



PO Box 7209
Bozeman, MT
U.S.A. 59771
Tel 406.585.7841
Fax 406.585.5302
info@ikat.org
www.ikat.org

May 11, 2011

Dear Friends of Central Asia Institute (CAI),

Asalaam-o-Alaikum (Peace be with you).

Please accept my profound thanks for your support and prayers in recent weeks, and my assurances that, despite my temporary incapacitation, CAI is moving full steam ahead in 2011.

The urgency of CAI's work was underscored for me on Mother's Day by a newspaper story on the countries that are best for women. Afghanistan ranked last. That must change. Ensuring that every woman in the world has a right to good health, education and well being. The story also brought to mind a woman named Bibi Ashia, whom I met in Afghanistan in March. She fled the pre-2001 Taliban attacks in Badakhshan Province with her husband and 10 children. They now live a hand-to-mouth existence in a Kabul slum – a story both heartbreaking and far too common. But Bibi Ashia's enrollment at a CAI women's literacy center in Kabul offers hope. She is acquiring the basic skills necessary to help support her family. She is a role model for her children. Today her future is brighter.

As you may have heard, I am scheduled this month to undergo a surgical procedure to repair an atrial septal defect – a growing hole between the right and left atria of my heart – and eliminate the resulting hypoxia (low oxygen saturation). For several years, compelled by a relentless urge to fulfill CAI's mission, I ignored my doctor's advice to rest, did my best to mask the symptoms and continued on a grueling schedule. Now my body has finally caught up with me. My doctors, family and colleagues have ordered me to stop work and rest before surgery.

Hopefully all will go well with the heart surgery and rehabilitation, and in a few months my 53 year-old body will be as good as new. Going forward, I fully intend to continue in a life of service. However, I will also need to be realistic about taking care of myself and my family, and that will mean changes.

In the interim, rest assured that CAI is in very capable hands. Our work goes on. Our U.S. and overseas staff is resilient, and it is an honor to have great people who do such amazing work.

In a week or two, you will receive a special spring supplement of our annual Journey of Hope (JOH) publication. It is already available online (www.ikat.org). In it you will find reports of CAI's new and ongoing projects, evidence that the phenomenal support we received during 2008 to 2010 is being invested in education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan, Afghanistan and now Tajikistan. It also contains answers to numerous questions raised in light of recent media criticism. Please feel free to share this with your family, friends, colleagues, and classmates.

In the near future, as well as the long-term, we will continue to work hard, and make the necessary changes to ensure that Central Asia Institute and Pennies for Peace thrive as my role is redefined. Please sign up for our e-newsletter Alima, and visit our website (www.ikat.org), for the most updated information on our projects, my health and other issues.

Thank you again for your dedication to furthering education in some of the Last Best Places on Earth.

Blessings of Peace,



Greg Mortenson

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination, full of hope.” – Maya Angelou