

# *News from Afghanistan for Friends of Khorasan*

UK Registered Charity No. 1081438

Issue No. 4 –2006

- **Founded in 1999 and initially funded personally by Seema Ghani, who lived and worked in London for 12 years. Seema returned to Afghanistan in May 2002 when Khorasan relocated from Pakistan to Kabul**



***FROM THIS TO THIS***



**This issue gives profiles of some of the children that show the reasons why they are with us and describes their aspirations. You will see that all the children have suffered almost unimaginable horrors but through gentle encouragement, love and support they are working towards their ambitions and have already made great achievements.**

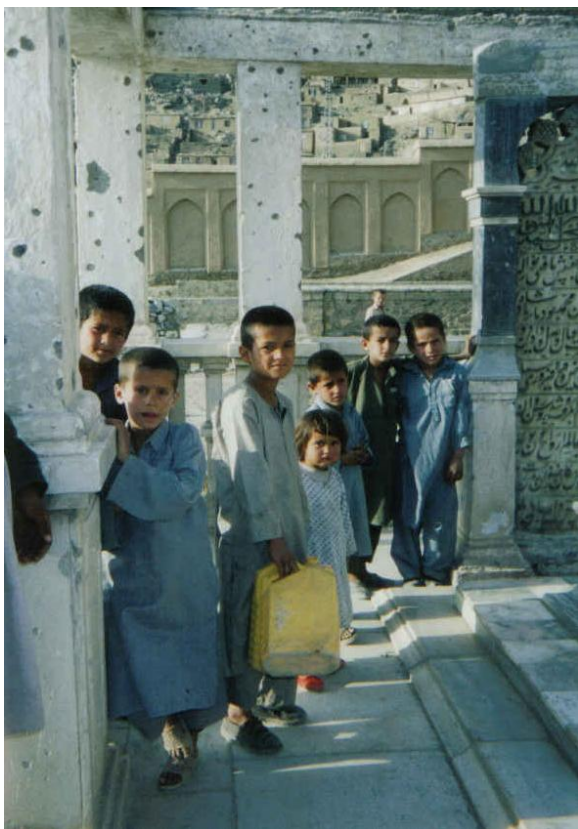
**As always we struggle to get enough funds and the need for money is even more acute at this time of year when the cold of winter is already biting and the long freezing months are still stretching ahead. Thank you again for all your wonderful efforts to help us. Please write to me at [Afghanlinks@aol.com](mailto:Afghanlinks@aol.com) if you would like a personal reply or update on our work.**

## The Children of Khorasan – Origins, Aspirations and Achievements!



*Safe and Sound*

The children of Khorasan are now assured of a safe and loving environment in which they can thrive. Take a look at the picture below of some children in Kabul during the Taliban regime.



*Life under the Taliban Regime – Kabul 2001*  
© Jeanne Bryer

A recent survey showed that two out of every three children interviewed had seen someone killed during the fighting in Kabul and seven in ten had lost a close relative to violence. Khorasan's children have all suffered trauma of the kind that the survey described. No child anywhere in the world should have to endure this kind of experience.

Many young people are left to fend for themselves in the dangerous streets of cities at risk of being preyed upon by dealers in the human organ trade.

But Afghanistan's children are its greatest hope for the future. This is why so much of Khorasan's effort is centred on helping the children to make the most of their talents. They are encouraged to learn as much as they can, to explore new ideas, to have confidence that they can achieve their ambitions. This issue gives some insights in to these young people's dreams.



*Khorasan House under Seema's Care –  
also in Kabul - 2006*

### PROFILES

Lina is now 17 and has a great talent for judo – an opportunity almost unheard of for a young woman in Afghanistan. At her school in Kabul her teachers were so impressed that they asked her to teach them – so now she is teaching the teachers! Lina's ambition is to become a pilot one day because her father always wanted to fly but never had the chance. When he was killed in an explosion Lina decided she would like to live out her father's dream. Lina is a serious and hard-working girl and says that if it was not for Khorasan she would never have achieved anything.

Maryam aged 14 is a quiet girl who likes to design and make clothes for the other children. We aim to find funds to enrol Maryam at a Design Centre so that she can develop her talent and interest. Maryam was ‘sold’ by her father when her mother died but no one knows why he resorted to this desperate act. A man she lived with started paying her inappropriate attention when she was 9 years old. Fortunately, the man’s sister intervened before any serious abuse had taken place and took her to Khorasan.



*Life at Khorasan House - Flower garden  
Kabul - 2006*

Ajmal is 13 now and came to Khorasan at the age of six. He was in a refugee camp in Pakistan with his family. One day Ajmal saw his uncle kill his father during a dispute; shortly after, he witnessed the suicide of his mother who took her own life rather than submitting to the fate of having to marry her husband’s murderer. Ajmal appears to have adjusted well and is impeccably behaved and respectful to everyone. He loves to learn and works hard at his education and on the computer. His sister Dua also witnessed the deaths of their parents. Dua was only 4 years old at the time and although she is beginning to recover she needs specialist care for the long-term and constant reassurance that everyone she loves is safe.



*Life in Jalozai Refugee Camp – Peshawar –  
2000 - © Jeanne Bryer*

Sosan and her sister Nilofar came to Khorasan House in 2004. Their mother died at child birth and their drug addict father could not care for them. Sosan and Nilofar are happy and healthy children now but were severely malnourished when they first arrived. They lived in a container with their father but there was no food as he spent any money he had on drugs. People living nearby who had been displaced due to the war shared some of their own meagre rations with the children. It was this act of selflessness that prevented the children from starving to death.



*Food for a week for a family of 8 – Jalozai  
Refugee Camp – © Jeanne Bryer*

## **Seema's Story - One Afghan Woman's Struggle to Care for Orphaned Children as her Own**

In 1999, Seema Ghani, opened an orphanage in Peshawar to care for children from the poorest places, many from the Jalozai refugee camp, well known for the atrocious conditions prevailing there (see pictures on page 3 taken of children in the camp). Seema funded the orphanage largely from her own salary in the UK where she had lived since her parents moved there to provide their own family with a secure environment.

In May 2001, I traveled with Seema to Kabul, where she had decided to live again having been inspired like many of us with the dream of reconstructing Afghanistan. We wanted to be part of this historical moment, the genesis of a re-born nation where all the people would have access to basic services and fundamental human rights. With hope in our hearts, the orphanage – known as Khorasan House (Khorasan means land of the sun) was moved from Pakistan to Kabul so that the children could grow up within their own culture and country and be proud to be Afghan. Much has happened since that time. Seema was a prominent figure in the new Karzai government, having a crucial role as the Director General – Budget and working closely with Dr Ashraf Ghani the previous Finance Minister. When Dr Ghani left the government and became Chancellor of Kabul University, Seema, left too as she did not wish to work in the ministry without him. Since then Seema has worked as a consultant on various projects. Throughout, Seema has continued to support Khorasan, living in the same house as their mother, and with a handful of unpaid volunteers has striven to raise funds to look after her family.

Since 2002 and those hopeful days, security has worsened again and hopes are fading. The situation even in Kabul is now difficult for the children's safety and services are still bad with electricity erratic and costs of fuel and rent stratospheric. Major onors are not keen on funding small charities preferring to put their money into high visibility projects. This means that small 'homes' like Khorasan are often ignored and now that Seema is no longer 'high profile' she is not drawing the publicity for donors that some expect. Consequently we constantly struggle to raise funds to look after the children. They are 'our' children and come what may we will look after them until they are able to support themselves.

- Khorasan is a small charity that cares for children in Afghanistan whose parents are either dead or who have no means of looking after them.
- Before being cared for by Khorasan, all the children had suffered loss of relatives, their homes and security.

You can help the children too by:

- Sending a donation
- Sponsoring a child
- Contribution by direct debit
- Local fundraising

Donations can be made to:

**Account name: Khorasan**  
**Bank: Natwest**  
**Bank Address: 520 High Road,**  
**Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7BZ**  
**Branch Sort Code: 60-23-08**  
**Account Number: 77550366**

