

The House of Flowers and MEPO

February 2017

Winter Newsletter 2017



A Visitor's Take on the House of Flowers

"The staff there and the children gave us a warm welcome. :) When I came, Fatima's class was having a silent reading session, but each child proudly read aloud to me to show off their English reading skill. Wow! I am impressed! They each also introduced themselves in English and told us about their favorite dish (many of them said "steak" :))

One child immediately pointed out 'Indonesia' on the map to his friends when they learned that I am from Indonesia. I am telling you, even adults in Iran and Afghanistan often don't know where Indonesia is :) I can see that the children are happy there. They are relaxed, confident, and cheerful around us. The classes felt lively."

I also need to mention another thing that struck me the most in HoF, is the fact that the children come from different parts of Afghanistan. Somebody mentioned that HoF is a 'Little Afghanistan.'



Sadly, everywhere I see in Afghanistan, the (adult) society is fragmented based on tribes, but in HoF the little children coexist and even I heard from the teacher that they teach each other languages from their own tribe. Well I guess there is a lot to learn from little children."

- Ariane, a Montessori teacher from Indonesia visiting Afghanistan. (Feb. 2017)



It astonishes me how hard life is, and at the same time many people stand their ground and try their best to make Afghanistan a better place to be.

-Ariane

Education for Life

Shukria, who got married recently, is studying for her university entrance exams, which she will take in March.

Our long-time student Zaher Shah is living and working in Tehran, and his brother Shaheen Shah is in Kabul in school.

Hayat is a charming boy who lived in the House from age 8 to 16. He is now studying economics at the university in Mazar-e-Sharif, and is Facebook friends with our teacher Fatima.

Computer Training for Our Teachers

The group Canadian Women for Women of Afghanistan, a major supporter of the House of Flowers, has given 10 computers and furniture to the House of Flowers.

Fatima and Razia from the House of Flowers then attended a computer education workshop and will be teaching computer skills to the children.

Our teacher Fatima attended a meeting of Kabul orphanage staffs in December, and shared the story of the House of Flowers and Montessori. Immediately she was beset with questions and requests for training. Fatima has taken this on very seriously and is now planning a training, as it has been her dream to share Montessori. We are so excited that the House of Flowers staff will show others how to run an orphanage in a way that meets the holistic needs of children, following Montessori principles.



Urgent Winter Help Needed in Kabul

The children of the House of Flowers are kept warm, well-fed, well-clothed, and safe. But hundreds in Kabul have been suffering in the intense snow of this winter. The heavy snow has impacted vulnerable people living in tents, camps and damaged buildings around the city.

→ MEPO is dedicating at least \$5000 towards distribution of food and clothing *this month* to needy families in the city. The HoF will help coordinate and assist in this critical support of the neediest people in and around Kabul.

Would you like to help? To contribute to this direct assistance, please consider donating to MEPO's efforts.

Stories of the Children

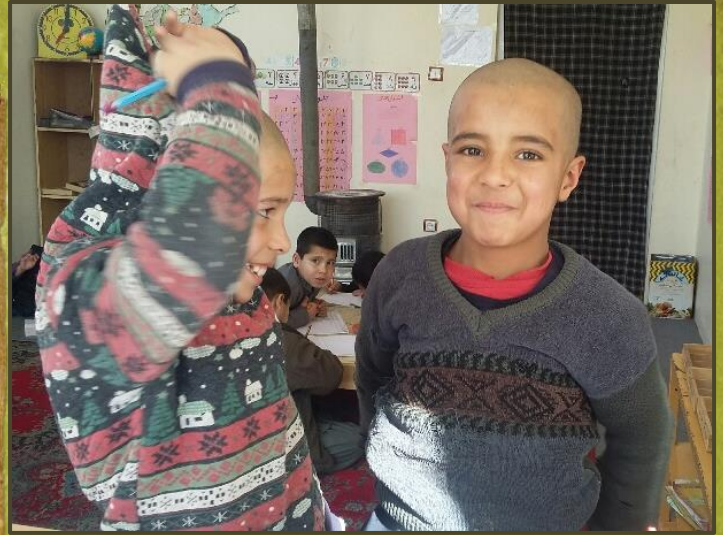
...from the teachers

*This is Yama's story: Yama is about 11 years old. He is from Bagram. When he was a child his father and mother died. So he lived with his poor uncle. Yama's uncle was illiterate. Yama sold plastic in the streets. So he didn't know about school and knowledge. When his uncle heard about the HoF he brought Yama in October. So we started him in Montessori education. He loves HoF! Now Yama can read and write correctly and is ready for 3rd grade of school next year!

*Sheer Haqa is a 5-year-old boy. He is from Badakhshan. His father was a police officer and is dead (martyr). He is very quiet and likes to play alone. At first, he was very thin and feeble. He didn't have strength to talk and play. He was -afraid. But now he is talking a lot! He eats everything we cook with delight! He said that in his home every day he had just dry bread and onions. Sheer's smile is very nice.



*Kochay is an 11 year old girl. She is from Nuristan. When she was a child her father died and her mother was sick. Her uncle didn't let her go to school. In December her uncle brought her with 3 younger sisters. At first Kochay couldn't speak Dari because her mother tongue is Pashay. She didn't know about school or the alphabet. But after a few months at HoF she can read and write her own name and is making words. Now she can speak 3 languages: Pashay, Dari, and Pushto. Now she is healthier, and she loves to go to school.



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

-- Maria Montessori

Starting in 2017...

Great Financial News for 2017!

We are so happy and grateful to announce that the House of Flowers will again be supported by Canadian Women for Women of Afghanistan this year. Their support of the operating costs for the House ensures financial stability and streamlines systems.

A New Transition Fund: “Watering the Flowers”

MEPO can now focus more energy on establishing a **Transition Fund** for the children who are growing older as they move into young adulthood with needs such as university fees, tutoring, seed money for a small business, help with rent, etc.

Our goal is to continue to support these young people in the same way a family would, helping them get on their feet as they become more independent. We’ve longed to do this ever since the children began growing up, and we’re glad it’s now possible. We hope you’ll join us in supporting these young adults!

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

Thank you to all of you for your support in this work of the heart!



To make a tax-deductible donation...

...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 via Lantern Projects, they cannot give us your name or email address. Please let us hear from you directly so that we may be in touch and express our appreciation to you. *Thank you!*

