

Girl helps peers on other side of world

The 10-year-old from Grapevine helps Muslim girls in Afghanistan get a better education.

By ADRIENNE NETTLES

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GRAPEVINE — Scattered on a table in Sarosha Hansraj's home are pictures of Muslim girls about her own age — miles away in Afghanistan.

As she looks down at the photos, Sarosha speaks about the girls who attend school in Khost, a poverty-stricken province that is thick with Taliban forces.

"I believe knowledge is the most precious gift from God, and I believe that education is the only way out of poverty," said Sarosha, 10, a fifth-grader at North Hills Preparatory School in Irving.

For the past 1½ years, Sarosha has been working to provide shoes, socks, backpacks and other school supplies to Muslim girls through Children Care for



Sarosha Hansraj, who has been raising money for girls in Afghanistan for a year and a half, recently won a scholarship for her efforts.

Profile: 'Welfare for the kids in need' is girl's priority

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Children, an organization she created.

Since she began, Sarosha has helped about 383 Muslim girls at Darnami Girls School, said Sarfaraz Hansraj, Sarosha's father. Money raised by his daughter is sent to Afghanistan with the help of the Partnership for the Education of Children in Afghanistan, he said.

Sarosha has been an inspiration, Hansraj said. Through her school, her parents recently nominated her for the Kohl's Kids Who Care Scholarship Program, which awards scholarships to children based on their leadership, creativity, and generosity in helping others.

In July, Sarosha bested 13,000 other children to become one of 10 national winners of a \$5,000 scholarship through the Kohl's program. She also received a \$1,000 donation from Kohl's to go to a

nonprofit organization of her choice.

Hansraj said he is proud of the work his daughter is doing.

"For a long time, girls in Afghanistan were deprived from obtaining even basic education," he said. "Sarosha feels it is our responsibility, living in the richest country, to help children with education in these poor communities."

Sarosha said she donated the \$1,000 to the Aga Khan Foundation USA, which works to improve the living conditions of people in developing countries.

Rafiq Lakhani, a spokesman for the foundation, said by e-mail that his group was thankful for the gift and was inspired by her generosity at such a young age.

"It's very overwhelming to see a 10-year-old kid with such a caring heart for others," he said.

"She is born and raised in the U.S. with all the comfort and luxuries we enjoy in this country, but Sarosha's priority is welfare for the kids in need. Giving gives her more satisfaction than receiving."

Sarosha said she was inspired to begin her organization by a bedtime story her father told her when she was 8.

The story was of a farmer who had lost everything and had to rely on his children to work instead of sending them to school.

She hopes her work will prevent such situations in Afghanistan.

"I want to go to Afghanistan one day and visit the school," she said.

Online: www.childrencareforchildren.org

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