

# ASPIRE

A Quarterly Publication of OBAT Helpers



## *Expressions of the President*

Dear Friends,

Peace and greetings of spring be unto you!

I am happy to share the first words for OBAT's new quarterly newsletter, "ASPIRE," with you.

OBAT has completed 5 years of struggle and success. In this time, we have accomplished several projects, of which I am proud to share with you the high self-empowerment rate achieved in our education and micro-financing projects. Up to this date, we have been able to provide basic education to thousands of kids and also help hundreds of youth for college and professional education.

I travel every year to Bangladesh to visit our forgotten brothers and sisters. My recent visit marked a milestone for the journey of their progress. At the Rangpur tutoring center, I asked the students about their future plans and almost 60% of them expressed interest in becoming a doctor, lawyer or other professional. This is a big change compared to my first visit in 2004 when mostly due to lack of resources, there was almost no concept of higher education. Similarly, when I met a couple of families in Syedpur who have been empowered through our micro-financing projects, I was amazed to see the changes in their lives. The women in these families were not only successful in establishing, profitably maintaining and improving their businesses but some of them have also bought land and are planning to build their first homes. Meeting with the youth and self-empowered women was evidence of our vision becoming a reality. By the grace of God, this is just the beginning; there is a long way to go, and the only way to make it is with your help and support.

I wish you all peace, health and love,

Regards,

*Anwar Khan*

(President OBAT Helpers Inc.)

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### *In the Pipeline....*

Always looking for ways to increase the living standard of the stateless and unfortunate Biharis, OBAT aims to launch a new project for the literacy of children and women living in the camps of Syedpur. At the end of the proposed three year term of the "Non-formal Education Project", 900 women will have acquired basic math, accounting and banking skills; and 900 children will be able to enter the mainstream education system by acquiring basic elementary school education. The skill-based knowledge will empower the women to own and run their own businesses.



On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, OBAT shared an evening with some of its friends. Anwar and Azher Khan, the president of OBAT and the president of SOL respectively, were keen to share details about their recent trips to Bangladesh. The event was attended by distinguished citizens of Indianapolis who were very generous with their support. Funds were raised through donations by the attendees as well as a silent auction and a raffle drawing. The event highlighted Anwar Khan's recent trip to the Bangladesh camps. He shared his experience with the audience through a moving film and an equally heartrending and inspiring speech about his encounters with the destitution that plagues the people residing in these camps for more than 39 years. Among other things, Azher Khan spoke about meeting the camp children; his talk about his experiences was very touching and made the tragedy very palpable.

### *Farewells and Welcomes*

OBAT would like to welcome the newest additions to its team. We are proud to have them as our representatives and believe they will be true assets to the organization. The new members are:

**Dr. Talha Siddiqui:** Our new vice-president, Dr. Siddiqui, served as the Chief of Anesthesia at Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Canada until the year 2005. After that and until 2007, he worked as an Interventional Pain Anesthesiologist at Rappahanock General Hospital. He is currently an Anesthesiologist and Interventional Pain Specialist in Fairfax, VA. Dr. Siddiqui is also a permanent member of APPNA and DOGANA.

**Charlie Wiles:** OBAT's new secretary, Charlie Wiles, is the Director of International Interfaith Initiative. He is also the Managing Director of the Center for Interfaith Cooperation (CIC) which is a collaborative project. Charlie has also served as the founding director of Peace Learning Center from its inception in 1997 until August of 2003.

**Sue Krebs:** Sue is joining OBAT as its new treasurer. She works as the controller/treasurer for Nachi America and also operates her own accounting firm, Krebs and Associates. Krebs and Associates provides accounting services to OBAT.

**Tipu Ahmed:** Tipu is a business consultant with more than 14 years of experience in business development, project management and event planning. He has participated in a number of successful business projects globally as well as in the United States.

**Tabassum Ahmed:** Tabassum has over ten years of teaching experience in multiple disciplines. She holds two bachelor degrees, one in mathematics/statistics and another in children education programs. She has a passion for working with charity based organizations and also runs her own clothing boutique.

We also had to bid farewell to some of our esteemed board members. Their efforts and contributions were highly valued and instrumental in graduating OBAT from a fledgling organization to a mature and growing one. OBAT would like to acknowledge the efforts of its retired board members, Dr. Aisha Zafar; Lennie Myers; Mehnaz Qureshi and Carleen Miller.



### ***OBAT Schools at a Glance***

School	Number of students	Number of teachers	Grades taught
Ferozeshah, Chittagong	80	2	KG-I
Khalispur, Khulna	157	6	I-V
Sardar Bhadur Nagar, Chittagong	439	13	I-V
Asfahani Camp, Rangpur	305	8	I-III
Halishaher, Chittagong	197	6	I-V
Mohamadpur, Dhaka	157	11	Up to KG
Geneva camp Dhaka	87	6	VI-VIII
Total	1422	52	

### ***New Ties***

OBAT is thrilled to be a part of CIC, Center for Interfaith Cooperation, located in its neighboring office. The CIC is a collaborative effort of several organizations. Its partners apart from OBAT are International Interfaith Initiative; Bridge Generation; Muslim Alliance of Indiana; Healing Friends and Provocate. Through this alliance, CIC hopes to achieve synergies resulting from sharing of resources; whether it is sharing office machines or pooling rental payments to sharing intellectual resources such as exchanging ideas and information pertinent to all partnering organization's common goals.



### ***A prayer for Japan***

Here, at the Center for Interfaith Cooperation (CIC), everyone was deeply affected by the recent and terrible tragedy in Japan. All of us wanted to do something to put our hearts at ease and be there in spirit at least with the disaster stricken Japanese population. A prayer vigil was arranged by Healing Friends and the III, in the conference room at the Indiana Interchurch Center on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March. The entire building was invited to come and offer a silent prayer or meditate in memory of those who lost their lives and those who will be struggling to rebuild them. Candles were lit and people trickled in to offer prayers in the serene setting of the room. Thank you to all those who came; we continue to wish for peace and strength for Japan and its people.



## *Some of OBAT's accomplishments in educational programs...*

More than **1500** children are enrolled in **seven** of OBAT's schools; **two** computer training centers and **three** tutoring centers. The lives of all these children have been changed because of you. Thank you to all our wonderful donors.

## **OBAT Helpers Inc.**

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"Clearing the Way for a Brighter Future"

Find us on the Web:  
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OBAT Helpers is a nonprofit, tax-exempted organization.



## *Buzz from Bangladesh*

Ever heard of the word, "Jamdani"? It means a vase of flowers. It is also an exquisite woven fabric, a testament to the fine workmanship of Bangladeshi craftsmen. The fabric is hailed for its texture and quality which is supposed to be so fine that it is described as being woven with the "thread of the winds." Jamdani was the apparel of choice of nobility in the past; it still is very expensive due to the delicate, embroidered patterns. Usually worn in the form of a saree, (a six yard garment for women) a red jamdani is an integral component of a Bangladeshi bride's trousseau.



## *Please reach out*

Together, we are making a difference in their lives by helping them fulfill their hopes and dreams and to enable them to live with pride and dignity. We need your help to continue these projects. Please help us by passing on this message to others who can join us in these efforts. To continue our educational projects and clinics, we need to raise almost \$71,000 before July 2011. The projects details are:

Project	Total project cost in \$
5 schools in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna \$5000 each	25,000
2 clinics, Rangpur (\$10,000) and Syedpur (\$25,000)	35,000
10 preschool centers (\$1100 each)	11,000

Please be a part of OBAT's humanitarian mission by:

- Sponsoring our events
- Contributing your time
- Donating to this worthy cause
- Letting people know about OBAT's work