



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

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**6,800 WALK TO END GLOBAL POVERTY AT
ATLANTA PARTNERSHIP WALK ON OCTOBER 26, 2008**

Atlanta, Georgia, October 26, 2008 – Over 6,800 participated in the Atlanta Partnership Walk, an event held annually in five major cities across the U.S. to raise awareness and funds to alleviate global poverty and promote partnerships between America and the developing world. The Walk is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) and its network of volunteers in communities across the United States, to involve young and old in a compassionate effort as global citizens to build bridges of hope that reach across boundaries of race, religion, age and gender. Nationwide, over 30,000 are expected to participate in Partnership Walk, also held in Chicago, Dallas, Houston and Los Angeles.

The 1.2 mile Walk at Centennial Olympic Park brought together families, friends, students and leaders in government, business, media and the arts for a day of learning activities, fundraising and culturally diverse performances. People from corporations, universities, schools and community organizations took a step to demonstrate their support for ending global poverty. Atlanta Partnership Walk raised over \$900,000. **100% of funds raised at Partnership Walk go directly to the projects supported by the Foundation.** No contributions are used for administrative costs. Over the past 14 years, 250,000 have participated in *PartnershipsInAction* activities across the U.S. raising \$29 million.

In an address to the enthusiastic crowd, Mike Leven, Chief Executive Officer of Georgia Aquarium and Vice Chairman of Marcus Foundation said “I don’t have to remind you why you are here. I don’t have to tell you to care for others. You already do. For decades, Aga Khan Foundation has been investing in people and creating model programs that are replicated all over the world. *PartnershipsInAction* confirms that.” Distinguished guests included David Shafer, Georgia State Senator; and Melvin Everson, Georgia State Representative. The program of entertainment celebrating the diversity of world cultures was hosted by media celebrities Suchita Vadlamani, co-host of “Good Day Atlanta” and George Franco, reporter, FOX5 News. For a detailed schedule and directions, visit the Partnership Walk website at www.PartnershipsInAction.org/walk. A stage program throughout the day featured a multicultural mix of music, dance and performances.

The 2008 theme for Partnership Walk, “*Planting Our Future*,” spotlights the extraordinary success, expansion and impact of rural support programs pioneered by the Aga Khan Foundation, initiated in northern Pakistan in 1982 and expanded to nine other countries. The story of the AKF’s rural support programs brings to light the power of partnerships and reflects the Foundation’s enduring commitment to community participation and grassroots democracy. It embraces the time-tested principle of helping people to help themselves. For over a quarter century, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. has focused on planting hope in the lives of people in the developing world in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society and the environment. Today, 2.5 million people have benefited directly from the Foundation’s rural support programs worldwide, in over 8,400 village organizations in Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, Syria and Tajikistan.

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An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

One of the Walk's most inspiring features was the *Village in Action*, where participants of all ages had an opportunity to engage in interactive activities and learn how people in developing countries create innovative solutions to overcome the challenges of low income, poor health conditions and limited educational opportunities. Through displays, exhibits and hands-on demonstrations, the *Village in Action* showcased the positive results that are achieved through the Aga Khan Foundation's development programs. Participants took part in exercises and exhibits as if they were traveling to East Africa, India, Mozambique, Egypt, Tajikistan and Pakistan. Volunteers researched, designed and created the exhibits. Through this process, youth, in particular, gained a deeper understanding of global citizenship and social responsibility.

Partnership Walk, now in its 14th year in the U.S., is a Partnerships*InAction* initiative giving individuals the opportunity to actively take part in advancing human dignity and peace around the globe through volunteerism, awareness-raising and contributions. Partnerships*InAction* represent AKF USA's growing portfolio of programs including Partnership Golf and Tennis Tournaments, Softball Classic, corporate and professional networking events, film screenings, essay and art competitions, education activities, among others. Since 1995, Partnerships*InAction* events have attracted over 250,000 participants and raised over \$29 million nationwide.

Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., established in 1981, is a private, nondenominational, nonprofit international development organization committed to the struggle against hunger, disease and illiteracy. The Foundation works to address the root causes of poverty by sharing innovative solutions and by supporting over 100 self-help programs in health, education, rural development, civil society and the environment in 18 countries in East Africa and South and Central Asia. Using community-based approaches to meet basic human needs, the Foundation builds the capacity of community and non-governmental organizations to have a lasting impact on reducing poverty.

AKF USA works in partnership with other like-minded institutions dedicated to international development such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as private foundations and corporations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, Johnson & Johnson, among others.

The Foundation 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. His Highness the Aga Khan is the Founder and Chairman of the Board of Aga Khan Foundation and 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion and its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable of society.

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