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IMAGES: <http://picasaweb.google.com/ryderotary/Afghanistan#>

A Good News Story from Afghanistan

Ryde Rotary and the Indigo Foundation celebrate the building a school for 1000 students in Borjegai, Afghanistan.

Sydney, January 2011 – A local Rotary Club has found a way to make a difference in war-torn Afghanistan. Ali Yunespour, an Afghan refugee now living in Sydney was inspired by his involvement in two Rotary programs – Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) – to do something for his people back home.

Through his work helping newly arrived immigrants from Afghanistan, Ali learned of the work one of his friends had been doing with Indigo Foundation, an Australian NGO, to establish schools in Afghanistan and, convinced of the value of education in bringing peace to the world, resolved to do what he could to further that work.

Ali sought the opportunity to speak to the Rotary Club of Ryde about his thoughts. In early 2009 the club started working with Ali and the Indigo Foundation to formulate a feasibility study for a school for 1000 boys and girls in Borjegai, a location in Afghanistan where schooling is limited, due to very cold winters and the lack of any school accommodation other than tents.

The project approach utilized The Rotary Club of Ryde's strengths in project development and direction and Indigo Foundation's very successful in-country network.

A clearly articulated memorandum committed all parties – including village leaders in Borjegai – to their defined roles, documented the project program and schedule, key milestones and resource commitments, and identified risks and risk management strategies.

The Rotary Club of Ryde provided project direction, high level management and \$76,000 (AUD), covering construction work, school supplies and teachers salaries; Indigo Foundation utilized their tested network and contacts for funds transfer and disbursement and in-country management and administration; the Borjegai community provided a substantial proportion of the manual labour, and, of course, the land for the building.

Construction commenced in April 2010 and was completed in October 2010, an outstanding achievement, evidenced in the accompanying photographs. The school was officially opened recently, the number of people attending the ceremony providing ample evidence of just how significant this development is for the Borjegai community, and how effective it has been at building communities and bridging continents.

Ryde Rotary Club is now considering how to best provide ongoing support for the school, the most likely avenues being provision of school furniture and equipment, as well as teacher training. With the major step of school establishment complete, there is ample opportunity for any interested parties to participate in this life-changing and inspirational "good-news" program.

For individual contact information and further details of the project, visit www.ryderotary.org.au