



# 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



Page 1

Connectivity Students Made an Exciting Trip to the World of Food Culture

Page 2

Tajikistan Connectivity Students Against Tuberculosis

Page 3

Teacher Exchange and Fond Memories Bring Libraries to Tajikistan!

Why are two officers from the US Embassy in Tajikistan are holding beautiful bouquet of lilacs in front of a heap of english books? Read the story 'US Elementary School gives gift of books to Vakhsh school' in our April issue.

### Connectivity Students Made an Exciting Trip to the World of Food Culture

The first month of spring brought Connectivity Students in Tajikistan hope for forthcoming warmth and summer, along with a new educational activity. 'Foods Around the World' – a tasty title promising exciting adventure to the world of food culture and inciting connectivity students creativity.

This activity was launched as the first world wide project where Connectivity Students from Palestine schools joined USA and Tajikistan in the competition. Students had to prepare a brochure – a menu for their restaurant – which they would like to open in their city, and which will reflect their taste and sympathies to one of the world's traditional food.

Connectivity kids combined their computer and the Internet skills, with research in the community. They also were asked to 'build' their restaurant - using Internet search and Adobe Photoshop, students found and combined images of their ideal restaurant

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Connectivity students from School #1 in Sarband decide which brochure they like the most.

together - with the roof from Chinese styled building and walls decorated with Afghani carving.

The result was that everyone in the project had a chance to visit virtual restaurants and try virtual food. The spirit of friendship and common understanding were inside every student. Some of the Tajik ILC's, like in Khorog School #2, Connectivity students with the help from our local staff, school director and their Afghani friends who live and work in Khorog prepared some Afghani food, so their students could better understand cuisine of the country they have selected for their restaurant.

The menu was created by the students in their minds, using different computer software and the Internet, but with a main goal – to be seen by the world. Some of the students created their brochures using HTML, which means that Connectivity students made a great step towards their professionalism and creativity. This shows also, that students are not going to stop learning once they know Microsoft Office. Our goal is to help them to find their interests and identity in the world using technology.

Please, visit our website here:  
[http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/foods\\_web.html](http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/foods_web.html)  
 to dip into connectivity world's creation and see the winner's brochures. The winning school will get a scanner for their ILC.



Chorbog team are in the process of creating their brochure



'Eating Mouse' - Connectivity students from Fayzabad became so hungry after seeing all tasty brochure menu's

**Tajikistan Connectivity Students Against Tuberculosis**

An Internet forum was launched among the Connectivity schools especially for "World Day for Fight Against Tuberculosis" on March 24th. Specialists from the international organization 'Project HOPE' participated in the forum to help community members and Connectivity students understand TB issues in Tajikistan and to answer their questions.

Increases in TB infection rates are connected with the deterioration of social and economic conditions in the country since independence and with the breakdown of the Soviet system of health care. For several years there have been no regular checkups of school children and in children's institutions, health officials said. Donor support for TB campaigns in Tajikistan is growing. "Now there is increased attention to TB in the whole region, and here in Tajikistan," said Tom Mohr, the program manager for the international Project Hope.

Tajikistan Connectivity students were busy with their educational activities, but they showed all their enthusiasm when we invited them to participate in this forum about tuberculosis issues in Tajikistan.



TB Specialists from the Project Hope participating on the forum at School #10, Dushanbe

## Teacher Exchange and Fond Memories Bring Libraries to Tajikistan!

This February, six American teachers headed off to Central Asia to explore and learn about the amazing country of Tajikistan. While they are there they are learning fascinating new things and having experiences they could never have imagined. When they return home they will no doubt have a place for Tajikistan in their heart and fond memories. What many people often don't realize is that the people they met along their trip, those who shared their experiences and maybe their conversation, are also left with warm memories and a little piece of America or Tajikistan in their hearts.

During last September's teacher exchange to California, the Tajik teachers spent a night at the home of Polly and Eric Stanbridge in Corona del Mar. "Auntie Polly" was one of the American's who the visiting teachers from Tajikistan touched deeply. The teachers spent a wonderful time getting to know Polly, her husband and their friends. Polly took the teachers to the beach near her home where they collected shells and played in the ocean, and introduced them to strawberry shortcake and ice cream sundaes.

That evening they had a dinner with traditional "California cuisine" where Polly invited some of her own American teacher friends to meet the Tajik visitors. Polly, Eric and their friends had hundreds of questions about Tajikistan and the education system the teachers work in. During the time she spent with them Polly saw the passion that the teachers felt for education and the excitement they had in all the new things they learned during their stay. One of the things they were most excited about having seen were the libraries in America. It was then that Polly became inspired to help support these amazing teachers in their desire to improve education in Tajikistan.

Since their return to Tajikistan four months ago, Polly has stayed in touch with a number of the teachers from the exchange who call her "Auntie Polly". Through emails they communicate about their lives and their work.

In December 2004 Polly had her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and decided she wanted to do something special in order to celebrate. Traditionally for birthday's in America, guests bring presents to the person who is having a birthday. Polly however wanted to do something different. Instead of gifts, she asked her friends and family to donate money to RI-SOL so she could help start a library in an ILC's in Tajikistan. The wonderful teachers that she met during the exchange inspired her to help turn their dreams of libraries into realities.

On January 29 Polly and Eric held a party to celebrate Auntie Polly's birthday. Their family and friends came to take part in the "Tajik Party" and to help celebrate the big day. All the guests wore international clothing from different countries around the world while Polly wore a traditional Tajik dress that was given to her by teacher Dilorom Abdulloeva from School #16 in Gulukandoz. Before the event Polly spent weeks emailing with teacher Zeboniso Muradova (Sarband ILC), to learn how to make Tajik food for the party.

With Zebo's help Polly was able to make traditional plov for everyone who attended! All of the guests had a wonderful time eating Tajik food, listening to Tajik music and hearing about the teachers and their schools in Tajikistan.

All together Polly and her friends raised enough money for two libraries in Tajikistan! With help from RI-SOL staff in Dushanbe, the libraries should be started in the next few months. The libraries will have English, Russian and Tajik books. The RI-SOL staff hopes to have reference books, non-fiction and fiction which will benefit everyone in the community. It was Polly's hope that the students and teachers of Tajikistan would be able to start their dreams of large libraries with the help of her birthday gift.



Polly is wearing the Tajik dress (on the right) with her sister Emily.



Zebonisso Muradova (on the left) wearing American Indian's head dress

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