



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

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2,000 AT LOS ANGELES PARTNERSHIP WALK HELP END GLOBAL POVERTY

Los Angeles, California, October 12, 2008 – Over 2,000 people from all walks of life participated today in the Los Angeles Partnership Walk at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The annual event is held 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 Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Houston.

The 3-kilometer walk 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. Thirty-three teams from corporations, universities, schools and community organizations took a step to demonstrate their support for ending global poverty. Los Angeles Partnership Walk raised over \$250,000. Twenty-five people, called “Ambassador 1000s” each raised over \$1000 each. **100% of funds raised at Partnership Walk go directly to the projects supported by the Foundation;** not a cent is spent on administrative costs. Since 1995, Partnerships *InAction* events have attracted over 250,000 participants and raised \$29 million nationwide.

At the opening ceremony, U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman said, “By being here at the Partnership Walk, you are expressing your conviction that positive change is possible through grassroots participation. The Aga Khan Foundation has modeled programs that are really showing that a lot can be done, not only by the Aga Khan Foundation, but by other organizations that follow its lead in education, health care, rural development, microfinance and the environment.” He presented to the Foundation, a United States Flag that flew in Washington DC, during the July 4th, 2008 celebrations. Congressman Brad Sherman toured the interactive exhibits on site that showcased the Aga Khan Foundation’s innovative solutions for reducing poverty in Africa and Asia. Other distinguished guests included L.A. City Council members Bernard Parks and Dennis P. Zine; J.R. Reviczky, Mayor of Hermosa Beach; J. Curtis Park, President of the World Affairs Council; Captain Calvin Beard of the California Highway Patrol; and Samia Rashid, President, Ismaili Council for Western USA among others. Council member Bernard Parks of L.A.’s 8th District, in a welcome address, expressed his support for continuing to hold Partnership Walk in downtown L.A. at the Memorial Coliseum for many years to come. He highlighted that “every cent raised goes towards helping people and we know that the money is not going anywhere else The Foundation does not give a handout but a hand up.”

Consul Generals from Bangladesh, Belize, Kenya and Pakistan also graced the event along with the Consul from Azerbaijan, who noted that “The Walk is a true inspiration as it demonstrates how harmony and cooperation within one community can and should be duplicated in other communities in the fight against poverty and the struggle to improve quality of life.” In a message from the First Lady of California, Maria Shriver, the First Lady applauded “the Foundation’s active stance on raising awareness on poverty and working together to create long-term solutions to ending this problem.”

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An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

Following the Walk, there was an entertainment program featured a multicultural mix of music, dance and performances celebrating the diversity of world cultures. www.PartnershipsInAction.org/walk.

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 traveled virtually to learn about issues in microfinance, solutions to health care in India, environmental projects in Mali, water projects in Afghanistan and India, and educational programs in Tajikistan and East Africa. Through this process, youth, in particular, gained a deeper understanding of global citizenship and social responsibility.

The 2008 theme for Partnership Walk, "*Planting Our Future*," spotlighted 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.

Partnership Walk, now in its 14th year in the U.S., is a *PartnershipsInAction* initiative giving individuals the opportunity to actively take part in advancing human dignity and peace around the globe through volunteerism, awareness-raising and contributions. *PartnershipsInAction* represent AKF USA's growing portfolio of programs including Partnership Golf and Tennis Tournaments, Softball Classic, education activities, among others.

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.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Shaheen Nanji, Media Coordinator for the Los Angeles AKF USA Volunteer Team
(310) 613-5000 email: imanes@aol.com

Ms. Martha Sipple, Communications & Public Affairs Officer, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.
office: (202) 293-2537 mobile: (202) 203-0838 email: msipple@akfusa.org