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ZAKATNEWS

The Leader in Empowering Lives through Zakat



ZAKAT
FOUNDATION
of AMERICA



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Our Mission: Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) is an international charity organization that helps generous and caring people reach out to those in need. ZF fosters charitable giving to alleviate the immediate needs of poor communities and to establish long-term development projects that ensure individual and community growth.

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Cover: Plane used to fly Libyan refugees home to Chad &
Newly arrived refugees at Camp Ras Jdir on Libya / Tunisia border

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Twenty Years in Making: *Keeping my promise to a little girl named Gulshan*



Khalil in Haiti assisting with relief

Assalamu Alaykum,
Peace and Blessings be Upon You,

By the grace of God (*blessed be His name*), Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) is celebrating its tenth anniversary in service of humanity. It has been ten years, masha'Allah! We have served our community, Muslim-Americans, our country—the USA, and humanity at large. We are grateful to our Lord, Allah (*blessed be His name*) and our beloved donors for enabling us to do this. I would like to share my thoughts about why we do this work.

In 1991 after the first American/Iraqi war ended and created millions of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDP), I went to a refugee camp in Iran at the Iraqi border to provide humanitarian aid. There were millions of Kurdish refugees, among them thousands of children. Children are a fountain of joy. That is so even in refugee camps. Whenever I arrived in the camp, the children would gather joyously, ignoring their conditions, to see if uncle, as they called me, had candy for them.

One child I encountered in this camp was a beautiful girl named Gulshan. She was 7 years old and was always the first to run to me. Her pretty face and beautiful dark eyes resembled her name Gul=Rose, Shan=Joyful. When time came for me to leave, I went to the camp to say goodbye to everyone. Gulshan was sad and ready to cry. I asked why she was so sad. She looked deep into my eyes and asked, “When you leave who is going to take care of me?” All these years Gulshan’s look and words never left my mind or my heart. I promised myself that I would never forget Gulshan or other children like her. ZF is a continuation of that promise I made twenty years ago.

Today all around the world, little girls and boys reach out for a hand to wipe away their tears. I think of the children of Afghanistan, Bahrain, Chechnya, Libya, Pakistan, Palestine, Kashmir, Somalia, and Yemen. I think of the men, women, elderly, and the poor and needy of the world.

Zakat is third pillar of Islam. It is an obligation. ZF is a collective endeavor to use Zakat to empower lives. We believe the real heroes of this organization are our beloved donors, volunteers, and supporters. On behalf of our board, staff, field officers, and beneficiaries, I thank our supporters from the bottom of my heart for their generosity. I thank them for being part of my promise. The collective work brings collective reward, I pray Allah (swt) reward them all.

We ask our Lord (swt) to give us wisdom, strength, and patience to fulfill our duty in the best of our ability and enable us to serve Him (swt) and humanity in the many years to come.

Kind Regard,

Khalil Demir

Khalil Demir
ZF Executive Director

Taking Libya-Crisis Refugees Home:

ZF Charters Flight for Migrant Workers from Chad

Since the start of the crisis in North Africa, 500,000 people have fled the turmoil in Libya. Many received help from governments and NGOs to return home, yet thousands of refugees remain stranded at Libya's borders without the means to go home. They are left wondering how long they will have to endure the living conditions of refugee camps.

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF), in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), is helping refugees stranded by the Libyan crisis return home.

In March 2011, ZF chartered a flight for 178 Chadians, including many families, to return to Chad. The refugees had been stuck at the Libyan-Egyptian border for

several weeks. ZF supported their air travel from Marsa Matrouh Airport, just over the Libyan border in Egypt, to N'Djamena International Airport in the central African country of Chad.

ZF's Program Coordinator on the Libyan-Egyptian border calls the situation of most refugees at the border a "tragedy." The camps are overwhelmed, and are no longer able to provide adequate housing for the 5,000 refugees in the area.

Many of the refugees fled Libya, leaving "everything behind [even] their passports and identity cards." Then they found themselves abandoned and without hope at the border. But ZF's team worked tirelessly with Egyptian officials to prepare the temporary legal documents that would allow the Chadian refugees to fly home.

An estimated 1.5 million Sub-Saharan Africans worked in Libya. These vulnerable people who fled Libya without resources, will continue to need assistance as the conflict persists. Other migrant workers, from countries as diverse as Egypt, Bangladesh, and the Philippines also need help to go home.

Please rush your donation in the attached envelope or donate via our website, zakat.org, to help us shelter, feed, provide health care and transport refugees and internally displaced Libyan civilians during this crisis. ■

Libyan Refugees in front of bus that will take them to the ZF flight home to Chad



Ceaseless Relief Work in Libya:

Ship Full of Humanitarian Relief Goods Delivered Much Needed Aid to Misrata

As crisis envelopes Libya from its east to its west, Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) teams continue to provide vital assistance in the country. One of its latest efforts to bring humanitarian aid to Libyans included the shipment of food and medicine to the city of Misrata.

In cooperation with the Maltese Ambassador to the US, as well as ZF's local partner in Malta, humanitarian goods were packed on a ship that used a humanitarian aid corridor to deliver much needed supplies to civilians in the battered city of Misrata. The goods included rice, pasta, sugar, tea, baby milk, baby food, cooking oil, bottled water and medicines.

Misrata, Libya's third largest city, saw heavy fighting between the rival forces vying for control of the city. As a result, access to basic necessities has been severed and services such as water and electricity have been turned off by government forces.

The shipment of humanitarian goods to Misrata is a part of ZF's comprehensive response to the crisis in North Africa. In



addition to that vital shipment of humanitarian relief goods, ZF has been consistently providing assistance to the Libyans and the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers affected by the crisis.

ZF is committed to staying on the ground in Tunisia and Libya until the humanitarian crisis ends. We appreciate our donors' generous support for our work in the region. ■

Above: ZF Shipment of food, water, and medicine from Malta to the besieged city of Misrata, Libya

Below: Refugees in line for food at camp on Libya's border with Tunisia

Hatim M. M. Salih:

Letter from a Refugee

Service in this camp seems very, very good and transparent in terms of receiving people and number of caterers and volunteers. Volunteers are trained well in treatment and management of temporary refugees. The camp renders a high quality of determination, accommodation and food services and above all the high spirit they continuously offer to those in need. Also they provide Health safety and security, polite management and serious administration.

We have been surprised by this type of humanitarian activity. Through our deep experience we found the team to be amazing with sound generosity from the entire workers. After being pushed in circumstances of war in Libya we came to Tunisia so intimidated. Within 12 hours we were in Ras Jdir in a different spot in this camp where our children became safe and happy for all the above reasons. We were embraced and really comfortable. ■

*Hatim M. M. Salih
Sudanese / Activist
Activist Journalist
Theatre / Actor - Director stage*





The Experience of a Registered Nurse in Refugee Camp at the Libya/Tunisia Border

*Above:
ZF rep. Saoussen
(left) with Suad, a
Sudanese resident
of Camp Ras Jdir*

*Right:
Donna C. Neil
sorts medical
supplies at ZF's
health clinic for
refugees*

*Zakat Foundation of America (ZF)
has a team in Ras Jdir Refugee
Camp to assist with humanitarian
efforts. One team member, Donna
C. Neil, recounts her experience.*

I arrived at Ras Jdir Refugee Camp, approximately 500 meters from the Libyan border. The camp is highly visible and accessible to all who are fortunate enough to cross the border into Tunisia. As I worked I often heard gunfire coming from inside Libya.

Our daily routine consists of assisting new refugees by providing them with basic needs and to transfer them to other

camps like Shousha. The number of refugees in our camp has increased from 800 to 2,800.

We constantly work to comfort refugees and the approximate 200 families here. We provide hot meals and water, medication, and sanitation facilities to both Ras Jdir and Shousha camp residents.

At Ras Jdir we met Sister Suad who offers very few complaints, she is a kind and patient woman. Suad is a professor who taught at the University of Tripoli in Libya. When war broke out, she along with her husband and three children left Libya for the Tunisian border.

"Life in the Ras Jdir refugee camp is nothing like life in Tripoli, but this is life", Suad says, "We all will be tested and we must be patient."

Not everyone is as lucky as Professor Suad. For many refugees, like those from Somalia and the Ivory Coast, there is no possibility of returning home due to civil unrest in their home countries.

It is true working in a refugee camp is stressful, but it is also rewarding. I experienced both sadness and joy aiding in Ras Jdir. The great satisfaction of providing 13,000 hot meals for

those in need and of meeting great sisters like Professor Suad. She became our friend and has invited us to visit her in Sudan. I will never forget the smile of children here. They do not understand our language but they truly touch our hearts.

Soon my assignment here will be finished. I will leave but my life experience will stay with me forever.

When I leave, someone else from ZF team will come to replace me as ZF is committed to staying as long as there is a need.

ZF is providing aid in many locations to alleviate pain and suffering of victims of the Middle East Conflict. We all must do our share. Pray for our sisters and brothers. ■

~ Donna C. Neil, RN. BSN.





Mohibo Hussein explains why ZF's daily water delivery has helped her family survive drought

Horn of Africa Drought Relief: *Water Saving Lives and Giving Hope*

Before Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) began its water deliveries to drought stricken Ethiopia, Muhibo Hussein, a thirty-nine year old mother of five, ventured out each morning with a group of women to look for water. They traveled an average of fourteen miles daily for water.

People in several regions of Ethiopia struggle to survive in the midst of yet another drought. Poor rains, especially in the Somali and Oromiya regions of Ethiopia, led to water shortages that threaten tens of thousands of people. According to the United Nations, the unavailability of water for consumption adversely affects the nutrition of people in the area, as well as their livestock.

ZF made it a priority to provide people in the most affected areas with water. In March 2011, ZF, along with its local partner, arranged daily deliveries of water from a tanker to families. Many people showed up at distribution points. At least 8,400 people in twenty villages benefited from the daily water distribution. This includes six healthcare facilities and eight schools.

ZF's recent drought relief water distribution in Ethiopia is a part of a Horn of Africa drought campaign through which ZF has also built water wells for needy communities. ZF is committed to addressing water safety and shortage issues troubling poor communities around the world. ■

Clean Water Keeps Cholera Away: *ZF Distributes Water Filters in Port au Prince*

Gaining access to water for drinking, farming, and bathing was a big problem for most Haitians before the 2010 earthquake. More than a year after the Earthquake, Haiti struggles to fight the spread of Cholera, a water-borne disease that killed 4,627 people and infected 248,442.

In March 2011, Zakat Foundation of America launched a program to improve water quality for Haitian families. Each family received a five gallon capacity water filter which could purify up to 30 gallons of contaminated water daily. ZF served 150 families with these water filters. ZF hopes to distribute thousands of water filters throughout Haiti. ■

Web Exclusive: Read more about this project at zakat.org.



ZF's Haiti representative explains to media how the water filters work

Relief Containers Arrived to Pakistan to Aid Flood Victims



Above : Mother and Child in Muzaffargarh, Pakistan receive relief goods from container shipped by ZF

In the summer of 2010, flooding engulfed Pakistan. In addition to taking the lives of more than 2,500 people, the floods caused severe destruction of property, livelihoods and internal infrastructure, affecting nearly 20 million people.

In the fall of 2010, Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) sent the second of three containers to Pakistan. The container was packed at ZF's warehouse facility with hygiene products; medical supplies, wheel chairs, and crutches; along with clothing for children and adults, blankets, and bicycles.

In January 2011, the container arrived in Pakistan. After receiving the items ZF's local partner sent teams out to conduct surveys of various flood affected areas. The goods were then distributed to needy flood victims in several villages in the district of Muzaffargarh.

More than six hundred people and their families in Muzaffargarh benefited from the goods distribution. Many families were grateful to receive warm clothes and blankets just in time for the brunt of winter. The disabled population in the area welcomed the crutches and wheelchairs.

ZF is committed to assisting the most vulnerable communities throughout Pakistan with relief and development programs that promote self-sufficiency. ■

Volunteers unload container with relief goods shipped by ZF to Pakistan



Sri Lanka Flood Victims Receive Crucial Help

In December 2010, heavy rains caused severe floods and landslides in Sri Lanka that affected nearly one million people. High water levels ruined crops, contaminated wells and reservoirs, and cut off many towns and villages.

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) responded to the flood by providing immediate assistance to 50,000 vulnerable families on the East Coast of Sri Lanka. Many of these people were victims of the 2004 tsunami and were rebuilding their lives. ZF, through its Sri Lankan local partners, supported several communities, especially displaced people living in camps, with much needed food, safe drinking water, and bedding. This was in addition to providing water pumps to help victims to

remove water from their flooded homes. Thousands of homes suffered partial damage while more than a thousand were completely destroyed.

Later, ZF distributed dry ration food packages to flood victims in remote villages. More than 150 families benefited from the distribution. The families in this area earned their livelihoods from farming and fishing, and suffered substantial setbacks due to the severe flooding. In addition to feeding these vulnerable families, ZF also provided assistance to help the residents rebuild and repair partially damaged houses.

ZF has been active in Sri Lanka for several years, helping the impoverished gain access to education, quality housing, and relief from natural disasters. ■



A child watches as a yellow water pump provided by ZF removes water from his flooded home

USA – Chicago, IL

- SUSA Institute offers education and training courses to students.
Read more on zakat.org
- Social Services: Food aid for at-risk communities, p. 14.



KEY

■ Countries we currently have on-going programs.

■ Countries we proudly serve.



Haiti, p. 6

- ZF provides thousands of water filters to families.
- Filters are made in Haiti thereby supporting the Haitian economy.
- Filters clean up to 30 gallons of water a day.



Bolivia, p. 10

- In Feb 2011 hundreds of homes were destroyed in a mudslide.
- ZF distributed food, water, and clothing to affected people.



Middle East Crisis, pgs. 3 – 5

- ZF's Camp, Ras Jdir, at Libyan/Tunisian Border provides refugees fresh meals daily.
- ZF arranged a shipment of food and medical supplies to besieged city of Misrata.
- ZF, with UNHCR and IOM, arranged the return of refugees back to Chad.

Afghanistan

Read more on zakat.org

- As a part of its Afghanistan Education Campaign ZF provides education sponsorships for 400 students at Universities around the country.



Ghana
p. 11 & 15

Horn of Africa p. 6

- ZF responds to the drought that affects millions.
- In March, ZF delivered daily water by tank to villages, clinics & schools.



Japan
p. 10

Pakistan
p. 7

Bangladesh
p. 12 – 13

Sri Lanka
p. 7

Kenya
p. 15

Zambia
p. 11



Volunteers unload mattresses ZF provided to Bolivian mudslide victims

Aid to Bolivian Mudslide Victims

In late February 2011, hundreds of homes in the South American, country of Bolivia were destroyed after strong continuous rains caused massive mudslides and landslides in the city of La Paz. An estimated 6,000 people lost their homes and most of their possessions due to the destruction caused by mudslides, which occurred in multiple places across the city.

Many of the survivors of the mudslides were made homeless and were forced to begin their lives again from scratch. That is not easy, especially because the mudslides affected primarily low-income neighborhoods where the poor lived in fragile houses built on steep hillsides.

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) pledged early to provide relief to the victims of the mudslides who were living in tent camps. ZF's representatives went to the camps to distribute much needed food, clean drinking

water and clothing to the needy residents of the camp. Among the residents, many included elderly, pregnant women, and children. In addition, ZF provided mattresses for the most vulnerable in the camp.

Bolivia is one of the poorest and least developed countries in South America with 30 percent of its population living on less than two dollars a day. The poor tend to suffer the most from the weather related disasters like mudslides that occur in the country. Often they have few resources or assistance to help them rebuild. ■

Mother & child, Bolivia ZF relief distribution



When the Earth Shook:

Getting Food and Supplies to Japan Earthquake/Tsunami Victims



A volunteer in Japan carries food for Earthquake and Tsunami victims

On March 11, 2011 just hours after a destructive earthquake and tsunami caused massive damage and loss of life in Northern Japan, Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) deployed a team of five people to the country. ZF team surveyed the damage and provided aid to victims. ZF received an email from the Japanese embassy in

the USA thanking ZF for the initiative it was taking to help the Japanese people.

By the next day, ZF's team reached the affected area

and was in the city of Sendai. Once there, they were able to visit people displaced by the earthquake and tsunami at the locations where they were placed by Japanese authorities. This included school buildings, convention and sports centers being used as shelters.

ZF representatives worked with local partners to prepare packages that could be distributed to the displaced victims in the areas of Miyagino, Wakabayashi, Miyagi-ken Yamamoto-chou, as well as within Sendai. These packages included water, instant noodles,

biscuits, and onigiri (Japanese rice cakes). Other packages included rice, powdered milk, tea, fruit, clothes and baby diapers. The relief packages were given to local Japanese officials. The Japanese Self Defense Force, who assisted in distributing them to the evacuation centers, provided them in areas with the greatest need of assistance.

ZF's relief work in Japan is ongoing. It is committed to alleviating the duress of the needy in Japan during this time of devastation. Your charitable donation will help us to be successful in this work. ■

Sustainable Development: *Pass-on an Animal Program in Zambia*



Goat herd

In July 2010, nine Zambian families were entrusted to carry on a Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) program. The program was called Pass on an Animal, which lasted for 6 months. ZF

purchased thirty three goats and distributed them among nine families.

The purpose of the program was aimed towards empowering the resource poor households who could not afford to manage their own livestock. The beneficiaries (*the nine families*) would have to pass off the off-spring to

other community members so they could continue breeding and passing off livestock to the rest of the community.

A series of activities took place to equip the nine families to complete the project successfully. An education tour was arranged to help the families understand how to implement the program. The families visited a nearby village that completed a similar program. The most valuable lesson learned from the nearby village was how to continue the program once the sponsorship ended. Through cooperation and formulation of community by-laws, the livestock herding flourished, improving incomes and food security.

To ensure all challenges and questions were addressed, ZF required monthly planning and review meetings for the purpose of discussing issues concerning goat management and planning activities. Each participant presented on goat management in order for veterinary officers to review the beneficiaries understanding of goat herding while self-assessing the officers education and training approach. ZF's Pass-on an Animal program served to give the community much needed resources. And through community initiative to educate others and continue the program since ZF's program sponsorship ended, ZF has empowered the community. ■

Planting Better Futures: *ZF Supported Cassava Cooperative in Ghana*

Abiba Yukubu, age 38, is a member of the cassava cooperative. She says that joining the Zakat Foundation of America's (ZF) cooperative has helped her greatly because she is now able to afford schooling for her six children.

Cassava is a hardy plant that plays a crucial role in the lives of millions of people in Ghana because it is a key source of carbohydrates. Cassava can remain in the ground for up to two years, and needs relatively little water to survive.

ZF supports a cooperative of ten women who farm and process cassava in the village of Jamam. The women transform the cassava into gari, a staple food in the region. Due to its popularity, the processing and selling of gari is a good business initiative. ZF is helping the women of the cassava cooperative to move out

of poverty and towards self-sufficiency through its micro-credit program.

Initially, the women bought the cassava from local farmers and then sold the gari they made for profit. They have been able to acquire a small piece of land where they farm the cassava themselves. They hope to use future profits to expand the farm. They also hope to purchase a grinding machine that will help to facilitate the gari making process.

ZF's micro-credit program mobilizes people from disadvantaged communities, encourages them to employ their talents, skills, and initiative for the betterment of themselves and their community. We hope that our donors will support this program generously. ■



Members of ZF Cassava Co-op processing Cassava into Gari



To Their Health: *Bringing Quality Health Care to the People of the Hazaribag Slums of Dhaka Bangladesh*

Nur Jahan, age 78, is a regular patient at the Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) clinic where she receives treatment for her chronic problem of recurring muscle pain and headaches. She lives with her son who works as a gardener. They use his meager salary to pay the rent for their slum dwelling and to cover their monthly expenses, but they usually limit their food consumption. It is rare for Nur Jahan to eat a full meal in a day, and so the free medical care offered by the clinic is true treasure.

Dr. Parvin Sultana, Assistant Professor at the Sohrawardy Medical College Hospital, Dhaka, has offered the ZF Clinic her services since its inception. She says “I thank Allah for giving me this opportunity. I am very happy that I am working for the poorest people of Bangladesh.” Dr. Parvin says that most patients live in unsanitary conditions, and suffer from the diseases that arise from such conditions such as severe skin diseases and stomach ailments. But she can see that day by day their conditions are improving due to them having access to long term continuous treatment at the ZF clinic.

In 2009 ZF opened a health clinic in the Hazaribagh slum area of Dhaka, Bangladesh in order to address the poor health conditions of the poverty stricken community, especially mothers and their children. According to the United Nations, Bangladesh’s maternal mortality rate is among the highest in the world. Numerous studies link the substandard social

condition of women in Bangladesh to their poor access to education and health care.

ZF’s clinic provides poor women and children with medical consultations, health advice, immunizations, and medication for a nominal fee of 10 Bangladesh Takas (BDT); the equivalent of 14 cents that is charged in order to relegate overcrowding for the clinic’s high-demand services. A high number of patients at the clinic suffer from conditions brought about by a lack of prenatal care, access to immunizations and malnutrition.

Each month the clinic provides services to an average of 375 patients many of whom struggle to simply eat a single meal on a daily basis and do not have the funds to pay for medical services. ■

Above: Patients waiting to enter ZF’s Clinic in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Below: Dr. Sultana checking Nur Jahan’s blood pressure



How your Donations Change Lives: *Making a Place for Grace*



Grace (with son on her back) hangs one of her designs to dry

Since 2009, Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) worked with a local partner in Nairobi, Kenya to support, safeguard, and provide vocational training for unaccompanied refugee girls. Due to continuing

instability in the region of East Africa, vulnerable girls and young women primarily from Somalia, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi seek refuge in Kenya.

Fleeing horrifying situations of war and personal loss, many of the girls arrive in Kenya

without family or friends. ZF supports a safe house, where the most vulnerable can stay while they heal and try to get their lives back on track. The house provides a peaceful environment and emotional support for the residents.

ZF also supports a seven month tailoring program in which the girls are trained with the knowledge and skills required to allow them to become financially self-sufficient once they leave the program. One successful graduate of the tailoring program, who was also a resident of the safe house, is a young woman by the name of Grace. Grace is originally from Mlenge, Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2009, rebels killed her father while attacking her town. She was separated from the rest of her family and was taken

hostage by several men. Grace arrived in Kenya after having escaped from her captors who had assaulted her. As a result, she arrived in Kenya pregnant and without a support base. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) referred her to ZF's local partner who assisted her and accepted her into the safe house and eventually, the tailoring program. Today, she is a successful graduate of the tailoring program and is part of a collective that allows her to use her skills to support herself.

Grace is among the first of the girls in the ZF supported program to transition into independence and she continues to serve as a living example of how hope can be restored to other refugee girls. ■

Abu Yusof: An Orphan's Academic Success Story

Orphaned children are the most vulnerable people in a society. At Zakat Foundation of America's (ZF) Orphan Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh, special care is given to help children live lives as close to "normal" as possible.

Abu Yusof, who is 12 years old, came to the ZF Orphan Center four years ago. His father died when Abu was one years old, and poverty drove him to work as a house servant at a tender age. He came to know of the ZF orphan center and gained admission. Shortly after his admittance, he lost his mother in a car accident.

Despite all his personal setbacks, Abu Yusof has excelled academically. He is now in the sixth grade and ranks top of his class. He aspires to become a teacher to help others learn.

Recently, Abu Yusof's school arranged a picnic where it recognized the academic achievement of students in high standing as well as achievements in sports and extra-curricular activities. Abu Yusof was excited to attend the picnic where he won two prizes. In total the children from the ZF Orphan center received thirty-three awards, nearly one-third of all that were given out by the school.

ZF's Center is home to thirty-two orphaned boys from different areas of Bangladesh, ranging in age from five to their early teens. The Orphan Center provides a home and secure environment. Children receive support and assistance from experienced teachers and care-givers to help with their homework and day-to-day problems. ■

Abu Yusof (center) at school awards ceremony



Food Aid Program to at-Risk Communities in Chicago

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) has served at-risk communities in Chicago since its launching in 2001. The need for food programs in at-risk communities becomes dire as the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) presented alarming statistics on hunger in recent years. According to the USDA, in 2009, over 50 million Americans, including over 17 million children, were food insecure or didn't have the resources to obtain enough food to live healthy lives. The studies show the rise in grocery costs left many to resort to purchasing expired food or visiting food pantries. Studies have also shown that since the recession, more people fall under the poverty line.

In January, ZF increased its efforts by providing food assistance in a designated neighborhood monthly. ZF provides nourishing, hot meals and new clothes donated through its clothing drive. The program focuses on feeding the homeless and low-income families indiscriminate of religious affiliation. Through the program over a hundred individuals. The community sees ZF volunteer in their Islamic attire and respects them in spite of their faith. Many volunteers were greeted with, Assalaamu Alaykum, Peace be upon you, by community members. One volunteer noted, community members recognize the faces of volunteers and remember the customs.

In the upcoming months ZF will collaborate with local mosques in these communities and further expand its efforts by establishing a second location for food and clothing in the Westside of Chicago. ■



ZF staff and volunteers distribute cooked food and fruit to needy seniors

Zakat Foundation of America ED New Board Member of ARISE Chicago



Learn more, visit
arisechicago.org

Zakat Foundation of America Executive Director, Khalil Demir, was inducted as a new member of the Board of Directors of ARISE Chicago in March 2011. He was appointed for his commitment to relief work as well as his advocacy for workers' rights.

ARISE Chicago, formerly Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, was founded by Monsignor Jack Egan, Rabbi Robert Marx, and United Methodist Bishop Jesse De Witt in 1991 under the guidance of Ms. Kim Bobo who went on to found the national group, Interfaith Worker Justice.

With knowledge that the basic tenets of all faith

traditions support the rights of workers, Arise Chicago organizes the religious community to bring about just resolutions to workplace injustice.

When workers wish to form a union, they are often met with intimidation and harassment. Arise Chicago organizes religious leaders through its Faith and Labor Solidarity program to support workers seeking unionization. Arise has recovered over \$4.6 million in stolen wages and compensation.

The Board of Directors consists of representatives from all three programs, with an Advisory Board of prominent religious leaders in the Chicago area. ■

An Act of Sadaqa Jariyah: *Building Mosques for Needy Communities*

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) helps its donors extend the life of their good deeds through its Sadaqa Jariyah Program. Sadaqa Jariyah is perpetual charity, a benevolent act whose benefit extends beyond the lifetime of the person by whom it was performed. ZF donors are able to contribute to the long term needs of impoverished communities around the world by supporting projects to build schools and mosques, or dig wells where need exists.

Currently, our donors are in the process of building two mosques for needy communities in Ghana, West Africa and Kenya, East Africa. Both communities have struggled for years with poor quality buildings, but lack the resources needed to build better structures.

In Jugboi, Ghana, the current mosque can no longer accommodate all the members of the community. In Samulia,

Kenya, the building that is being used as a mosque was erected more than twenty years ago; it has a leaking roof and many other structural problems.

ZF invites all of its donors to consider contributing any amount towards Sadaqa Jariyah projects that will be used towards constructing and renovating mosques, orphanages, schools, and clinics.

The rewards are endless. ■



Left: Workers placing minarets on top of mosque in Southwest Kenya

Below: Workers in Southwest Kenya pose on top of recently completed mihrab (niche in wall of mosque that indicates direction of Mecca)



What Are the Forms of Sadaqa?

They are countless.

The Prophet said:

There is a charity to be given for every joint of the human body each day upon which the sun rises. To judge justly between two is a charity. To help one mount one's beast, or by lifting one's bags on to it, is a charity. To speak a good word is a charity. Every step to the Salât-Prayer is a charity. To remove an impediment from the road is a charity. (Bukhârî, 3:870)

He said also:

A Muslim plants or sows nothing from which a person, an animal, or anything else eats, save that it is a charity for him (Bukhari, 3:513).

The Prophet is teaching us that an act of charity need not come in the form of monetary value. God has commanded Muslims to enjoin good and forbid evil so as to uphold human society. The simplest deeds that help people are the practical fulfillment of this commandment. ■



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