



**AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE REVIEW**

**9,500 WALK TO HELP END GLOBAL POVERTY  
AT HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP WALK**

**Houston, Texas, November 14, 2009** – Over 9,500 participated in the Houston Partnership Walk, an event held annually in cities across the U.S. Now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year nationally, the Walk is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) to raise awareness and funds to alleviate global poverty and promote partnerships between America and the developing world. For a detailed schedule and directions, visit [www.PartnershipsInAction.org/walk](http://www.PartnershipsInAction.org/walk).

The 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. **100% of funds raised at Partnership Walk go directly to the projects supported by the Foundation.** Approximately \$900,000 was raised. The cost of organizing the Walk is completely underwritten by AKF USA and in-kind contributors. No contributions are used for administrative costs. Since 1995, *PartnershipsInAction* events have attracted over 280,000 participants, raising \$32 million.

The Houston Partnership Walk was held today at Sam Houston Park Downtown. Nationwide, over 30,000 participated in Partnership Walk, also held in Atlanta, Birmingham, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Memphis, Orlando and San Francisco. Scores of teams from corporations, universities, schools and community organizations participated in the Houston Partnership Walk to take a step to end global poverty.

At the opening ceremony, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee addressed the crowds. “A future is in educating the mind, and the spirit, and the body, so that you can stand up against the ravages of oppression and depression. What Partnership Walk has done is to focus on what the world has lapsed, has forgotten, has given up on. And I can assure you that when people have a right to education, they have the right to a trust, a desire for democracy” The program also featured other distinguished guests, along with entertainment celebrating the diversity of world cultures. The on-stage program of energetic and cultural performances was hosted by media celebrity Sharron Melton, Co-anchor for ABC 13 Morning News.

Our 2009 theme, “*Education – The Universal Bridge*” highlighted the importance and the extraordinary success and impact of Aga Khan Foundation’s educational activities. Serving as a bridge to help individuals and communities build more productive, fulfilling and dignified lives, the Foundation’s educational activities span across a broad range of initiatives to help people in Asia and Africa reach their full potential from early childhood development to primary and secondary school improvement to skills and management training for professionals, entrepreneurs and community members.

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*An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network*

Aga Khan Foundation's education programs bring to light the power of partnerships and reflect the Foundation's enduring commitment to education. For over a quarter century, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. has worked in the developing world in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society and the environment. All these efforts equip people with life-long skills to overcome poverty and expand opportunities. It embraces the time-tested principle of helping people to help themselves.

One of the most inspiring features of Partnership Walk was the *Village in Action*, where participants took part in interactive exercises and exhibits. This year Discovery Domes using multimedia presentations were set up to introduce visitors to the Foundation's work in health, education, rural development and microfinance. Surrounding the domes were interactive exhibits that explained the innovative ways that Aga Khan Foundation is alleviating hunger, disease, illiteracy and poverty.

AKF USA, established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, non-profit international development organization committed to alleviating poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. AKF USA is part of the Aga Khan Development Network ([www.akdn.org](http://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, to 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. The Foundation presently supports over 100 programs in 18 countries for the common good of all citizens regardless of their gender, origin or religion. The geographic focus of the Foundation's development programs is in East Africa and South and Central Asia.

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