

The House of Flowers and MEPO

March 2015

Winter Newsletter 2015



Changes Over the Winter

Spring and the New Year in Afghanistan are on their way! With the passing of winter came a number of major changes at the House of Flowers.

Change in Staff In January, our teacher Qudsieh, who had been a dedicated guide for the children applying Montessori principles for 8 years at the House of Flowers, gave her notice that she was moving to Germany with her family. We were **very** sad to see her leave. She was talented, intelligent, insightful and always enthusiastic and positive. Not only is it ours and the children's loss, but it is a loss to Afghanistan. In losing Qudsieh to Germany, Afghanistan is losing 25% of its adults who know Montessori principles.

But happily, our partner organization HEWAD did a search and has found Basira, a talented teacher who lives near the House. She is eager to learn, and the staff is already talking about her great energy and how quickly she is learning about Montessori education. Our teacher Fatima, with her 13 years of teaching at the House, will be a wonderful mentor. The program of the House of Flowers will certainly continue as strong as ever once this transition is complete. (Below is a picture of Basira with Amina.)





A New House for the House



Another transition was entirely positive: after several years of struggling with a poorly built house and an unrelenting landlord, the staff had had enough and in January they went house hunting. In a stroke of good luck they found a newly built house just one kilometer away, with more reasonable rent and fully functioning plumbing and other critical systems.

Moving homes is never easy, and moving a house and school for 30 children required packing, moving and unpacking 30 iron bunk beds, 30 trunks of clothes and shoes, boxes of books and toys, carpets and cushions, kitchen equipment and furniture, and more –no small matter. Especially in the wintertime, and in *Kabul!*

The efforts of the staff again demonstrate their true dedication to the children of the House of Flowers, and their great stamina and solution-oriented attitudes. We look forward to being able to offer them a well-deserved raise once we are able to raise more funds for the next year and implement the new budget for 2015.



Website: <http://mepoonline.org>

Email: mepo.hope@gmail.com

Growing Up, and Coming Home

All of the children are doing well. The 30 children living in the House continue to thrive, from the smallest one, like little 5 year old Amina, to ten year old Farah Haz who had to get an emergency appendectomy during the winter, to the older ones preparing for their university exams.

Recently we received a picture of 5 boys who grew up in the House who are now young *men*, looking quite cool in their black leather jackets (top picture, sitting with Fahim). In seeing their faces we are taken back in time to when these boys were small, remembering Obaid with his polio-afflicted legs being carried by his friends, Zaki with his hyper energy and quick mind, Noorullah with his quiet manner, and red-headed Gul Mohammad, always serious and studious.

Now, besides just the sisters Nadia and Razia, the boys Gul Mohammad and Noorullah are also studying in university, and Obaid and his brother Zaki are working.

These young adults, who came from such difficult childhood backgrounds, have become contributing members of Afghan society, hopefully with integrity and a peaceful outlook on life. This is what will make us more proud than anything else they do.

The fact that they come back to visit shows the depth of relationships forged. This is what the House of Flowers is all about: providing these children with a solid and stable foundation from which they can build their own lives, knowing that they are loved and that they have a place to come home to.



If we are to reach real peace in this world, we must begin with the children.

-- Maria Montessori

Support Is Needed – The New Year and a New Budget

Seeing the return of the boys was a very strong statement that the work of the House of Flowers does not end when the children leave. This is why this work must continue, to provide for the young children currently in the House as well as to continue to exist as a support for those young people who have now left and are making their own way in the world.

Next month is the start of the new year in Afghanistan, the holiday called Nau Ruz. It is the time for re-evaluating the budget and giving the staff their raises. For 2015 we hope to **increase the budget of the House to \$7000 per month** (a \$600 increase). This will cover the slight increase in rent (\$100/month) and needed cost-of-living increases in salary and expenses. This is an extremely tight budget and is fairly miraculous these days in Kabul. We need everyone's help in meeting this goal, and circle of supporters of the House of Flowers around the globe continues to inspire us with their dedication and generosity.

We need **\$50,000** by summer to meet our goal this year. If we all help, that is easily doable!



So **please help if you can**, and spread the word about the House of Flowers.

Donations can be made online via Paypal on our website www.mepoonline.org, or with a check made out to MEPO and sent to our volunteer headquarters in Ohio:

MEPO
8641 Porter Central Rd.
Sunbury, OH 43074

Website: www.mepoonline.org Email: mepo.hope@gmail.com Facebook: [houseofflowers](https://www.facebook.com/houseofflowers)



To make a tax deductible donation:

You can donate to the organization **Lantern Projects** at www.lanternprojects.org. They will forward 100% of your earmarked donation to the House of Flowers while also giving you the tax deduction. **Please note:** If you donate to us via Lantern Projects, they cannot give us your name or email address. We would love to hear from you directly so that we may be in touch and express our appreciation to you.



All kids need is a little hope, a little help, and someone to believe in them.

-Magic Johnson