Special thanks to Dr. Homaira Behsudi-Wali for her leadership role in this project.

A promotional poster for the 'Life & Cope' talk series. At the top is the AAWA logo with the word 'PRESENTS' below it. The main title 'LIFE & COPE' is in large, bold, orange letters. Below the title is the subtitle '"A BREAKTHROUGH IN HEALING ANGER"'. The event date and time are 'September 25 2016 // 2:00-5:00 pm'. The entry fee is 'Free entry for members! // Non-members \$10'. The location is '6140 Rolling Rd. Springfield, VA 22152' and the RSVP email is 'aawaevents@gmail.com'. Below this information are three small portrait photos of the speakers: Dr. Homaira Behsudi-Wali, Mrs. Suraya Sadeed, and Dr. Nahid Aziz. Each photo is accompanied by a short bio. At the bottom right of the poster is the website 'a-awa.org'.

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STARS OF A-AWA RECOGNIZED FOR DEDICATION AND SERVICE



A-AWA recognized three dedicated volunteers, Mrs. Nabila Sarwar, Rohina Baseer Panah, and Mrs. Masooda Baluch, during the Life and Cope Talk Series on September 25th, 2016. These volunteers have played an important role in making A-AWA a successful community organization that continues to survive through its volunteer role models. Their dedication is critical in bringing the community together and strengthening bonds of friendship and the spirit of giving. We are grateful to them and to all

of our selfless volunteers.

To get involved with A-AWA as a volunteer, email shalee2009@yahoo.com or visit our website: <http://a-awa.org/how.html>

COAT DRIVE 2015

In October, 2015, A-AWA hosted a coat drive to support Syrian Refugee aid efforts. The coat drive was in coordination with another local group. The team collected and shipped over 25 boxes of coats. Special thanks to Ms. Masooda Baluch and Ms. Rohina Baseer Panah for leading this project.



A-AWA SETTLEMENT SERVICES TO REFUGEE FAMILIES IN NEED

A-AWA has continued to manage a number of cases referred either by the refugee resettlement agencies or through the community. A-AWA has been able to form engaged group of volunteers who have selflessly offered their time and resources to help whether

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with families facing major health issues, or in need of guidance on housing, job search, translation, transportation, referrals to available resources, home visits and supportive counselling. A-AWA has closely worked with a number of refugee resettlement agencies forming partnerships to coordinate services. Special thanks to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington (CCDA) for their partnership with A-AWA to welcome and assist new Afghan refugees. Special thanks to Ms. Nillab Pazhwak for her leadership role, and enormous assistance offered by Ms. Mariam Rusta, Ms. Rohina Baseer Panah, Ms. Farzana Panjshiri, Ms. Nabila Sarwar, Ms. Mariam Rashid, Ms. Malal Nezam, Ms. Neelab Yousefzai, Dr. Hosai Hesham with a number of other volunteers in managing these cases.

Arranged by Ms. Nillab Pazhwak (Board Member), Ms. Hannah Hopkins (Board Member), and Ms. Alaha Ahrar (Director of Media and Publication).

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