

Afghan Coalition

Annual Report 2008-2009



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Serving the community since 1996

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Letter from the President and Executive Director

December 2009

The Afghan Coalition has been proud to serve the community since 1996 with vital social services support and advocacy. In 2003, the Afghan Coalition consulted with pro bono consultants at the Stanford School of Business to establish our *first* strategic directions. Since then so much has changed. To respond to evolving community needs, we have listened to families, service providers, clients, partners and other colleagues.

This year we recognized the importance of refocusing our energies and direction. We need to ensure that the Afghan Coalition's support services and programs will be a permanent community resource for families, refugees and other vulnerable individuals. This means that we need to continuously examine our strengths, our challenges and our opportunities.

We are grateful for many of our colleagues who encouraged us to pursue a new five-year **strategic plan** for the Afghan Coalition. The idea and encouragement originally came from discussions with Sharon Hing and Archana Shagal of the *Asian Americans Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)*, which awarded the Afghan Coalition a capacity building grant.

The award from AAPIP came at a very good time. We were able to leverage their support with an organizational development services grant from the *Center for Civic Partnerships*. Together the support from these agencies gave us the opportunity to undergo a thoughtful strategic planning process informed by recent research by *Dr. Carl Stempel* and *Dr. Valerie Smith* and community feedback. This process and the many tireless individuals who contributed to its success led to the development of action-oriented work plans.

We remain dedicated to providing our core services to the community, directly supporting individuals and families who are most in need. Critical to providing this support, we know that it is important to build programs and resources that enable community members to achieve self-sufficiency and well-being. Consistent with our strategic directions, this year we continued to develop **microenterprise training for women** in our support groups thanks to new support from the *East Bay Community Foundation*, and we continued to collaborate with the community to promote **culturally appropriate health education** and support.

In the coming months we will also be sharing with you news about two important new projects. One funded by the *San Francisco Foundation* involves reaching out to Afghans in the Bay Area to make sure they are counted in the **Census 2010**. Second, recently we learned that the *Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services* selected the Afghan Coalition to implement **the Outreach, Education and Consultation** project funded by the *Mental Health Services Act*. We look forward to working with community partners to build and implement this important program.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any comments or questions regarding programs and services. We hope you will continue to join us to help make our community thrive.

With respect and gratitude,

Waheed Momand
Board President

Rona Popal
Executive Director

History of the Afghan Coalition

The Afghan Coalition is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Formed in 1996 and incorporated in 2001, the Afghan Coalition is nonprofit community-based organization located in the Fremont Family Resource Center, where bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers work to empower underserved Afghan families, women and youth living in Alameda County.

Service Area

Serving as a community center, the Coalition provides a safe, non-political place for Afghans and other members of the multi-ethnic community to receive a variety of social, educational, cultural and other services. The majority of the Afghan Coalition’s clients live in the East Bay cities of Fremont, Hayward, Union City, and Newark in Southern Alameda County. Although the Afghan Coalition's primary service population is the Afghan community, the agency’s multilingual capacity makes it possible to serve Pakistani, Arab, Indian and Iranian immigrants as well. In addition to advocating for the health needs of Afghans through the Afghan Health Partnership Program, we have made other important connections that have elevated the visibility of and opportunities for the Afghan and multi-cultural communities in Southern Alameda County.

Overview of Programs and Services

Delivering programs and services to over 1,000 community members per year, particularly immigrant women and youth, the Afghan Coalition provides:

<p>Afghan Health Partnership Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health Leadership Consortium ▪ Empowering community ▪ Community needs assessments and research support 	<p>Women’s Support Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Microenterprise development ▪ Field trips
<p>Individual case management and health and social service advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health workshops ▪ Interpretation services ▪ Information and referral 	<p>Community education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parenting workshops ▪ Youth leadership development ▪ Youth health ▪ Cultural counseling ▪ English classes
<p>Community building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-cultural celebrations ▪ Community-building events and programs 	<p>Community Leadership and Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civic Engagement ▪ Get Out the Vote ▪ Census 2010

Community Impact

Afghan Coalition programs improve the health of local communities by helping Afghans and other immigrants and refugees to increase their ability to become self-sufficient contributing members of society. Staff and volunteers **bridge** the language and cultural gaps between community members and health and social services. This support provides Afghan families unparalleled access to community resources. As a result of our work, community members experience:

- Increased access to public and private services and resources;
- Improved ability of women and girls to deal with critical family issues, develop economic self-sufficiency, access health services, support their children in school, and escape situations in which there is domestic abuse;
- Improved leadership skills, self-esteem, and cultural identity of Afghan youth
- A sense of community ownership and pride;
- A dynamic interchange between Afghans and other residents of all ethnicities

The Coalition has been an **asset** for city and county agencies that want to serve the Afghan community but have difficulty because of language and cultural barriers. Agencies consistently consult with the Afghan Coalition as a resource for Afghan clients and are able to contact the Coalition in almost any emergency situation and receive a response. The agency also works in close partnership with the *East Bay Agency for Children* to link children and families to important community resources.

Client Success Story

“Hana” came to the United States almost nine years ago as a refugee. After resettling in Fremont, she felt isolated, lonely and stressed by the new culture and her inability to speak English.

She learned about the Afghan Coalition through a friend while attending adult school and decided to join our support group for women. The Afghan Coalition’s ongoing support programs for women are safe arenas where women learn new skills, receive health education and provide mutual social support while working on jewelry making, sewing and other craft projects. Women who have been isolated have experienced opportunities to socialize with each other and share ideas and experience.

Like many women who first learn about us through the support groups, Hana also learned of our English classes and signed up for the first available class. Now she is an active member of the women’s support group, jewelry making and English learning classes. Her participation and active involvement has been life changing.

She told us that her English-speaking ability has empowered her to access community resources and solve problems she encounters. With the support of Afghan Coalition advocates, she also secured a job as a provider of in home supportive services and she started a small business, making and selling jewelry.

Her Afghan Coalition advocates and our network of supporters helped her to identify markets for her craft. Together, her small business and the in home services she provides to a local family allow her to support herself and her family.

Hana tells us “whenever I come to Afghan Coalition I feel very happy” to connect with other women in a supportive atmosphere.

Member Projects

Community members join together to plan and implement special projects, most of which are entirely volunteer-driven, to promote the quality of life for all residents. To this end, the following member projects aim to fulfill additional goals for meeting the needs of the greater community and society. In addition to these projects, many community members are active with supporting special events and programs.

- Afghan Women's Association International
- Afghan Business Network
- Bridge Building
- Afghan Friends Network
- Lemar-TV
- Afghan-American Entertainment Association
- Afghan Domestic Violence Prevention Program
- Afghan Youth Soccer Program

The Afghan Health Partnership Program

One of our goals is to improve the health and well being of immigrant communities in Southern Alameda County by increasing access to culturally competent social and health services. To make this goal a reality, for the past two years we have coordinated community resources through the "**Health Leadership Consortium**," a project of our Afghan Health Partnership Program. Facilitated by **Dr. Valerie Smith**, this consortium brings together healthcare professionals, ethnic organization representatives and community advocates. Dr. Newhouse of Kaiser Permanente refers to the Consortium as a "model in collaboration" among diverse cultures and programs. To thousands of participants at a national Kaiser Permanente conference in San Jose, Dr. Newhouse highlighted the successes of the Health Leadership Consortium.



The Afghan Coalition hosted four Health Leadership Consortium Meetings during fiscal year 2008-2009, one of which was called a "Summit" in October 2008. Other meetings were held on February 18, 2009 at Kaiser Permanente hospital in Fremont, on April 24, 2009 and on June 14, 2009.

Meeting participants have included the Afghan Coalition staff, volunteers, and clients; East Bay Agency for Children; City of Fremont (Youth & Family Services, Human Services, Senior Services); Tri-City Health Center; Kaiser Permanente; SAVE (Shelter Against Violent Environments); Palo Alto Medical Foundation; CSU East Bay; SEMAH, Inc.; Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center Inc.; Narika; League of Women Voters; Family Violence Law Center; Tri Valley Haven; Alameda Health Consortium; Arab Cultural Community Center; Washington Hospital; Winton Wellness Clinic of Alameda County; Afghan Elderly Association; Alameda County

Behavioral Healthcare Services; Fremont Unified School District; The Hume Center; and Afghan Care, among a growing group of agencies.

The October 17, 2008 **Refugee Health Summit** was a special meeting of the Health Leadership Consortium. During this meeting, our partners from CSU East Bay presented the preliminary results from a two-year study called the "**Afghan Medical and Mental Health Needs Assessment Survey**" to a group of public officials, healthcare providers, nonprofit staff and members of local educational institutions. In addition to the health survey, Dr. Valerie Smith presented relevant results from her doctoral dissertation research, "**Public Health Issues Among Afghan Refugees.**" Meeting participants also met in small groups to discuss recommendations and other ideas related to the presentations and report back to the group to summarize their team discussions and next steps for collaboration.

To conclude the event, the project team presented a "call to action" and have continued to engage participants to move forward and ensure the community's health and mental health needs, including access to prevention services, are met through adequate capacity, leadership and funding. Public officials attending included City of Fremont Mayor Bob Wasserman; State Senator Ellen Corbett; Alameda County Supervisor Gail Steele; and Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, as represented by Josh Thurman.

Collaborating with CSU East Bay has been instrumental to the success of this project. We are grateful for the dedication and time by **Dr. Carl Stempel** and **Dr. Valerie Smith**.

Entrepreneur Program for Afghan Women

With the support of a seed grant from Wells Fargo in 2007 and leadership by Seema Farhad, the Afghan Coalition established a successful jewelry-making program to teach refugee and other immigrant women entrepreneurial skills with the objective of increasing self-sufficiency in a supportive environment.

On October 24, 2008 Afghan Coalition staff, volunteers and clients proudly participated in a holiday fair hosted by the East Bay Community Foundation. The event will took place before and after the Alameda County Funders' Forum in the foundation's conference center in downtown Oakland. Guests to the forum had the opportunity to shop for the holidays and meet microenterprise entrepreneurs from local nonprofit programs including the Afghan Coalition's Jewelry Making Program. Other



participants included Anew America Community Corporation, Creating Economic Opportunities for Women, West Contra Costa Business Development Center and Women's Initiative for Self-Employment.

Now funded by the East Bay Community Foundation, the **microenterprise program** is an extension of the Afghan Coalition's ongoing support programs for women - safe arenas where women learn new skills and provide mutual social support while working on microenterprise development. The program involves a weekly three-hour workshop, which includes training in the handicraft skills as well as skills of money management, budgeting, marketing and other entrepreneurial skills.

The Afghan Coalition microenterprise program trains participants in a handicraft skill they can carry out in their own time - such as beading and jewelry making. Many participants come to the program with experience in beading and jewelry making from their time spent in Pakistan's refugee camps. The Afghan Coalition's vision is to develop the program so that participants in turn become trainers who empower other members of the community. Please contact *Ms. Seema Farhad* if you would like to get involved with this program as a participant, mentor or educator.

Community Building to Promote Health Outcomes – Afghan Youth Soccer

A new member project of the Afghan Coalition is the Afghan Youth Soccer Club, which aims to promote access to sports, healthy lifestyle choices and leadership for youth, with an emphasis on low-income immigrant youth who would not otherwise have such opportunities. The program began in September 2008 with recruiting and meeting with youth, families and coaches.

All youth soccer teams are organized and coached by Afghan volunteer trainers. We have received very positive responses from our community and have discovered that soccer is one of the best ways to bring parents and youth together to have fun, build community, learn about each other and receive education about health, parenting and community resources.



We would like to expand this program to reach more youth and improve the emotional and physical health of the community. We are seeking help in identifying community partners and funding for the project. If you have ideas or if you would like to raise funds on behalf of the group, please contact us.

Get Out the Vote

With support from the **San Francisco Foundation's Social Justice Fund**, the Afghan Coalition led a very successful voter mobilization campaign leading up to the historic November 2008 election. Civic engagement and representation are very important for our work to advocate for policy changes and resources for underserved Afghan communities.

The Afghan Coalition mobilized a campaign to bring awareness and educate the community about the presidential election. We met with community members one-on-one to answer their questions; we hired volunteers to reach out to the community members; and we ran educational announcements on community television. As a result of this work, thousands of Afghans participated in voting including many of our clients, and close to 300 people registered to vote in our office. This was the **largest voter turnout** we have ever witnessed in the Afghan community.



Afghan Domestic Violence Prevention

While it is very challenging to talk to our community about sensitive public health topics like mental health and domestic violence, we have made significant progress. Through our cultural education and outreach to service providers and public officials and community outreach, we are removing more barriers every day and building opportunities for funds and other resources needed to build a health community.

One of the Afghan Coalition's member projects is the **Afghan Domestic Violence Prevention Association** founded by **Dr. Farid Younos**, a community leader on faith and domestic violence prevention. An Afghan American who fled Afghanistan shortly before the 1979 Soviet invasion, Dr. Younos studied Cultural Anthropology in Denmark and obtained his Doctorate Degree in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco. He is a researcher and lecturer of Islamic studies and serves as the president of Islamic research for the Afghan Journalist Foundation in the United States. As an author, a TV host show, radio host show, an advocate of women's rights and lecturer of Islamic thought, Dr. Younos has educated the local community and beyond about Islam and domestic violence prevention and is a prominent voice in Northern California. He has collaborated with other Bay Area domestic violence prevention agencies on publishing culturally relevant educational materials and presenting at conferences.

As a **certified cultural advisor** by the **Alameda County Court**, Dr. Younos works with Afghan families referred directly to the Afghan Coalition by the court for cultural advising on issues of domestic violence.

Community Media

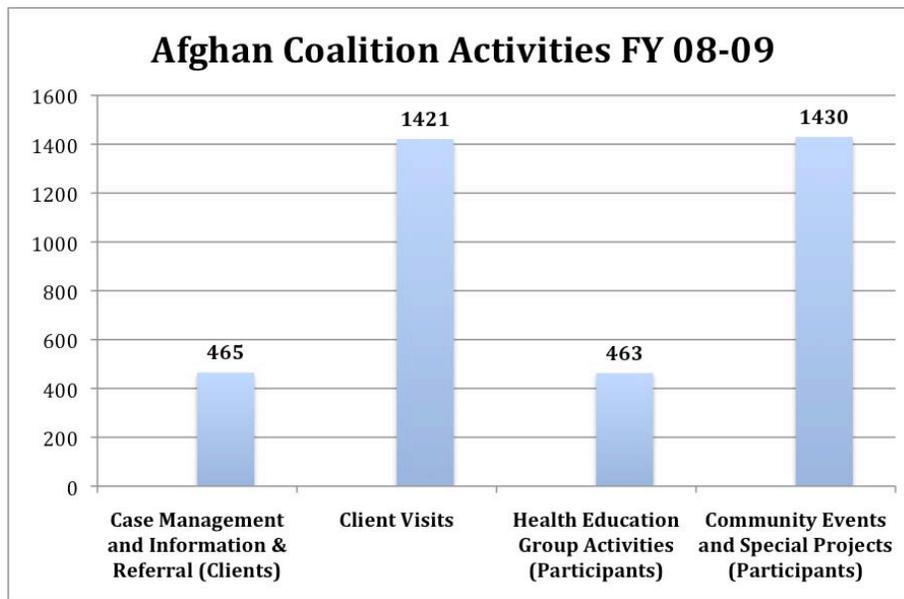
The Afghan Coalition provides information to the Afghan community through NOOR-TV and Lemar-TV, community-based satellite channels that broadcast in the Bay Area and beyond.

With the support of the East Bay Agency for Children in fiscal year 2008-2009, the Afghan Coalition continued to publish a newsletter titled **"Little Kabul"** in Dari to bring awareness to the community about all Afghan organizations and their events. Edited by Nadia Faizi, we distribute this newsletter in the community and post it to our Web site.

We also post community information on our events and announcement blog at:

www.afghancoalition.org/blog

Persons Served Fiscal Year 2008-2009 (July – June)



Hidden Treasures of Afghanistan

By Bruce Green, Afghan Coalition Board Member

The Afghan Coalition helped over 450 East Bay Afghans see “Hidden Treasures of Afghanistan,” a world-class display on loan from the National Museum of Kabul for a three-month visit to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

The Afghan Coalition, whose clients are among the least advantaged in the large Bay Area Afghan community, wanted every Afghan to be able to visit this treasure, no matter their economic level or transportation resources.

We contacted museum officials with our plan to bring several busses, and the museum responded with free passes and a wonderful welcome to our community members.

Bridges Community Church donated busses to supply transportation for the museum field trips on December 7, 2008 and January 17, 2009.

Thanks to all the donated resources and volunteer help from Bridges and the museum, the cost was only \$10 for a family of 4. In addition to the 300 who came on these field trips, the Afghan Coalition distributed 150 free passes to Afghans who provided their own transportation.

It was encouraging to see whole families experiencing this treasure together. Many older Afghans remembered seeing parts of the exhibit in the old museum in Kabul before the building was destroyed during the civil war. Children enjoyed playing in the “archeological dig” sandboxes. Perhaps some of them will be inspired to become the future scientists and protectors of their culture and history.

Many adults commented how proud they were to see Afghanistan honored and celebrated in this way. A special mention should be made to Pauline Fong-Martinez, the Director of Visitor Relations for the Asian Art Museum, and Bridges bus drivers Bob Mayer, Dwight Hunnicutt, and Tony Hernandez (all of whom donated their time and were too busy driving to see the exhibit). Also special thanks to Habib Zargi and Qais Habibi of Lemar TV for covering this event and helping with publicity.



Chronicle of Events - Fiscal Year 2008-2009

July 2008

- New seven-week diabetes workshop began
- Six-month English as a Second Language classes began
- Ongoing beginning English classes for beginners every Tuesday from 1pm to 3pm

August

- First day of school backpack giveaway and parent workshop
- Women support picnic at Park Elizabeth

September

- Women's Support and Microenterprise Group presented Afghan culture and Afghan clothing at Pleasanton Fairground Kids Festival
- Workshop on Ramadan month and how to eat healthy food

October

- Eid Celebration
- Get out the Vote Campaign
- Refugee Health Summit with public officials and CSU East Bay
- Women's Group Jewelry show at Alameda County Funders Forum at East Bay Community Foundation conference Center

November

- Clients participate in Youth Soccer Tournament at Dublin Sport Park
- Motherland Afghanistan: Afghan doctors and other nonprofit agencies participated to learn more about the challenges that Afghanistan faces in health areas
- Thanksgiving event and outreach through Lemar TV and Noor TV

December

- Afghanistan A Human Right Focus at the Main Library in San Francisco: Rona Popal participated in this program and served as a panelist for a discussion about Afghanistan's issues and problems.
- Afghan Soccer Club parents meeting

January 2009

- Barack Obama Inauguration Celebration at Diamond Palace in Fremont called "Unity for the Sake of Change" at the Diamond Palace
- Youth Soccer Tournament in Livermore
- Women's Health Workshop by Sima Ali, a former Afghan doctor, made a presentation about menopause
- Parenting Workshops: Dr. Farid Younos started a six-month workshop

February

- Health Leadership Consortium meeting at Kaiser Permanente hospital for remote video interpreting program demonstration
- Youth Afghan Soccer Club meeting to learn soccer skills and leadership values

March

- Breast cancer and cervical cancer educational program for Afghan women
- Afghan women celebrate the Moulud day and learn about community resources

April

- Presentation to Grass Valley Baptist church about the Afghan Community in Bay Area and Afghan culture
- Health Leadership Consortium Meeting
- Workshop on safety



May

- Strategic Planning Retreat in San Ramon
- Mothers Day celebration for Afghan Women's Support Group
- Afghan Poet meeting with film makers about Rumi the famous Afghan poet
- Youth Soccer tournament at Washington High School
- Afghan Coalition organized a field trip to Lopez Ranch farm in Brentwood for cherry picking and to learn about local farms

June 2009

- Health Leadership Consortium Meeting
- Health workshop by Ruth Narayan on osteoarthritis, rheumatoid and their symptoms and treatments
- Preparation for Strategic Planning community work shops



Client Satisfaction

From **June 1 to June 30, 2009** the Afghan Coalition conducted a satisfaction survey with clients in written form and through telephone interviews (with the help of volunteers). Seventy-one (71) individuals participated in the survey. The result of this survey yielded the following results:

Gender of survey participants:

- 48 Female
 - 23 Male
- 71 Total

3) Did you learn about community resources in your area? (local health clinic, hospitals, domestic violence resources)

- 46 Yes
 - 25 No
- 71 Total

1) Did you attend a health workshop or women support group?

- 42 Yes
 - 29 No
- 71 Total

4) Did you meet with an Afghan Coalition health advocate?

- 71 Yes
 - 0 No
- 71 Total

If yes, how would you rate the service?

- 31 Very satisfied
 - 34 Satisfied
 - 6 Not Satisfied
- 71 Total

2) Did you learn something about your health?

- 50 yes
 - 21 No
- 71 Total

5) Do you have any comments or recommendations?

20 need housing, 15 transportation, 10 need job, and 26 are very satisfied with Afghan Coalition services.

Sustainable Organizational Development

On December 2, 2008 the Afghan Coalition was awarded a grant and capacity building support from **Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy** for a **strategic planning project**. This process helped us refocus our energies and direction, especially since we have entered into a new economic landscape.

Like the community members we serve, we need to work hard to make sure that the Afghan Coalition will be a **permanent community resource**. This means that we need to continuously examine our strengths, our challenges and our opportunities. This award from AAPIP came at a very good time. We were able to leverage their support with the organizational development services grant from the **Center for Civic Partnerships** (as a grantee of *The California Wellness Foundation*). Together the support from these grants gave us the opportunity to undergo a thoughtful process, which included **stakeholder interviews** (conducted by the **Center for Civic Partnerships**) and a board and stakeholder planning retreat in May 2009 with **28 community participants**. Mary Anne Mendall, MSW, the strategic planning consultant, led the Afghan Coalition through the design of the retreat workshops, and she facilitated the core workshops at the retreat. Ms. Mendall also held three follow up workshops with staff, board, retreat participants and clients to develop implementation plans for three focus areas.

From the project, we learned that many colleagues, program participants and other agencies in our region are very supportive of our work and recognize its importance. The stakeholder interview results were very informative. Finally, this is the first time our community and board members have had the opportunity to participate in this type of process. It was a very educational and inspiring experience for everyone.

Stakeholder Interviews



Center for Civic Partnerships
A Trusted Partner in Community Building and Organizational Development

- The Results
 - Organizational Strengths
 - Organizational Challenges
 - Current Opportunities



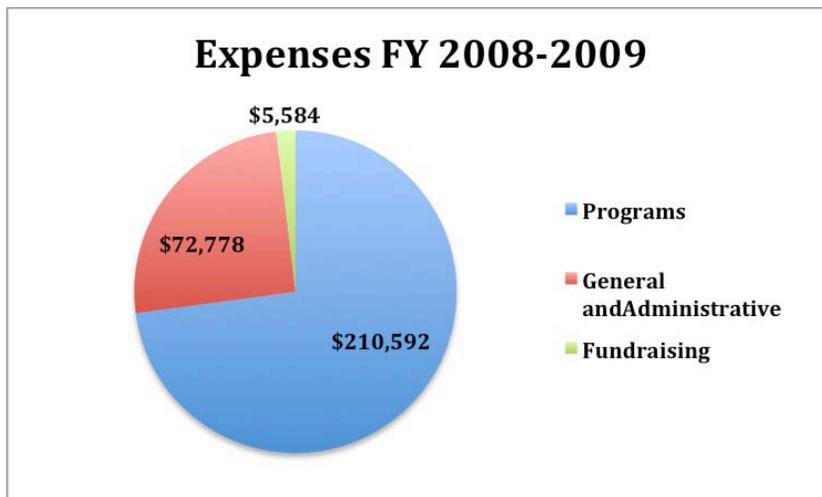
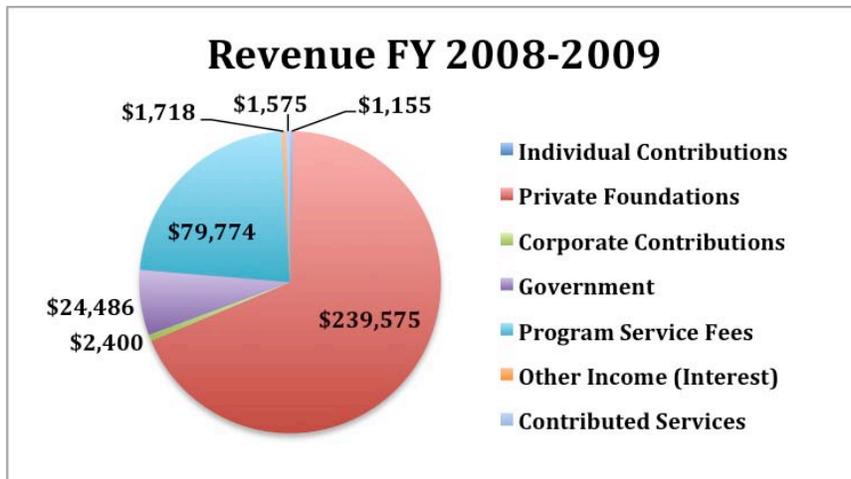
Informed Decisions

Financial Report FY 2008-2009

Revenue and Expenses 07/08 – 06/09

Total Revenue	<u>\$350,683</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$288,954</u>
Change in Net Assets	<u><u>\$61,729</u></u>

Source: Audited Financial Statements



Thank you to Our Supporters!

While the economic downturn has been difficult for our community, we are grateful to volunteers, colleagues and other friends who helped us serve community members in need and strengthen our agency.

Strategic Planning Participants

Shahla Arsala, Hamida Ashufta, Sima Aziz, Nazeer Babacarkhial, Bibi Gulali, Bruce Green, Rahima Haya, Zahida Hayati, Taiyaba Hosseini, Lucia Hughes, Abdul Wali Jabarkhel, Martha Jimenez, Heidi Lyss, Mariam Mogaddedi, Farida Momand, Nazem Momand, Hamida Naisan, Rahela Nayab, Hamid Nekrawesh, Nahid Nevin Rehman, Homayun Noor, Najiba Noori, Abdullah Popal, Abdul Safa, Suzanne Shenfil, Aida Shirazi, Valerie Smith, Dr. Suraiya, Qasim Tarin, Hanifa Tokhi, Parween Towfique, Giselle Vieto, Missy Ward, S. Reshma Yunus, Mizgon Zahir, Ahmad Zamani, B. Zarabi, Habib Zargi and Aziz Zetaryalai.



Staff and Consultants

Nadia Faizi, Seema Farhad, Rona Popal, Mary Anne Mendall and Christine Sculati

Volunteers, In-Kind Services for Programs

- Local High Schools
- Ohlone College
- Board Members with special thanks to *Bruce Green*, Bridge Builder
- Longtime community volunteers and supporters
- Past clients and program participants
- In-Kind services from City of Fremont staff
- East Bay Agency for Children

Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Funders – Grants and Fee for Service

- The California Endowment
- The California Wellness Foundation
- California Breast Cancer Research Program – UC Berkeley
- Asian Americans Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy
- Center for Civic Partnerships
- City of Fremont
- East Bay Agency for Children
- Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit Program
- The San Francisco Foundation
- Five Bridges Foundation
- East Bay Community Foundation

Congratulations to Homaira Hosseini

A longtime volunteer with the Afghan Coalition and a community activist, Homaira Hosseini, was selected as the student speaker for the UCLA College of Letters and Science graduation ceremony, held at Pauley Pavilion on Friday, June 12, 2009.

"Actions speak louder than words. You need to do as much as you say you are going to do. Never do anything you won't be proud of," said Homaira, UCLA student body president.

As a youth coordinator for the Afghan Coalition, Homaira helped the Afghan community locally in Fremont, where she grew up, while also raising funds to help Afghan women and children in Afghanistan who were victims of war.



When Homaira Hosseini was just 2 years old, Soviet troops invaded her native Afghanistan and imprisoned her father, who was a justice of the nation's highest court. Her father escaped and the family fled to India, then on to the United States when she was 4. They settled in Fremont, California, a Bay Area community with the largest Afghan population of any U.S. city.

Her experience with the indignation of poverty, culture shock, discrimination and disempowerment by language barriers, gave her an early appreciation of the hardships her family had escaped and a desire to help those left behind.

In 1994, at the age of 7, she returned to Afghanistan to visit family. There she witnessed the devastation of war and visited a refugee camp, a Taliban-controlled school and an excavated mass grave of skulls and bones.

"I learned very early on that I was destined to aid people afflicted by the scourge of conflict and injustice," she said. "As a victim of war, I knew that I held sole responsibility for my success in life."

Homaira Hosseini says her experience traveling back to Afghanistan has continued to be her source of motivation throughout her life pursuits in education and community service and her commitment to being an architect of positive change.

At UCLA, she helped coordinate the first "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" conference, which focused on raising student awareness about international poverty and oppression. She was also deeply involved in student-initiated community service programs at UCLA.

Homaira is now participating in the prestigious **Coro Fellows Program**, a leadership training program in San Francisco.

How You Can Help

We welcome and greatly appreciate the community's contributions of:

- Volunteer support
- In-kind and pro bono services
- Donations

Please visit our Web site to contact us about volunteer opportunities or to donate online. We especially need to find pro bono support for *public education assistance*. We receive numerous inquiries from journalists, academics, researchers, the general public and others who are interested in learning more about the Afghan community.

The Afghan Coalition is also grateful for your tax-deductible donations, which are securely processed through Guidestar.org's **Network for Good** system.



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