



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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The Tajikistan School Connectivity Project for Central Asia has established 24 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, as well as developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan School Connectivity Project activities include:

- teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching
- US school partnerships on civic education projects and teacher exchange
- public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups
- development of sustainable practices for schools and communities

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The World War II Veterans at the ILC in School #101, Tursunzade. Read the story 'Tajikistan Connectivity students payed tribute to the World War II Veterans' in our May issue.

Improve Yourself - Improve Your Community! Tajikistan Connectivity Celebrated Global Youth Service Day 2005

On Global Youth Service Day and every day, millions of young people in countries everywhere carry out thousands of community improvement projects.

Tajikistan Connectivity students decided to contribute their might to the Global Youth Service Day by conducting special events and activities to improve their community. Connectivity folks already had some experience from last year when they were just a beginners and it was really hard for them to find a connection with their community and local government – but this time they started early and working together brainstormed for new ideas.

Almost one thousand Tajikistan Connectivity students and volunteers starting from April 1st worked with their school administrations, city government and community members to highlight their needs. And everywhere volunteers help and support were accepted with the gratitude.



'Don't let me fall!' says little boy from the boarding house in Gulyakandoz. Connectivity students played with kids during their community service activities.

By talking with people, volunteers first found the needs of the community and applied all their efforts to help, improve, educate, and advocate people around them.

During Global Youth Service activities, Tajikistan Connectivity folks showed their ability to contribute and participate in community life. The area of their community service projects were wide: from whitewashing trees on the streets and cleaning garbage to buying food and making toys for kids with disabilities from local boarding houses. For many of the youth it was their first time volunteering, and they promised that they would continue to help their community all year.

Please, visit our website here: http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/gysd2005_web.html to learn about Connectivity students community service.



Gissar students can't plant trees and gardens all around Tajikistan, but they can make their small city more beautiful and healthy. This is what they want!

Connectivity Students Learn Morals from Folk Tales

On the April 18-27 Connectivity students both in Tajikistan and the US dipped into the world of Traditional Folk Tales. This activity was designed with the aim to widen student's and community member's world vision about different cultures and traditions. Our choice for this goal was the magic theme of Folk Tales, because exactly tales are teaching us from childhood all these good things and warning us from bad deeds.

While participating in the Folk Tales activity, students collected and studied examples of the folklore of their country. They researched, recorded, and analyzed these stories, concentrating on the morals they teach and how they support their culture's unique values and traditions. Then they compared these tales and morals to those of their partner country, discussing the similar themes, characters, adventures, and the unique social aspects they reveal, as well as the relevance of the tales and morals today.

Please, visit our website here: http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/folklore_web.html to read the tales and return to your childhood



Connectivity boys from Kayrakkum were really surprised when they found similar to their culture folk in another country



New Educational Program!
Beginning in
September 2005

RI-SOL will have a new educational program available to teachers and students all over the world. This program, called Global Citizenship and Youth Philanthropy (GCYP) is aimed at turning students into active global citizens. The lessons are cross-cultural and are based on different countries. Students have an opportunity to learn about 3 or 4 different countries in each unit! The units end in philanthropic projects that allow students to do something positive for their community. Online forums and web postings allow students to communicate with students all over the world who have completed the same lesson and worked on a project themselves. We are excited to launch this program and are looking forward to seeing wonderful volunteer projects from students around the world!



US Elementary School Gives Gift of Books to Vakhsh School

On the April 1, 2005 Major Neal Edmonds of the Virginia National Guard presented a gift of English language books and cassettes, maps of the world, a tape player, white board, and other materials to School #1 in Vakhsh, Tajikistan. The money for the donation was raised by Stark Gallagher, a 4th grade student from Virginia's Echo Lake Elementary School.

Stark wanted to help a school in Tajikistan and decided to hold a bake sale to raise money for a donation of books. The books were purchased in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and now the school has an English Language resource center to help the development of their English language.

In addition to the gift on behalf of Echo Lake Elementary, School #1 in Vakhsh also houses Relief International Schools Online Internet Learning Center. This center is part of the Connectivity Project, and despite the fact that ILC in this school was opened only few months ago, students and teachers here did a great step ahead in their computer and Internet education.

Vakhsh city is located in Khatlon Region two hours drive from the capital Dushanbe. Our choice falls on to this city, because community of Vakhsh river valley is very poor and people here are very limited in terms of education and they have never had access to the Internet and computers.

With their active participation in our collaborative education activities and with the help of English books from Echo Lake Elementary Vakhsh community now have a chance to see and to be seen by the world.



Major Neal Edmonds in the Connectivity students and teachers circle in Vakhsh



Major Neal Edmonds and Garth Willis, Tajikistan Connectivity Program Director in front of books, tapes and maps in English presented to the school in Vakhsh



Tape Recording books in Ukiah

Exchange participant Norma Barber is working hard with her students and community in Ukiah, Oregon on a project to benefit Tajik students and teachers. While in Tajikistan Norma began to understand how difficult it is for Tajik students to learn English without the benefit of native English speakers. To solve this problem, Norma decided she would ask her students to record their favorite stories on to tapes. The tapes and books will then be sent to Tajikistan. The idea is that students will be able to read the story and hear the correct English pronunciation of the words. Norma hopes this project will help students in Tajikistan increase their English skills. Not only are Norma's students involved in this project but so are a number of community members from Ukiah who were inspired to help. Norma is hoping to have over 100 books taped by September! RI-SOL will help Norma get the tapes and books to Tajikistan.



Exchange participants: Norma Barber - on the right; Jen Peterson in the center; Emily Leary - on the left and Tajik girl Nieza, who danced for the US Teachers

A local NGO Madad in Azerbaijan, a local partner organization of Relief International office in Azerbaijan (RI-AZ) has recently started a similar to Connectivity, but a smaller-scale project in Azerbaijan with the financial support from the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Company (BTC) and UNOCAL Khazar. The project includes the computerization and connection of ten secondary schools to the internet along the BTC pipeline.

The successes of the Schools Connectivity project implemented in Tajikistan sounded rather interesting and impressive to RI-AZ and Madad and therefore, two representatives - Ulkar Babayeva, the Program Officer and Teymur Mammadov, the IT specialist were sent over to Tajikistan to carefully study the project.

'We had all kinds of impressions. The project is thoroughly thought and implemented by both the staff in Dushanbe and the ones in the field. It was really interesting to see how the educational activities were implemented, how the community was involved and how the management itself was working on the project. We found many differences in the design between our programs, but there were also many similarities between the AZ and Taj projects. Seeing a similar project first-hand saved and is still saving us much of the learning curves!

We travelled to several ILC's and observed the actual lessons, discussions and Schools Action Committies work, and etc. The most motivating part was to see how the local resources were applied to this project in order to make it sustainable in the future. In addition, we found that the students themselves were initiative in creating and design lesson plans, bulletin boards, posters, leaflets, newsletters and etc.

The trip helped us to closely understand the project and gave us an opportunity to learn and be able to effectively apply our knowledges in Azerbaijan to make our project there as successful as the one in Tajikistan.'

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Ulkar and Teymur are talking about Relief International activities in Azerbaijan at the meeting with Tajikistan staff



Our guests from Azerbaijan observing Connectivity teachers participation in educational activity at School #1 in Vakhsh

US Office Begins Recruitment for New Schools

The California office is hard at work recruiting new schools for the 2005-2006 school year. Staff will be attending conferences, sending out mailings, and announcing the program in teacher newsletters. The new schools will be working with both the Tajikistan schools and RI-SOL's new schools in Palestine and Bangladesh. We are hearing back from interested teachers who are excited about the prospect of connecting their students with students overseas.