After seventeen years of successful educational services, today Star Educational Society is one of the brightest stars in Afghan horizon of academic and cultural excellence. During the past seventeen years, this academic institute, with its tireless efforts for youth, not only conducted English language courses in the west of Kabul but also conducted many cultural programs in order to discover and demonstrate the latent talents of this vibrant community.

I was a student of Star Educational Society from 2007 to 2009. After graduation from Advance level, I was a cultural manager with different local and international organizations and acquired considerable experience and knowledge of cultural and social activities. I was inspired and I wished to promote the culture and social activities of my people. As I was seeking an academic and cultural place where my dreams could come true, I found Star Educational Society. So with a world of dreams and wishes, I rejoined Star to learn from and revive the cultural initiatives within the Star family and community.

My return to Star after five years paralleled the return of Star’s Chairman, Ali Reza Yasa, who returned from a two-year master’s program with peerless energy and many new ideas. Now I am in charge of the Cultural Department at Star Educational Society and will lead the implementation of the programs and improvements long I had thought about. After I joined Star, the library of Star gets updated with standard coding and has become a more comfortable place for all Star students, teachers and knowledge seekers. The library is full of scientific and literature books which can be useful for English learners to improve their knowledge of English awareness. We are in the initial stages of starting a student government program for Star branches. When the student government is active, it will make students closer with Star teachers so that student representatives and Star Educational Society office bearers can meet regularly to address and discuss the challenges, obstacles and boost the rate of creating positive achievements in each branch. This program can also bring a positive competition between students of different branches.

Though Star Educational Society is known as an English language center among the people, its scope of voluntary activities, social activism, higher education support, employment consultation and even attempts for reduction of poverty are made. Monthly seminars for youth is one of the other programs which has long been in practice and will be even more organized shortly. In these programs, many issues will be discussed by youth and related specialists. These programs aim to improve the knowledge and culture of our student participants and guests who mostly come from different rich educational and cultural backgrounds.

Star Educational Society is a welcoming environment for educational development. Furthermore, our youths are thirsty for learning many new things. Star provides all of its facilities to you, as one of Star’s family members. Star depends on its students, staff members and friends and is only able to realize its many achievements with the support and encouragement of the Star extended family. Your support is the inspiration for us to move forward with high hopes and optimism. With your cooperation we can implement the humanistic cultural programs for the people who are still hopeful about their future in spite of the pain they have suffered in the past. Join Star Educational Society for difference.

“Dreams get you started, discipline keeps you going” - Jim Rohn

Star Educational Society established its public library in 2011 and has been slowly adding to its book collection and improving its resources. With children’s books, books for English learners, books about health, science, philosophy and other general information titles, there is something for everyone. Today, under the leadership of Habiba Sadeqi, the library has reached full operational capacity and has become an inviting sanctuary for all teachers, students and knowledge seekers. Unlock the doors of your minds with books. Help us to open the doors and flood the world with the light of our newfound knowledge.

“Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light.” – Vera Nazarian
Debt of Success

About the Author: Adela Khwairani has been an English teacher at Star since 2012 after studying English Literature and Accounting at Iqra College in Karachi, Pakistan and teaching English in Quetta. In addition, she is an excellent English announcer.

Every individual may have some specific objectives to be achieved in his or her life. Achieving those objectives would be considered a success for someone pursuing them. But, this is a matter of concern if the person is not satisfied enough after successfully reaching his or her goals. I think it is human nature to desire to achieve more, to seek more progress or to pursue the best.

However, I think that human beings have made their lives too complicated and difficult in their pursuit of more achievements. We have made our lives more challenging and complex instead of making them more comfortable. Life has become a never-ending race. Everyone runs to be the first one across the finishing line, but this race does not have a finishing line. It means that success does not have any limit or finishing line. But I think the real success must be the satisfaction rather than the competition. If someone is completely satisfied with their achievements at some stage of their life, then that is a life of true success.

How many nights that I haven’t slept
A thousand times that I have wept
So many joys that I have left
For only if... Could I! Would I! Should I!
Pay this debt of success

Knowledge Is Power

About the Author: Mohammad Jawad Niki is a recent Star graduate after consistently holding the 1st position since beginning as a Level Prep Two student in 2012. He received his BA in General History from Kabul University in 2014 and received a Turkish Scholarship to begin his MA studies in Political History at Abilenzia University in Ankara, Turkey this month.

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for he is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; much more than English language and has contributed greatly to my personal, academic, and professional success.

Upon graduating from Kabul University, I made a decision to pursue my MA degree. After progressing through the many stages of a competitive scholarship in Turkey, I received a formal offer of study at Abilenzia University, one of the most attractive universities in Turkey. As I continue on the golden journey of education, I would like to thank and congratulate all respected teachers, Chairman and General Director and all students and wish each of you the very best in your studies at Star and in your educational careers beyond. A challenging academic environment and an exciting experience at Star, the ideal educational environment, could well be a turning point in your life. Mr. Yasa, Chairman of Star Educational Society, said, “We have built a wall of human chain with the motto, ‘join us for a difference.’ Join us to strengthen this wall against discrimination, injustice and atrocities and build the kind of country we deserve.” Therefore, you must accept your responsibilities as a member of the Star family and Afghan society. Your success will help Star to shine even brighter than before.

The Shoemaker

About the Author: Zabihullah Hashimi is one of Star’s newest English teachers. He graduated from Star in 2014. Zabihullah graduated from Balkh University in Mazare-e-Sharif with a baccalaureate degree in Construction Engineering in 2011 and has worked as an engineer and a site engineer for a Construction company.

I was standing in Pol-E-Soldra after my class at Star Educational Society searching for a bus with empty seats for my 30 minute ride home. It was rush hour and there were crowds of people waiting to board the buses and take the limited number of empty seats that were available. While I struggled to board the bus, I noticed the people who only needed to travel for one or two kilometers but still took an empty seat. Some passengers held small children and others carried heavy watermelons and pumpkins while fighting against the crowds. A thought flashed through my mind - our resources are limited and only those with strength are going to succeed. The ones who move too slow or struggle weakly will remain outside or stand for the duration of their trip. I was pleased and felt a sense of accomplishment when I managed to get a seat.

When I was young and handsome, I used to sing in ceremonies, weddings and parties. I was a stylish and happy man of the city. Every night I was invited to sing and I made the party exciting for the people. People loved my voice. They listened to each of my songs very intently. While I was singing, people were dancing to my music. My music was so popular that I was known as an excellent English announcer.
Sabera Daqiq who has been a student and teacher at Star, received a grant to encourage the development of women’s handicrafts in Afghanistan and to provide training to women to learn how to make handicrafts. Sabera identified craftswomen in Afghanistan and requested them to make particular Afghan handicrafts. The handicrafts are sold in various craft shows in the United States where she is studying. From the sales, Sabera will continue to order handicrafts from the women – an initiative that provides the women income and encourages the handicrafts industry.

Sabera, with Mursal Nader, is a founder of an organization, Afghan Women’s Handicrafts (AWH.) AWH had started its activities in January 2012 by ordering handicrafts from skilled craftswomen in Afghanistan, most of whom are illiterate. Specific products and designs are ordered and, since the craftswomen often do not have funds, AWH provides the raw material such as different kinds of needles, tools, beads, wire, cloth, and other necessary items. AWH pays the women 10% more than the value of the product if it sold in the local market. The products are then brought to the U.S. and displayed and sold at crafts shows at universities and the local community where the grantee attends college. The project also encourages Afghan handicrafts by providing training to interested women who want to learn “handicrafting.” AWH contracts with certain of the skilled craftswomen to teach and train other women as craftswomen. One woman contractor trained two women without experience in making handicrafts (stitching) for $100 month. The two trainees were also provided room and board during their training and learned the complex skills of Afghan handicrafts.

The project is managed by Sabera and other college students who volunteer their time in the U.S. and Afghanistan. Sabera’s hope is that this project raises cultural awareness in her communities in the U.S. and Afghanistan.

Star wishes to congratulate and welcome our newly hired teachers. Pictured here are Sajida Alizada, Parisa Ahmadi, Habiba Sadeqi, Zahra Wahedi, Faiza Naseri, Abdul Malik Baqeri, Mohammad Asif Rasoli, Jumakhan Hamdard, Ali Reza Nazari, Mushtaq Sarwari, Zabihullah Hashimi, and Nematullah Shaikhi receiving their new teacher badges recently. It was a memorable moment as Star Chairman, Ali Reza Yasa, congratulated them with his encouraging words, “You are the golden pegs on the wall of our glory upon whom we hang our future pride...make us feel stronger my comrades.”
British Minister of Defense worried about increasing presence of Daesh in Afghanistan

Translated by: Mohammad Asif
Source: Etilaatrooz

During his visit to Kabul, Afghanistan, the Defense Minister of Britain, Michael Fallon, stated that he is worried about the presence and advances of Daesh in Afghanistan. During his trip, Fallon met Abdullah Abdullah and Massoom Stanekzai and discussed peace negotiations and security treatments. Fallon said that he, together with his international fellows, are worried about the presence of Daesh in Afghanistan. However, his worries are not only toward Afghanistan, "we worry about Indonesia, Africa, and the Mediterranean, because they attract other insurgents’ cooperation in destructive plots. This is a powerful ideology that challenges us. Thus, I’m worried about all areas where Daesh has activity."

According to BBC, Fallon continued his journey to Islamabad, to encourage both sides toward peace. Fallon said Britain is hopeful for peace negotiations and expects Afghanistan and Pakistan to face terrorism together. "Mullah Omar’s death postponed the peace negotiations with Talibain, but restarting the negotiations once again is what matters. We need to persuade the moderate Talibain, who are willing to start peace negotiations."

Repeate Pledges by Pakistan

Sirtaj Aziz, Foreign Relations and National Security advisor of Pakistan, after meeting the Afghan officials in Islamabad, has agreed to cooperate with their Afghan counterparts in maintaining peace and security. Sirtaj Aziz added, Pakistan and Afghanistan will work seriously in order that Afghans can take over their country’s security. On Thursday 22, Asad, a high-level government delegation went to Pakistan and visited Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, and Sirtaj Aziz, Foreign Relations and National Security advisor. This high-level government delegation was supervised by Afghan officials Salahuddin Rabbani, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Massoom Stanekzai, Supervisor of Ministry of Defense, and Rahmatullah, Head of National Directorate of Security.

In the proclamation, Sirtaj Aziz of the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan declared that both sides have thoroughly discussed comprehensive relations between the two countries. While visiting with this panel in Islamabad, Sirtaj Aziz discussed flagrantly and openly about the Kabul-Islamabad relationship. Sirtaj Aziz said that his country has a solemn determination for maintaining peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan and the last propagandas should not threaten Pakistan’s honesty.

An Afghan panel had a visit in Pakistan on Monday last week whereas, President Asghar Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah strongly criticized Pakistan’s action in Afghanistan’s security. President Asghar Ghani said training camps of suicide attackers and bomb producing factories are still operating similar to the past which cause the bloodshed of innocent people. Ghani added that groups which were leading the last terrorist attacks in Kabul and other provinces have offices and training centers in large cities of Pakistan.

Abdullah Abdullah in the meeting held on Monday also criticized Pakistan for their lack of cooperation against terrorism and the peace talk procedures between Afghanistan and Talibain. He added that Pakistan has never taken an honest step in this way. Abdullah labelled Pakistan as a place where the terrorist criminals in Afghanistan are being armed. Until now, it is not clear which issues were discussed by the Afghan Panel and Pakistani Officials as reports have not been received. Foreign Ministry have announced that results of this visit will soon be declared.

Islamic Commandos emerge in south of country

A local official in Ghazni province warned about the formation of a new radical group called “Islamic Commandos” in the south of the country, primarily in Zabul and Urozgan provinces. Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, the deputy governor of Ghazni province, said, "Most members of Islamic Commandos are from Chechenya, Uzbekistan, China and Turkmenistan and most kidnappings in Ghazni and Zabul provinces were carried out by this group," as quoted by Bokhdi News Agency.

According to Ahmadi, these warriors are well-equipped and always appear with a mask on their faces and usually travel via HI Lux vehicle in the area. For the first time they kidnapped 31 travelers from Shah-joy region in Zabul province and at least 10 of them are still in captivity now. The local official added, "This group is conducting terrorist activities and propaganda in Zabul, Urozgan, Kandahar and Ghazni provinces."

Ahmadi said, "The war in northern Afghanistan is being carried out by individuals of this group whether in Badakhshan, Kunduz and Farah. Their members in northern part of the country are fighting and in the southern region they are creating their programs and planning." According to Ahmadi, this group has formed training camps in Zabul and Urozgan provinces and, at this moment, they are training new members in military tactics. Ahmadi added, "This group even publishes their activities through their own press agent and website in Zabul province."

The deputy governor of Ghazni province said, "This group was located in North and South Wazizistan but with Pakistan military operation they escaped from there and settled in the North and South of Afghanistan. According to Ahmadi, this group is composed of foreign terrorists such as: Uighurs, Uzbeks, Chechens and Arabs which have close relations to ISIS. He added, "This new group is the front line fighters of the ISIS group and their main goal is to find human and financial resources for its members in northern Afghanistan and to open a path for their members from South to North through Zabul province."

The deputy governor of Ghazni province also said, "This group is connected with Al Qaida. Individuals of this group, which are mostly from Central Asian countries, are located in Takhar, Badakhshan and Kunduz provinces and are fighting against national security forces. But a small number of them have created the Islamic Commandos and are concentrating on attracting new forces and making propaganda in areas like Khak-e-Afghan, Shah-joy and Arghandaab districts."

Ahmadi explained the reason that the group has settled in two different parts of the country and said, "They are following their planned program which enables them to use a second route in case they face problems in the first one."

At the same time, the deputy governor of Ghazni province added, “Members of Islamic Commandos which are connected with ISIS, fought against Talibain in Zabul and Urozgan provinces and drove them out from some areas in Khak-e-Afghan, Arghandaab and Shah-joy.” Mr. Ahmadi also said, “Due to ideological beliefs, the people of the region support this group and believe this group is the savior of the Islam religion.” Ahmadi warned that at this moment this group has influenced the local people through religious activities and propaganda and if they are able to continue it will be a dangerous for the Afghan government in the future, unless the government stops them.

Ahmadi also said that the members of this group are well-equipped and receive support from regional Inter-Services Intelligence. According to Ahmadi, all the group’s equipment, funds, weapons and ammunition would not be possible to provide without the support of a foreign country. The deputy governor of Ghazni province criticized the central government and said, "Government is not serious with this group and again warned that the region will face a serious threat in the near future if this group is not controlled."
LeGree had to change these habits and build them into a problem climbing, they wanted to quit because they allow women to work outside the home impacts and successfully reached three mountaintops over their trip on August 21st, led by two American guides of the highest peaks in Afghanistan. The group finished mountaineering to be the first women to summit one between 15 – 22 years old and has trained them in of women from social pressure through mountaineering. LeGree connected with 13 Afghan women between 15 – 22 years old and has trained them in mountaineering to be the first women to summit one of the highest peaks in Afghanistan. The group finished their trip on August 21st, led by two American guides and successfully reached three mountaintops over 16,000 feet. She said that very traditional ideology not allowing women to work outside the home impacts most women’s self-confidence. Whenever the girls faced a problem climbing, they wanted to quit because they doubted their ability to do difficult activities. Therefore, LeGree had to change these habits and build them into climbing stars.

Beyond climbing, management of the program was not easy. It was difficult to find families who would allow their daughters to take a three-week hiking trip. She said that most of the girls were athletes before. While their family may allow them to participate in sports and climbing exercises, their relatives would object and make problems with their families. LeGree reminded the women to keep quiet about their activities otherwise they might face danger. She shared the example of two sisters who travelled to training together. Their taxi driver tried to extort money from them and then threatened their family. Afterward, the family did not allow them to continue because their father was afraid of driver’s threat.

Even finding an area for climbing was nearly impossible. The group planned to climb the 24,000-foot Mount Nooshq, Afghanistan’s highest peak, but fighting between Taliban and National Afghan Army forced them to change plans. LeGree said that their operations officer and his cousin climbed Mount Nooshq and were injured in a skirmish. The decision was made that area is not safe for women.

LeGree did not join the trip because she is nine months pregnant, but she communicated with the team by telephone and was thrilled with the results. The team conquered three peaks over 16,000 feet and now the women feel like they can do anything.

The proposal for weekly holidays of Friday and Saturday was confirmed by the cabinet. On Thursday’s cabinet meeting, under the order of president Ghani, the proposal that all Fridays and Saturdays should be legal holidays was suggested by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyred and Disabled. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyred and Disabled were assigned to draft the labor law modification.

Still, it is not obvious when this plan will be implemented, but it seems that currently the Executive Power is waiting for modification of the labor law and the lawful order for this issue. Currently, according to the labor law of Afghanistan, only Friday is known as a weekly legal holiday and the total number of actual and legal working hours is 40 in a week.

In 1388, the Council of Ministers sent the holiday proposal of two days per week (Fridays and Saturdays) for confirmation to the Parliament. According to it, 40 hours work was proposed in five days of a week. When this proposal was sent to the Parliament, some of the Parliament Members criticized it and said that it has canonical defects and it is a lawless practice. However, the cabinet announced that the holiday plan of Fridays and Saturdays depends on current relationship among Islamic countries, especially: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Morocco, Egypt and Bangladesh with consideration for: decrease in government costs, reduction in pollution and reduction in the large number of travelers during commuting hours. On the other hand, two years ago, because of an epidemic disease and pollution in Kabul city, the government closed the universities and official offices. Although this plan was only for one year, it still worked. Thursdays and Fridays are proposed to be off and many western countries and other foreign organizations are off on Saturdays and Sundays. In this case, four days would be useless in Kabul.
On the eve of Mother’s Day, Wednesday, September 12th, 2015, Star Educational Society hosted a speech contest which was a great pleasure and among the most precious memories written in the diary of Star. Star has undoubtedly been the realm of intellectual and intellectual performance. This starry day shined with over five hundred participants and memory builders of Star, Mr. Chairman Ali Reza Yasa, Executive Director Mustafa Hussaini, Program Director Hassan Rahmati, and B Branch Director M. Zahir Sarwary. B Branch teachers and students. Speech contest programs are held primarily to measure the students’ spoken language skills and ability to orally describe their thoughts. Great minds have risen from Star with students who have found success at the Center itself to great universities around the world, such as Columbia University, and these students shine as the most tangible achievements of Star.

The topic of the speech contest was “Women and Violence against Women.” At Star, speech contests such as this event, are an opportunity to use the English Language to express our common human condition and speak of the inner treasures of pain and happiness. Mr. Khan Muhammad Ayarve and Sajeda Alizada, our talented announcers, started the program by inviting Qari Mujtaba Habibi to recite some verses from the Holy Qur’an followed by the National Anthem played by a local musician. M. Zahir Sarwary, B Branch Director, warmly welcomed the audience. “Afghanistan is one of the third world countries and it has been facing many challenges. Among them, the most backbreaking challenge is violence against woman which can be caused by many factors, like meaningless perception of zan-ousness, illiteracy and considering woman at a lower status than men,” Sarwary said. He added that women, like men, all have personal, social, political, educational, and economic rights. Securing those rights is not incumbent only on the government but also on every individual. Furthermore, he promised the audience the continuous services of Star in brightening ways toward a good future.

The first round of the speech contest started. Four fluent and competitive speakers from different intermediate and upper-intermediate levels stood behind the podium and addressed the audience on the topic, “Women and Violence against Women.” The speakers were Muftaza from Level Three, Mujtaba, Fahima and Hussein from Level Five. The round ended with tremendous applause. The announcer called the Chairman of Star Educational Society, Mr. Ali Reza Yasa, who is famously known as Sir Changez, on the stage. As usual, he added to the beauty of the program by briefly speaking to the audience about Starians’ success in being awarded several Fulbright Scholarships. He proudly stated that Star has the pleasure to see its alumni ticketing their academic tour to the world’s most popular universities. Following Yasa’s speech was a marvelous drama performance by some students acting scenes of real challenges threatening women in Afghanistan. Though the title of the drama reminded us of bad times, the funny dialogues of the characters caused laughter in the audience.

The second round of the speech contest began. This time four other talented speakers Hafraia, Khadija, Hamidullah from Level Five and Ali sina from Level Four appeared on the stage and delivered their speeches. All spoke about how important the issue of violence against women is and very emphatically invited all authorities to do something to put an end to it. Soon after the speakers, two lovely little brothers excited the audience by lip syncing a nice rock song. Their talent lip syncing, dancing and rocking on the stage surprised everyone. The most exciting part of the program was when the panel of jury members entered the stage to announce the results of the speech contest. The speakers, being anxious and restless, couldn’t wait for the announcement of the results. Hamidullah from Level Five was announced as the Best Speaker of the Contest.

The program was concluded by awarding the Appreciation Letters to students scoring the highest in the general quiz competition of the semester and some words from Mr. Chairman Ali Yasa on praising the Star Instructors’ continuous perseverance in working hard to make such programs happen. The teachers were awarded Commendation letters.

**Things That...**

**Across**
1. An insect that makes honey.
2. A place where people watch TV.
3. A place in a home where people cook food.
4. A thing that people use to sew.
5. A place where people can see old things and learn history.
6. A place where people borrow books.
7. A person who plays sports.
8. A place where people see soccer or baseball games.
10. The time of day when people eat breakfast.
11. A place where people park their cars.
12. A person who cooks food.
15. A person who paints.
16. A person who paints.
17. A person who designs buildings.
19. A person who cooks food.
20. A place where people borrow books.
21. A place in a home where people cook food.
22. A place where people park their cars.
23. A person who plays sports.
25. A person who designs buildings.
26. A person who plays sports.
27. A place where people borrow books.
28. A place where people park their cars.
29. A place where people eat breakfast.
30. A place where people park their cars.
31. A place where people park their cars.
32. A place where people park their cars.
33. A person who cooks food.
34. A person who builds buildings.
35. A person who designs buildings.
36. A person who designs buildings.
37. A person who codes.
38. A place where people make things.

**Down**
1. Something that people use for paint.
2. The season when farmers plant crops.
3. A thing that people use to sew.
4. A place where people can see old things and learn history.
5. A person who plays sports.
6. The time of day when people eat breakfast.
8. A person who cooks food.
9. Someone who puts out fires.
10. A person who designs buildings.
12. A person who cooks food.
15. A person who paints.
16. A person who paints.
17. A person who designs buildings.
19. A place where people borrow books.
20. A place where people park their cars.
22. A place where people park their cars.
23. A person who designs buildings.
25. A person who paints.
26. A person who plays sports.
27. A place where people borrow books.
28. A place where people park their cars.
29. A person who plays sports.
30. A place where people park their cars.
31. A place where people park their cars.
32. A place where people park their cars.
About the Author:

Hadi Zaher was the first graduate of Star Educational Society in the year 1999. He is the nephew of the founder of Star in Quetta, Mr. Nabi Ariq. Hadi was both first position holder and also one of the first Star graduates who, together with Mr. Hussain Yousoof, was selected as a language teacher. Hadi Zaher has an MA from the University of Wollongong in Australia and is currently a post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales. He is the president of Zaheristan, a virtual world of professional photography that he describes in these words: “A land of good people, a free people. A land where flowers bloom in streets, rubub music plays in the samovar tea houses, and kites fly in the skies.”

The Kuchis came to the hills every year. They spent the entire summer in the area. They ate from our orchards, claimed their right on the crops, ate our food and at times, stayed at our homes. Their cattles and camels grazed all over our land, while they grazed all over our homes and livelihood.

One hot summer day, the girls were getting mulberries from the tree when they dropped a full container.

“Ay khag da sar e Awgho!” (Damn the awgho!), I exclaimed.

Bakhtawar Awgho, who I did not know was up the next mulberry tree, heard me.

He yelled:

“Khag bar sar e Hazara! Khagbar sar e Hazara! Khag bar sar e Hazara!” (Damn the Hazara!)

I was taken aback. I panicked and dropped all the mulberries. I huddled my girls together, and rushed back home.

Bakhtawar Awgho, Sher Jan and Sahib Jan came from Rasna. They were not nice people. They did all they wanted in the summer. They barged into our homes when they wanted. They demanded food, took our belongings, and beat up anyone who resisted. They had the support of the government. We despised them, but were too afraid and too weak to ever say anything.

In the Autumn the Kuchis returned home, only to return the following summer.

Then came the war, and mehrbani khuda, they stopped coming. May be that was the one good thing about the war.

*Kuchi = Afghan Pashhtun nomads
*Awgho = A variant of the word Afghan; a term Hazaras use to refer to Pashtruns
*Mehrmani Khuda = By the grace of God.

I went down to the river, I set down on the bank. I tried to think but couldn’t, So I jumped in and sank.

I came up once and hollered! I came up twice and cried!

If that water hadn’t a-been so cold I might’ve sunk and died.

But it was Cold in that water! It was cold!

I took the elevator Sixteen floors above the ground. I thought about my baby And thought I would jump down.

I stood there and I hollered! I stood there and I cried!

If it hadn’t a-been so high I might’ve jumped and died.

But it was High up there! It was high!

So since I’m still here livin’, I guess I will live on.

I could’ve died for love-- But for livin’ I was born

Though you may hear me holler, And you may see me cry-- I’ll be dogged, sweet baby, If you gonna see me die.

Life is fine! Fine as wine! Life is fine!

Langston Hughes, whose full name was James Mercer Langton Hughes, was born in 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. He was the only son of James Nathaniel Hughes and Carrie Mercer Langston. His parents divorced when he was young and his father moved to Mexico. Because his mother traveled a lot to find work and was often absent, his grandmother raised Hughes until he was 12. His childhood was lonely and he often occupied himself with books. It was Hughes’s grandmother, a great storyteller, who transferred to him her love of literature and the importance of becoming educated.

In 1914 he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her new husband. It was here that he started writing poetry. He wrote his first poem in the eighth grade. A year later the family relocated to Cleveland, Ohio. Despite all the moving around, Hughes was a good student and excelled in his studies. He was also handsome and popular with the other students. During his senior year at Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio, he was voted class poet and editor of the yearbook.

After high school, Hughes traveled in Mexico, Europe, and Africa sometimes by working on cargo ships. By 1924 he had settled in Harlem, New York, and was an important figure during the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was an African-American cultural movement that focused on literature, music, theater, art, and politics. One of his favorite pastimes was to sit in music clubs and listen to the blues as he wrote his poetry.

Langston Hughes wrote from 1926 to 1967. In that time he wrote more than 60 books, including poems, novels, short stories, plays, children’s poetry, musicals, operas, and autobiographies. He was the first African American to support himself as a writer, and he wrote from his own experience.

Latif Wahidy: A Source of Change

How do you describe yourself? I was born in 1990 in Maidan Wardak Province of Afghanistan. When the Taliban attacked our village, we immigrated to Pakistan and this immigration has affected my personality because when I lived in Pakistan I faced many challenges. The two basic and fundamental things that have shaped my personality are my education and immigration to Pakistan. I was weaving carpets and going to school. I forgot all those hardships and became interested in playing chess and photography.

What are your plans after you return to Afghanistan? I want to resume my job at the Central Bank of Afghanistan. I want to teach development economics at a local university. I want to establish an institution to do research regarding poverty, economics, growth and so on. People committed to returning to Afghanistan after studies. They also check if the application essays have been written by the applicant himself/herself. So the applicant must be honest and realistic.

What is your message to Afghan young students? I see people have the sense of leaving Afghanistan. I believe that students shouldn’t leave and focus on their studies.

What will you be studying and in which state will you be studying? I will study Development Economics. I have selected Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and American University in Washington. Once you are a finalist, the US embassy sends your application to the universities you have chosen and then one of the universities will confirm your application.VERSITIES will confirm your application. The candidate should be their real selves and present a success story in his/her life, like I have. The candidate should be their real selves and present a success story in their essays. My work experiences made my application strong. I established a youth organization called Meer Chehiltan Youth Association through which we provide knowledge for illiterate men and women in society. I also established a library in Dasht-e-Barchi. Fulbright is looking for someone who can be a source of change in the community and my initiatives demonstrated my desire to do that. In addition, I prepared and submitted a strong application and letters of recommendation. My essays demonstrated a strong connection between my educational background, my work experience and my future plans. All of these things helped me to become a finalist.

Tell me more about the library. The Pozhohesh Library is affiliated with the Youth Association. We raised some funds from the local elders and business men. I personally donated many books from my high school and university studies and collected some books from my father and grandfather (who was a university professor). All of them were donated to the library. With limited means, we have been trying to collect all types of books for all ages. We have both English and Persian novels, short stories, literature books, history, political science, economics, and business books. But we lack scientific books. The purpose of establishing the library was to promote a culture of reading among both children and youth. We want the children to get used to reading from a very early stage and for youth to enrich their school and university studies and experiences. Most of the students in our vicinity are poor and can’t afford buying reference books, so we have prepared a few reference books too.