Celebrating Shared Achievements

A Message from Mohammad Zahir Sarwary, B Branch Director

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison.”

— Victor Hugo

I was in my late teens when I first joined the Star family as a student. This life-changing experience helped my hopes to become palpable and allowed me to discover that Star was the place where I could pursue my goals. I graduated from Advance Class at Star and was then awarded with the most treasurable responsibility ever – teaching at Star. My climb to the position of the Director of B Branch has been with great pride. As Star heralded me with my own message of progress, I also witnessed a positive difference in the lives of my classmates, students and colleagues. A glimpse into my journey with Star follows.

During my days as a student, my semesters of learning English at Star passed with extreme pleasure. Students are taught and encouraged personally, academically and with immense commitment by Star faculty. Star instills in its students the energy to streamline their dreams and reach their destinations. This was my experience and it inspired me to work hard and become an active member of the Star family.

After my graduation, being badged as an Instructor at Star was the greatest pride for me. A new chapter of my life began and brought me a thousand times closer to my academic goals. Some people believed that becoming an English Instructor was not something to feel so proud and delirious about. However, I confidently responded that Star does not only focus on English but there are several programs and initiatives that help illuminate the path to our goals where we can celebrate our most memorable achievements.

I joined Star B Branch as a teacher in 2008 only three years after its establishment. It was headed by a young lady from the Yousofi family, Ms. Zainab Yousofi. Although academic rules and regulations were prevalent, the environment was extremely friendly. Students entered Star with their eyes glittering with hope that one day they would achieve what they aspired to. When Ms. Zainab Yousofi left to study in the U.S., she was replaced by Mr. Hassan Rahmaty. Rahmaty’s energy and perseverance inspired students and teachers and he encouraged the Star faculty to concentrate more on academic capacity. Rahmaty’s leadership was followed by Rajab Yousofi who, upon his return from studying in India, held capacity building classes, training in team work, and educational seminars. Mr. Yousofi introduced academic resources with up-to-date standards, founded the Star Futsal League, organized several successful speech contests with fresh topics, and more.

In 2014, Star’s Director General, Mr. Hussian Yousofi, promoted me to be the new Director of Star B Branch. The honor and recognition of being chosen for this new position made me feel flushed with success. To foster trust and confidence between the center, instructors and students, I have adopted a management style that relies on the valuable input of my colleagues and students, I have adopted a management style that relies on the valuable input of my colleagues and students. Moreover, our end of semester speech contests are among the many remarkable things which we have accomplished at Star since 2014. The future is bright for B Branch and Star Educational Society. As the director of B Branch, I aim to design and implement programs that will continue to develop our students’ knowledge and awareness. With increased capacity and confidence, the students will embrace their dreams, reach for their goals and live their lives with success and happiness.

On Friday August 28th, B Branch held their “B-B” trimester quiz competition. Over eight hundred students from Introductory through Upper Intermediate class levels participated. The quiz competitions are held every trimester and are a great way to encourage students to enhance their language skills. The enthusiastic students participated in three rounds: 1st round – Prep 1, Prep 2, and Junior Beginner students; 2nd round – Senior Beginner, Level 1, Level 2, 3rd round – Level 3, Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6. The competition resulted in over eighty winners. The first, second, and third position competitors from each class were recognized and commended for their achievement in a ceremony on September 11th.
Indelible Memory of Jaghato District

In 2013 I went to the Jaghato district of Ghazni Province. I was the Site Safety Manager for the Jaghato Afghan National Police working with a construction project funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers. It was the last month of winter and the temperature was below zero. We were stuck in a blizzard for several days during our trip toward the project site and we were almost frozen to death due to the cold weather and the sudden arrival of an avalanche.

While the project work was in progress we interacted well with the local labourers. We convinced the tribal elders and local residents to collaborate in the project development. Until the end of 2013, the project progressed according to schedule. The work was performed at a high quality and the activities were conducted very well. In the process of the completion of the company faced payment deficits resulting in long delays for project work.

On one early morning, the labourers went for work in an area against the company in order to receive their daily wages. They wrote a letter of complaint and sent to the Judiciary Department of Jaghato District. The company remained unresponsive because of budget shortages and failed to satisfy the angry protestors. Since the company had no procedures for dealing with complaints, the project work stopped until the financial problems could be resolved. Eventually, after a long postponement of project activity, the company solved the financial problem and resumed its work.

At the end of 2014 the project came under direct threat of Taliban attacks. All staff members and labourers were in a panic and everyone was in a hurry to escape from the project site as soon as possible. A power generator belonging to the Afghan National Police was stolen by Taliban insurgents while it was being transported to the project site from Ghazni City. In addition, several days later one of my colleagues, learning another by insurgents on his way home from work. He was brutally tortured by his abductors and we assumed that he would be killed. Fortunately, he was released after 18 days with the help of tribal elders who paid 400,000 AFN that was being demanded by the abductor.

Many other project staff faced death threats from the insurgents. In addition, the Taliban ordered the national police commander to stop military patrol of the area. This is the condition in the daily lives of ordinary Afghan people. People are not even safe in their motherland and are the victims of circumstances beyond their control. Afghans inhabit a land which is characterized by bombings, kidnappings, and ruthless killings by terrorist groups which are supported and equipped by territorial enemies of our nation in order to succeed in their evil goal.

Therefore, as responsible citizens, it is our national duty to come together and strengthen our national unity against foreign oppressors. We must rise up and defeat our oppressors instead of criticizing and blaming the government and taking refuge in foreign countries. Fleeing from difficulties which are imposed on our helpless people by foreigners is not the solution. We must not forget that we are part of the Afghan government. The enemies of Afghanistan must recognize that Afghanistan is not a place to be occupied because the Afghan people are ready to sacrifice themselves for their homeland to root out foreign oppressors.

Improving day by day

About the Author: Ghulam Sakhi Niazy graduated from Star Educational Society in 2013 and attended Star’s Teacher Training Program. He is a graduate of the Management Department of the National Institute of Accounting and Management.

Twenty-one years ago I was born into a crowded family with around thirty members. Thinking of it bothers me now because living in a crowded family with so many family members causes many children to be deprived of their primary needs. Where I was born the people were very rural and showed much respect to clergy and everything related to religion. Moreover, they were very sensitive to things such as movies, music, television and technology, according to their views. Attending mosques and studying religious subjects were mandatory whereas people did not care about going to school. Boys were preferred over girls and girls were prevented from going to school, the mosque and studying.

These are all the issues that made my childhood seem senseless and gave me a bad image of the rural lifestyle. I was tired of living in such an environment and tolerating people with ancient thoughts. Fortunately, when I was thirteen years old, my family decided to move to Kabul. I was so happy when I came to Kabul because I things were very different from what I saw and experienced in my birthplace. In Kabul I could learn topics other than religion and I could attend many different courses to learn English, computer and internet. I enjoyed seeing girls going to school and studying the same as boys did. These simple things were not possible in my birthplace and made urban life interesting to me and thus I always prefer urban life over a rural lifestyle.

Here in Kabul I have my own choices and do what I want, I learn better and meet various people from different areas and with different views and thoughts. I have bad good achievements, the most important of which are my English diploma from Star Educational Society and being accepted into Kabul Medical University. Now I go to university and will become a professional doctor in the future. It is clear that everyone faces problems and I also faced problems getting my English diploma and succeeding at Kabul Medical University. However, problems cannot prevent us from reaching our goals if our animus is to truly understand the complexities of another society’s cultural and social values, one must reside with and relate to the local population by actively interacting with them. This is not achievable without local language fluency and language awareness.

The English language is one of the most interesting languages in the world and is in Afghanistan, due to the presence of coalition forces and the international community, an escalating graph of interest is observed among the younger generation. English is often referred to as a sign of education and literacy. The higher your English skills, the more educated people think you are.

My interest in language has allowed me to meet new and interesting people and to develop lifelong friendships. These are certainly my objectives and are also valued by many other Afghan youth. Learning another language expedites the process of socializing and elevates everyone’s understanding of the world. When you learn a new language, observe an entirely new culture and experience a different view of the world, it is the most certain way to become a more open minded, understanding individual. Human beings are social beings. We are products of our own environments. When we meet people from other societies, we recognize the cultural base of our own attitudes and behavior and are better prepared to consider others in a more favorable light.

Seeing the world from a different perspective and understanding where you and others come from is a fantastic, eye-opening experience. Music, movies, food, literature, theater, poetry and fine arts - the list of fabulous things that culture brings into our lives is endless. Language and culture are two sides of the same coin in the journey towards understanding ourselves and others.

If you want to travel to new countries, it is very important to know about that country. Travelling is not just about catching pretty pictures and posting them on Facebook and Instagram or spending a week in a 5-Star hotel. Learning a foreign language, even just a handful of phrases, will make your travel experiences much better. Likewise, learning a foreign language, although it requires self-discipline and a serious commitment of time, is a rewarding experience. Learning a language is a journey, a journey of knowledge, a journey towards your better self.

Learning languages – A journey of understanding

About the Author: Ali Reza Behrouz is a Star alumnus and has been teaching at Star since 2013. He graduated from Kabul University with a Bachelor’s degree in Geology in 2012.

Discovering a new culture and people is an immensely enriching experience intricately tied to foreign language knowledge. To truly understand the complexities of another society’s cultural and social values, one must reside with and relate to the local population by actively interacting with them. This is not achievable without local language fluency and language awareness.

The English language is one of the most interesting languages in the world and is in Afghanistan, due to the presence of coalition forces and the international community, an escalating graph of interest is observed among the younger generation. English is often referred to as a sign of education and literacy. The higher your English skills, the more educated people think you are.

My interest in language has allowed me to meet new and interesting people and to develop lifelong friendships. These are certainly my objectives and are also valued by many other Afghan youth. Learning another language expedites the process of socializing and elevates everyone’s understanding of the world. When you learn a new language, observe an entirely new culture and experience a different view of the world, it is the most certain way to become a more open minded, understanding individual. Human beings are social beings. We are products of our own environments. When you meet people from other societies, we recognize the cultural base of our own attitudes and behavior and are better prepared to consider others in a more favorable light.

Seeing the world from a different perspective and understanding where you and others come from is a fantastic, eye-opening experience. Music, movies, food, literature, theater, poetry and fine arts - the list of fabulous things that culture brings into our lives is endless. Language and culture are two sides of the same coin in the journey towards understanding ourselves and others.

If you want to travel to new countries, it is very important to know about that country. Travelling is not just about catching pretty pictures and posting them on Facebook and Instagram or spending a week in a 5-Star hotel. Learning a foreign language, even just a handful of phrases, will make your travel experiences much better. Likewise, learning a foreign language, although it requires self-discipline and a serious commitment of time, is a rewarding experience. Learning a language is a journey, a journey of knowledge, a journey towards your better self.
9/11 brought us out of the dark ages

About the Author: Muhib Shadan was a student at the Star Branch in Quetta from 2003–2006. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management from Pune University, India. Currently he works as a translator/copywriter with Impassion Afghanistan, Afghanistan’s first digital media agency, and is doing his MBA at the Afghan Swiss University.

September 11 changed my life just as it changed the life of every Afghan. It was a tragedy for people around the world, but in Afghanistan, it was also a day when hope returned. I was just 3 years old when the Taliban came to power in Kandahar city in 1993.

Life was very boring in Kandahar, the capital of the Islamic Emirate. There were no official schools, just religious lessons in mosques. The only entertainment was playing marbles and kite-running. I still remember the marbles. I always won. Girls and women could only be in the home. You never saw them in the city, unless it was some sort of big holiday like Nawroz (New Year) or Eid. If they came out without a man, the Taliban would beat them. There was no music in public. The only music you heard were Talib Tarana (songs without music). Some people listened secretly, but they had to hide. The Taliban were destroying televisions and music cassettes, hanging them on their gates to show people the bad consequences of watching movies or listening to music. Men were forced to have beards, but could not wear their hair long. If they did, they were taken to Taliban headquarters where they were beaten. Then they were sent back with shaved heads. The Taliban had created big fear inside the city with their execution ceremonies. Shops were closed during prayer time, and people were being forced to go to the mosque.

The life continued like this for years. Then one day in 2001 a miracle happened. Our family’s shop was near the office of Anif Al Monineen, as we called Mullah Omar, the Taliban Supreme Leader. It means “Leader of the Faithful.” I saw Toyota with armed men, and with lots of weapons. But the most interesting thing was I heard music—real music, in public, for the first time. I wanted to get closer—the men were trying to enter Mullah Omar’s office. There were some Talib on the roof, but they had no weapons. So these men did not shoot them, just shouted at them to come down. I had heard on the radio about planes hitting the Twin Towers. The Taliban were praising what Osama bin Laden had done to America. They were saying the planes had killed thousands of people.

In Kandahar, drones were scattering pieces of paper with pictures of Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. There were things written on them, like “Osama bin Laden is a terrorist” and “The Taliban are backward people.” My friends and I would pick up the papers. I remember one day a Talib came into our shop and was talking about Osama bin Laden. “He is not afraid of anyone but Allah!” said the Talib. So I contributed the only thing I knew about Osama bin Laden. “He is a terrorist,” I said, although I did not really know what that meant. It’s a good thing my neighbor and my brother were there—the Talib would have beaten me. NATO planes were bombing specific locations, hitting Taliban centers in Kandahar. The only building I knew was located in Chawk-e-Madad. It was the place where people were taken for things like not praying on time or having long hair or not having a beard. The planes attacked it so precisely that the building next to it was not touched.

I was happy. Everybody was happy. Soon new and interesting things appeared. Tapes and cassettes, DVD players, VCRs, and television were amazing and delighting the people. The city completely changed. Everywhere you could hear loud music; we were watching movies the whole night. It was as if people could not quench their thirst for these things; they just could not get enough.

I believe post-Taliban Afghanistan is a far better place to live. People may suffer from economic problems. There is unemployment, there may be corruption and a lot of political issues. Suicide bombings and peace talks with the Taliban may make the international headlines. But still, it is better.

If September 11 had never happened, I might never have been more than a second-class refugee in some country, and my life would be passing with no ambition, no hope. Instead I have finished school, received a scholarship to India, and earned my Bachelor’s degree. Now I am back and I am working. Things may not yet be clear, but I have a good feeling these days. September 11 brought us out of the dark ages.
Ghani: we cannot authorize others to bring peace

The president of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, says the peace talks should be discussed only among Afghans and cannot authorize others to bring peace.

President Ghani mentioned this declaration in a meeting with staff and head of Ulema Council in Arg yesterday. "Peace is a primary need of Afghanistan, and we have no option except stabilizing peace. The government and all religious ulema should stand in a single row. I am proud of shared announcement by generous ulema, monitoring the current situation of Afghanistan, and solutions to bring peace to Afghanistan."

"Holy war proclamation by government opponents is permitted neither principally nor canonically. Abusing Islam’s verdicts is a crime," he added. President Ghani asked religious ulema to invite and unite the community with the government using their influence. The three Taliban groups consider the current war a holy war, and with alternations in the leadership of these groups, the Taliban continues their work more seriously as they announced that peace negotiations are just rumors by their enemies and they will continue the holy war until settlement of Islamic rules in Afghanistan.

The Ulema Council condemned the Taliban claims and says these are opposite of Islamic rules. The Ulema Council condemned the savage attacks in Kabul that resulted in the martyrdom and injury of many citizens. They consider the latest attacks opposite of Islamic rules and human emotions and asked security officials to identify these terrorists and arrest/capture them immediately and pay serious attention to avoid these kinds of incidents.

The council asked the government opposition not to cause adversity anymore, cease murdering their brothers and destroying their country, and solve their problems with the government through discussions. The Ulema Council reports there are some documents showing that the current war is controlled by others. Since the absence of a leader for the Taliban has continued for many years, a variety of members are abused, and they do not know who passes the verdict and who is their leader. The Ulema Council demanded magnanimous figures, endeavors and community to try their best in order to bring peace and security to the country.

An island far from this land

"Bamiyan, the world of marvel. Bamiyan, the land mysterious," the girls of Buddha city and caves sing accompanied by the charming sound of Dambora. The sound flows to the Foladi hillocks and the Ahammad valley, and echoes in the Baba Mountains. Thousands of men and women, many from other provinces, are gathered here to take a refreshing, deep breath far from routine explosions and suicide attacks, without any hatred or discrimination.

Most of them, as families, take their children’s hands and visit the City Park during the day and ruined Buddha statues at night, sometimes in Band-e-Amir national park, sometimes in popular hotels of Bamiyan and spend their time with happiness and joy. The chords sound of Sayeed Anwar’s Dambora, Dawood Pajman’s musical instrument, and the wonderful voice of Hamid Sakhibzada impasion everyone as if this place was an island far from this land: the land of explosions, death and disaster. It seems like everyone has forgotten they live in Afghanistan.

The children are dressed with colorful garments like the spring tulips and, sing joyfully like the sound of beautiful sparrows in the early morning. The youngsters are clapping and expressing their joy and eldros drop tears of happiness and hope for a bright future for their children. The moon is in the middle of the sky, the wind is blowing, and the Salsa* sculpture with its 3D laser light is reminiscent of the times the Buddha statue was magnificent and on its feet. Thousands of amazed visions stared at the wonderful statue of Salsal, and the lights have brightened the front court of the 55 meters tall Buddha.

With the song “I’m hearing her voice, her familiar voice” the atmosphere of the festival became so friendly, lovely and charming that nobody could ever imagine anything but hope for a bright future and a better tomorrow. Everyone is clapping and shouting, “Afghanistan, we love you!!!” Eyes stares at the stage and the whole audience is waiting to hear the charming songs of Wajija Raestar, Atyana Saeed, Nasser Soroush, Sahar Aryan and Arash Baarez. One after another, these artists double the happiness of SAARC festival participants and local residents.

Ahmad Fahim, who attended the “SAARC Music Festival and Silk Way” with his family, with a Hazari dialect says, “Right now, I feel like I am on an island far from this land, and the Buddha and Zootaster have been revived.” A few alleys farther in Bamiyan’s University, Jawad Anghari, Din Mohammad Javid Bamiyan’s Caves, the Buddha statues, Bamiyan’s culture, the natural attractions and the history of this land for the students. Taher Zaheer, the mayor of Bamiyan Province stated, “In honor of Bamiyan’s festival, ten books have been prepared as a subject of Bamiyan, four of them, which were exhibited today, were published by the Cultural Commission of this organization.”

Bamiyan is working hard with their brush and white tableaux, each in one corner. Sunama, a 45 year-old artist from Nepal is sketching a Buddhist bishop of Nepal beside the damaged Buddha, and said, “I wished to visit Bamiyan for ten years and now I am here to draw the beauty of its nature and take these paintings to other countries for everyone to enjoy, to spread the message of silent Buddha, the ruined cities of Zahan and Ghoghol, the abandoned caves of Buddhists, the silvery smiles of Foladi River and the entertaining place of Band-e-Amir and to let the world see what Bamiyan has.”

Ahmad Hussain Ahmadpoor, the Head of Bamiyan’s Cultural and Informational Department says: “Until now, more than 300 photos and paintings in this camp have been exhibited and most of them are dedicated by SAARC member artists. These masterworks will be kept in Bamiyan’s Museum.”

On 5 June, 2015, Bamiyan was nominated as the first Cultural Center of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). There has been an enormous celebration for this occasion.

The second SAARC festival coinciding with the seventh anniversary of Silk Way was celebrated in Bamiyan and named the “SAARC Artistic Camp.” This festival contained short film screenings, a local foods exhibition, local music concerts, and a local handicrafts exhibition. Bamiyan Province will remain the Cultural Capital of SAARC for one year although Bamiyan’s mayor and other high position authorities requested to have a permanent office of SAARC in Bamiyan.

* Salsal is the name of the larger of two Buddha statues in Bamiyan and means “light shines through the universe”
translated by Khalida Haideri
Source: Haseeb Sahib Daily newspaper

A lower court in the Ghor Province of Western Afghanistan sentenced a 21 year old man and 22 year old woman to one hundred lashes each for the crime of adultery and the sentence was carried out two weeks later. Ahmad and Zamina were accused of being involved in an illegitimate sexual relation. Ata Mohammad Farooqi, the primary court judge of Ghor Province, reported that both of them pleaded guilty and confessed to their crime. After the decision of the primary court, each of them were sentenced to a hundred lashes.

The judge said that the court, based on the first article of the Afghan penal code, article 130 of the constitution, and with accordance to Hanafi jurisprudence, sentenced the young man and woman for their crime. In Hanafi jurisprudence, an unmarriage pregnant woman can be prosecuted and penalized for the crime of adultery.

The judge, in response to a reporter’s question, said that reviewing and passing a verdict on this case is the jurisdiction of primary court. Both of them were released after an executive decree, but according to the lower court judge of Ghor, Zamina, after her release from prison, was moved to a safe house in Feroz Mountains. The court said that Zamina and Ahmad pampered a child after their illicit relations.

It is not clear yet in what circumstances the confessions of the young couple were taken. Both of the defendants were single. This is the first time that, at least in the west of Afghanistan, a young man and woman, each by an official court order, were forced to endure a sentence of hundred lashes although similar verdicts have been reached in the past.

A verdict of 100 lashes for young couple in Ghor

Translated by: Freshta Hayatti
Source: Etilaatrooz

180 Taliban insurgents killed in Helmand and Ghazni battles

Helmand province officials have reported that 150 Taliban fighters were killed and hundreds were injured in an operation of Afghan security forces together with NATO in the Musa Qala district of Helmand province. According to Shah Mahmoud Ashna, the spokesman of Helmand’s provincial police, Afghan security forces arrived within four kilometers of the central district while the Taliban continued their resistance. Ashna said that the operation continued since casualties of the security forces were minimal. The Taliban has not issued any statements on this issue yet.

Recently, the Taliban seized Musa Qala district and the following day security forces supported by NATO air strikes started to recapture the district. Based on reports, 30 Taliban insurgents were killed in security forces operations in Helmand and Ghazni provinces. There was intense combat between security forces and Taliban in Qarabagh, Andez, Gero, and Deyak during the last week.

Assadullah Insafi, the manager of security headquarters of Ghazni, said that at least 15 insurgents and 14 injured in Qara Bagh district as well as 16 Taliban militants killed and 17 others injured in Deyak district as a result of combat operations. In addition, the Taliban claims that nine local police members were killed in fighting in Shulgari district.

Ghazni and Helmand Provinces in the south of the country are among the insecure provinces. A number of their districts are under the complete control of the Taliban. Musa Qala district has been hit with conflict between the government and Taliban many times in recent years.

Truth Commission has announced the result of its review about Jalrez event

Translated by: Freshta Hayatti
Source: Etilaatrooz

Aft two months, the Truth Commission has finally shared with media their research about the Jalrez event. The Commission found that the main problem was a lack of coordination among the security forces. Yousaf Pathanin, a senior adviser of President Ghani and Chief Minister of the Truth Commission, told media that six government officials in connection with the Jalrez incident have been indicted, but he did not disclose the identity of the accused persons. Mr. Pathun added that in this event no ethnic issues were determined and some politicians are misusing this event.

Pashtun also mentioned that the local people had no role in this event and that they actually had tried to help the local policemen. After the sanguinary event of Jalrez, President Ghani had assigned a commission to review this event. The commission was to report the result of its review to President Ghani after five days. However, the commission announced the results of its review after nearly two months.

One of the issues of concern was the rumor that the local people were in alliance with the Taliban. But the result of the commission’s review indicates that the people were coordinating with the local policemen not the militants. On the other hand, videos after this event which were played by media, show that the local people were demonstrating against the local policemen. President Ghani, Chief Executive Officer Abdullah and the people said that the Taliban have committed a war crime.

President Ghani promised that this event will not remain without a response. The soldiers who survived this event are saying that during this battle they had asked for the help of authorities but no assistance was provided.

THEME: "Be the change you want to see in this world."

Star Educational Society was created 17 years ago to “be the change” that the founders wanted to see in the world. They adopted the motto, “Join us for a difference,” and built the foundations of their institution on that enduring principle. What does it mean to be the change you want to see in the world? How can you incorporate that advice into your own life? What can ordinary people, like the members of the Star family, do to make the difference that we want to see? Please illustrate your ideas with your personal experiences.

The judging criteria includes creativity, structure, adherence to topic, grammar and the “wow!” factor. Essays will be read and judged in a three-round process by an international panel of judges. Winners will be announced by November 15, 2015.

GUIDELINES:

1. Essays may be submitted by any current or former student, and current staff members and teachers. Submissions will be divided into two or more categories depending on the ages of writers submitting entries.

2. Essays must be 500 words or less in English. Essays may be typed or printed.

3. Essays must have a cover page indicating (1) name (2) essay title (3) date of birth (4) email address (yours or someone you know) (5) phone number (6) gender (7) current relationship to Star (student, alumna, teacher, staff) (8) the years that you attended and/or worked at Star.

4. Entries must be submitted by email to newsbulletin@star.edu.com with the subject line “Be the change Essay Competition.”

5. Essays must be original and unpublished.

6. Essays must be written by one person. Co-authored essays are not accepted. Writers are encouraged to self-edit their submissions and are not permitted to receive outside editing assistance.

* Entries not meeting the above guidelines will not be considered.

DEADLINE: Entries must be received by October 15, 2015 (23:59 Kabul time).
Mohammed Asif Sultani has recently connected with the Star Family and is working with Star to help reach the people in Bamyan. Asif studied at Star Educational Society from Prep One through Advance classes and graduated in 2011. Since that time he has been working in various governmental and non-governmental offices. He is currently the Manager of Capacity Building Training Course for a German organization named HELP INGO. Asif has remained a great focus for Asif, especially since arriving in Bamyan where he is teaching English and studying in the Faculty of Education in Bamyan University’s English Department.

Asif credits his experience at Star as the motivation to establish the Pioneer Educational Center, an English Language Center, in the center of Bamyan. Asif explained that the people of Bamyan and especially the students at Bamyan University need more access to English language programs. He established Pioneer Educational Center to help Bamyan people to learn English, promote the culture of the English language and encourage the youth to learn English for a better future.

Asif said, “I learned many valuable things from Star, its teachers and the environment which motivated me to keep learning English. I still remember the voice, great pronunciation, seriousness, and encouragement of my teacher, Mr. Yasa. Mr. Yasa was a tremendous source of inspiration and motivation for me and everyone who entered Star doors. My experience at Star and hard work helped me find and keep moving toward a correct path towards success and glory.”

Star Educational Society is indebted to Asif for helping Star to strengthen its ties with Bamyan and help to distribute the Intestellar Bulletin in the historic city of Bamyan. Two photos show English Language Department students at the University of Bamyan and other friends from Bamyan reading Star’s new weekly newspaper and two photos are from Asif’s Pioneer Educational Center. We wish Asif great success in Bamyan with his work, studies and running his new language center. We look forward to our new collaboration with him.

Starian creates
language center in
Bamyan

Asif said, “I learned many valuable things from Star, its teachers and the environment which motivated me to keep learning English. I still remember the voice, great pronunciation, seriousness, and encouragement of my teacher, Mr. Yasa. Mr. Yasa was a tremendous source of inspiration and motivation for me and everyone who entered Star doors. My experience at Star and hard work helped me find and keep moving toward a correct path towards success and glory.”

Star Educational Society is indebted to Asif for helping Star to strengthen its ties with Bamyan and help to distribute the Intestellar Bulletin in the historic city of Bamyan. Two photos show English Language Department students at the University of Bamyan and other friends from Bamyan reading Star’s new weekly newspaper and two photos are from Asif’s Pioneer Educational Center. We wish Asif great success in Bamyan with his work, studies and running his new language center. We look forward to our new collaboration with him.

"Best Student" Winners

Star Educational Society has initiated a “Best Student” program to recognize one student from each branch in each semester as the best student… a student who best represents an array of characteristics that make them outshine their peers. The students are selected based on their moral conduct, their participation in class, completion and quality of homework assignments, their grades in school, any special achievements, and how active they are in extra-curricular activities. The Best Students chosen for this semester are: Boston Ali from A Branch, Hamidullah Mohammadi from B Branch and Salman Mohammadi from C Branch.

Boston Ali is a Level 6 student. He started studying English at Star Educational Society from Level 1. He has been the 1st position holder in all of his classes except Level 1 in which he scored the 2nd position. He is motivated and ambitious and plans to compete for the Fulbright Scholarship to study his Master’s degree. He enjoys playing volleyball and football. He is also a big fan of Barcelona. Bostan reads voraciously but discriminately – preferring medical books which he reads non-stop. Since Class One in Gandab Village, Sheikh Ali District of Parwan Province he has always held 1st position in school.

Hamidullah Mohammadi is a Level 5 student. He is 17 years old and in the 10th grade at Balkhi High School. He is the most regular and punctual student with high integrity and interpersonal skills. In the future, he plans to become a successful business man. He has been attending Star since Prep 1, the introductory course for absolute beginners. Hamidullah is excellent at following the directions. He has a keen interest in football. He is great at Free Fighting – a type of mixed martial arts. His interest in business and success is due to his love and devotion for his mother.

Salman Mohammadi is a student in Level 6. He has been studying at Star from the Prep 1, which is the absolute beginners’ level. He has held the 1st position in all ten of his classes. He is humble but has high self-esteem. He is aspirant and ambitious. His goal is to pursue university studies in the United States of America at a fine medical school. He wants to be a dentist. He is in 11th grade. He is an instructor of computer programs, like Microsoft Office package and computer graphics. He has a keen interest in poetry and literature. He has written numerous articles published in several student journals.

Star Educational Society extends a hearty congratulations to Bostan, Hamidullah and Salman for securing the position as “Best Student” for this semester and we wish them further success and achievement.
During his time in Iran, his appreciation for different Universities in Iran. In 2001 he moved to Sweden and obtained degrees in International Relations and another degree in department of Oriental Studies and Political Science at University of New South Wales. He is the president of Zaheristan, a virtual world of Afghanistani writers in exile. He is the nephew of the founder of Star in Quetta, Mr. Nabi Atiq. Hadi was both a member of Cultural and artistic bi-weekly called Golbang. He was a member of Cultural Center of Afghanistani writers in exile and cooperated with the journals of Siraj and Dor-e-Dati. Saeedi was a member of editorial board as well as managing poetry and translation section of the journal. Several articles of Saeedi’s were published in this journal. ‘Modernism and the obstacles of Afghanistan poetry’ was among the most influential articles of Saeedi. Saeedi was editor of the magazine ‘Solidarity’ and published poetry, stories and travelogues in this weekly journal. In Iran, Saeedi has been involved in teaching literature and journalism. In Sweden, he has been engaged with interpreting and translation centers of the Swedish Ministry of Defense, cooperation with the international Swedish Radio and also teaching in Swedish schools.

About Mohammad Sharif Saeedi

Mohammad Sharif Saeedi (born 1970, Jaghoori) is a poet from Afghanistan. Saeedi lost his father at the age of four. He emigrated alone from Afghanistan to Pakistan and then to Iran when he was a teenager. He studied for four years at the Zahligar School in Isfahan and then went on to study in Qom. He studied Arabic language and Literature and Islamic Studies, English Language, and Political Science at different Universities in Iran. In 2001 he moved to Sweden and obtained degrees in International Relations and another degree in department of Oriental Studies in Persian Language and Literature. Saeedi began poetry in his childhood. During his time in Iran, he started a career for literature, especially poetry, grew. His first poems were published when he was 19 years old and continued to be published in different journals and Iranian media. He spent eight years as a poetry critique with the Tales and Poetry Forum of city of Qom. During these eight years of teaching in this forum, around 800 students took lessons on poetry critique and story writing and graduated successfully.

Mohammad Sharif Saeedi first gained fame in Qom with invitations to poetry congresses in the cities of Tehran, Mashadi, Shiraz, Isfahan, Kashan, Tabriz, Yazd, Kerman, Sari, Sari, Sanadan, Qarvin, Khomeini Shah, and Mazandaran. In addition to studying in Qom, Saeedi was the chief editor of the first literary and artistic bi-weekly called Golbang. He was a member of Cultural
Favorite teacher, singer and avid football fan

An interview with Nasrullah Hussaini, one of Star’s most popular teachers and the Director of the TOEFL/IELTS Program.

About the interviewer: Walid Rahmany is a Star graduate and has taken additional courses in TOEFL, Teacher Training and Creative Writing. Walid will graduate from high school in November and plans to pursue undergraduate studies in medical science.