

In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful



# MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

ISSUE THREE SUMMER 04/05 [www.mahbobaspromise.org](http://www.mahbobaspromise.org)

## Raising the roof

**W**hen Mahboba Rawi heard that orphans in the slums of Kabul had built their own "homes" from mud and were looking for help to erect the roof over their primitive one-room dwellings, she knew she had to do something constructive to help the street kids. As a charity organisation, Mahboba's Promise was already overcommitted and underfunded, but Mahboba couldn't sit still.

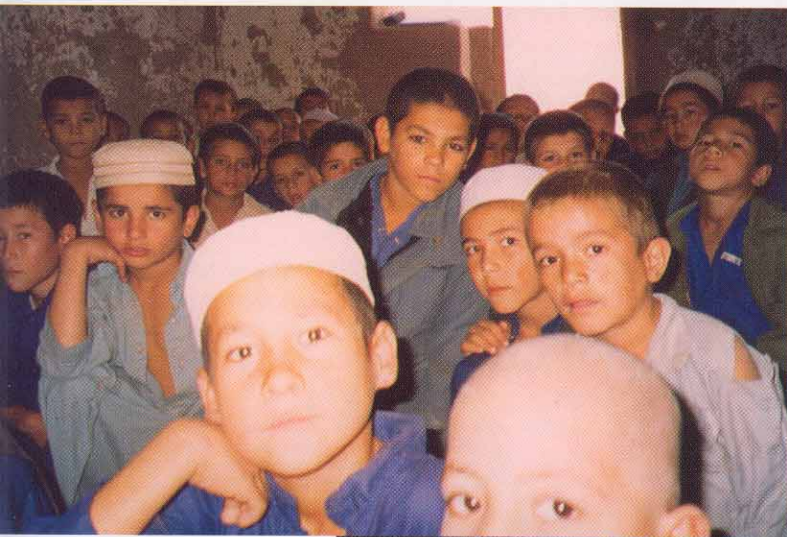
So she called as many contacts as she could and privately raised over \$7,000 within a couple of days. Before you could say 'refugee' she then put her brother, Sidiq Rawi, on a plane destined for Kabul. When her brother, on arrival, saw the dwellings the slum dwellers had built, he was shocked however. No one could live in these primitively hewn mud huts; in his view, they would be washed away in the first rainstorm.

Once in Afghanistan's capital, Sidiq found the \$7,000 Mahboba had raised was enough to build the children brand-new shelters – with roofs! These are incredibly humble abodes, but each of the eight new homes has windows, a door and a roof. The children were so pleased, they offered their rooms by day for learning, while cramming as many slum dwellers as possible by night into the rooms to sleep.

Eventually, Mahboba reports, there were so many people using the buildings for schooling that the community decided to rehouse the children and keep the beautiful new building for educating people 24 hours around the clock. The Shakaldara roof project is another small example, says Mahboba, of people desperate to help themselves... and people keen to help them in return.

"People are good," says Mahboba's Promise founder, happy that something could be done to build, rather than destroy. "This is another example of what can be done, with relatively little, to restore people's hope. With passion and commitment, almost anything can be fixed!"

If you would like to help the new Shakaldara project flourish, contact us today, [mahboba@mahbobaspromise.org](mailto:mahboba@mahbobaspromise.org).



**Kabul streetkids (top) built their own rooms out of clay and then Mahboba sent her brother Sidiq (left) to add a roof. It was then decided to build afresh with money raised: the result was new and improved lodgings (above) that the street community decided was better used for schooling the many streetkids who wished to learn.**

**Are you one of the angels who will make this dream come true?**

## "I HAVE A DREAM"

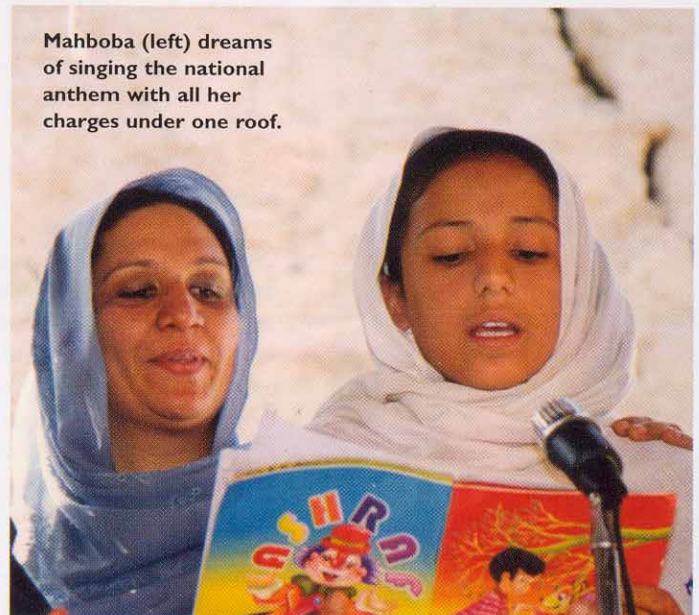
**M**ahboba Rawi dreams of collecting all the orphans she currently houses in three orphanages run by Mahboba's Promise – and putting all the women and children together in one warm and loving central location. In this one big orphanage that Mahboba dreams about, Mahboba's Promise could oversee a team of workers and volunteers who would teach the children to write, to sing, to draw, to cook, to sew – and to love life again.

To make this dream come true, Mahboba's Promise needs to raise \$150,000. This is a small amount of money in Australian terms for building one giant orphanage, but in Kabul, Australian dollars go a long, long way. Does \$150,000 sound like a lot? It's not, says Mahboba.

Together, we can do it! Only 300 kind people or organisations need to donate \$500 [or 150 people donate \$1,000!] – and the cement can be poured to give the destitute children of Kabul a new life. Make Mahboba's dream come true – be one of the 300 'angels' who donate \$500 to the new, big orphanage today. *See overleaf to donate!*

*In Kabul, Australian dollars go a long way - together, we can make this dream come true!*

**Mahboba (left) dreams of singing the national anthem with all her charges under one roof.**



**TO FULFIL THE HOPE AND POTENTIAL OF ORPHANS AND WIDOWS IN AFGHANISTAN**



# From no hope to **Hope House**



Mahboba's Promise's man in Kabul: Uncle Haji Fazal Ahmad Sabit

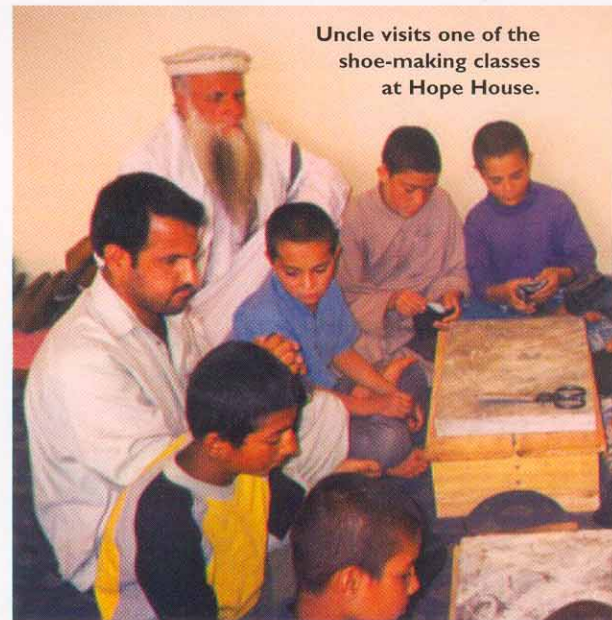
Mahboba Rawi returned to Kabul in early 2004 to help move destitute Afghans into Hope House, the new building she obtained rent-free from authorities for refugee accommodation. Moving traumatised tent dwellers to a new urban home proved more traumatic than she imagined however. Here is her report:

“Thanks to the generosity of the Australian public who donated \$23,000 to help the widows and orphans of Afghanistan, Uncle (Haji Fazal Ahmad Sabit) and I were able to move 23 families from the streets to Hope House in inner-city Kabul. However, within 24 hours, eight of the 23 families had returned to live in the tents! They have no running water there, no electricity, no jobs, no food, no hope... and they are all filthy, with sores on their faces from poverty, but the change, really, was too much for them. I cannot emphasise enough how disadvantaged, traumatised and depressed these people are. It is very difficult for Uncle and I, sometimes, to keep going when one is assailed daily by tragic, tragic stories. One beautiful 18-year-old girl I met on my last visit had killed herself by swallowing rat poison. I had told her that I was returning to Kabul to take her away. But when I did not come, after four months, she said I was just like every other NGO (non-Government organisation) and that my

promises were empty. This story breaks my heart, because I could only come when there was enough money to move the families to Hope House.

“For many, the adjustment of moving was too great. Many of them believed that Hope House had once been a place of torture. They found blood on the walls in the building's basement. Uncle had to set

up prayer meetings to cleanse the building of its past so the families were less frightened. Uncle or I also had to visit Hope House everyday; if the people did not see one of us, they would leave. They need a lot of help to learn how to live. The flushing of the European-style toilets frightens them, and they burn charcoal under their beds to keep warm, even though the electricity is now working. Slowly, the families that have stayed are getting happy. We have set up a classroom and English and computer classes have begun. We have two teachers, one teaching English and how to make shoes, another teaching the older women how to sew. We have also organised the kitchen for food preparation and the families have been taught how to prepare meals. We have a full-time manager and a security guard too. No one can work for Mahboba's Promise who does not love children. People over there have forgotten how to love one another, children just want to be touched and loved.”



Uncle visits one of the shoe-making classes at Hope House.

**These people are disadvantaged, traumatised and extremely depressed**

## REACHING OUT

Mahboba's Promise funds many projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including schools, medical centres and orphanages. The charity organisation also has an OUTREACH program to get children off the streets. There are children like nine-year-old Shah Mahammed Zoi who had his hand shot off by a landmine while collecting wood two years ago; and little Alama, 7, who lost her father and a leg when a rocket hit their home.

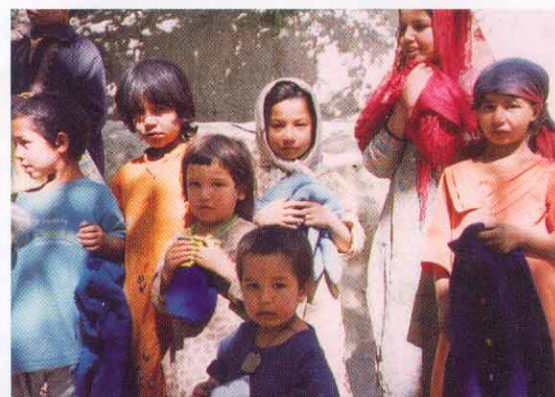
### MAHBOBA'S PROMISE:

- Looks after 190 sponsored widows, typically single mothers with four to 10 children
- Takes care of 48 children in a Kabul orphanage, overseen by Uncle Haji
- Teaches 150 girls at a Panshir Valley school
- Runs a Panshir Valley clinic and medical centre with two doctors which has treated thousands of patients
- Cares for 69 boys in Jaluzi camp at Peshawar orphanage, with a school there for 400 boys and 250 girls
- Teaches 48 girls in Jalalabad school
- Houses eight widows and their children at new Kabul orphanage, Hope House
- Runs an Outreach program to get children off the streets and educated

Streetkids (below) accept parcels of clothing from Mahboba's Promise



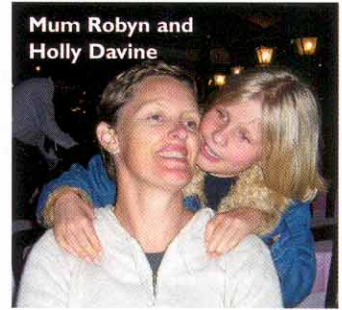
A Kabul streetboy earns money by burning herbs to dispel evil spirits





When tragedy struck Robyn Davine's life, the work of Mahboba's Promise helped her to see beyond her grief.

# Everyone has a story...



When Robyn Davine's son, Jack, died tragically in March this year at the age of 10, collapsing unexpectedly after a cross-country race at school, Robyn, husband Chris and their daughter, 8-year-old Holly, thought they would never get over the shock and the grief. Today, many months later, the family still find it impossible to come to terms with the senseless death of their son and brother, but Robyn has found solace in an unexpected quarter: the North Ryde garage where the philanthropic work of Mahboba's Promise is headquartered.

"A friend of mine told me that Mahboba had also lost a son and that she would understand," recalls Robyn. When the very fragile Lilyfield mother did finally call on Mahboba, she discovered that the much-lauded philanthropist had in fact founded Mahboba's Promise after tormented nights filled with grief and prayer following the drowning in 1992 of her seven-year-old son, Arosh, at the Kiama blowhole, NSW.

"Mahboba and I talked for hours and wept together for our sons. It was a huge relief for me to be with someone who understood what I was going through."

Robyn also heard all about Mahboba's work raising money to help widows and orphans back in Afghanistan, a war-torn country Mahboba had fled 20 years ago. "I had always wanted to do volunteer work and now I had the time and opportunity to do something useful. I told Mahboba of my secretarial and administrative skills and she put me to work. It was exactly what I needed – and still need," Robyn concedes.

"My husband and I decided to sponsor one of Mahboba's widows, a Kabul-based mother with five children, four of them boys. A couple of the boys were selling scraps on the streets to feed the family. When Mahboba's Promise sent the Faqir family our sponsorship money, they wrote Holly the most beautiful letter in Farci and Mahboba translated for us. When they started their letter with the words, 'To our darling sister,' Holly just broke into tears. She mourns deeply her brother's death and doesn't enjoy being the only remaining child."

Bolstered by the joy their sponsorship has galvanised, the Davine family has taken on board the role of "guardian angels" to the Faqir family. This comprises five-year-old Nasar-Ahmad, eight-year-old twins Gul-Ahmad and Shir-Ahmad, 10-year-old Jamishid and the eldest, 12-year-old Mari. "It has done me a lot of good to be reminded of a bigger picture," Robyn concedes. "It has also helped my grief to acknowledge that I am not the only one who is suffering. There is an enormous amount of suffering in Afghanistan, for example."



Robyn was inspired to hear that any money donated to Mahboba's Promise goes directly to feed, clothe and educate widows and their families. With another wretched winter closing in, she urges fellow Australians to adopt an Afghani family. For just \$50 a month, we can make a big difference to one family's life!

## YES, I WANT TO HELP



- I wish to donate \$ .....
- I wish to sponsor a child @ \$35 a month (100% of money goes to child)
- I wish to sponsor a widow @ \$50 a month (100% of money goes to widow)

YOUR NAME .....

YOUR ADDRESS .....

YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER .....

YOUR MOBILE NUMBER .....

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS .....

### You can pay one of three different ways

- 1. By cheque.** Please fill in the attached and include it with your cheque to Mahboba's Promise, P O Box 6234, North Ryde, NSW 2113.
- 2. By direct debit from your bank account.** To arrange this yourself with a Debit Order from your bank, you will need to know our bank details. Mahboba's Promise banks with the Commonwealth Bank, BSB 062.320, Account 101.762.56. PLEASE TELL US SO THAT WE CAN TRACE YOUR DONATION!
- 3. By credit card.** Mahboba's Promise accepts Bankcard, Mastercard, AMEX and Visa, and you can do so by filling out the attached Donation Form. Please choose your preferred method of payment.

#### CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

- Bankcard
- Mastercard
- Visa

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature .....

Mahboba's Promise is a non-government organisation registered for fund-raising purposes, ABN 85 254 682 685

# Thank you!



# Sister School

**MAHBOBA'S PROMISE**

[www.mahbobaspromise.org](http://www.mahbobaspromise.org)

Tel (02) 9887 1665

Fax (02) 9889 0473

The pupils of Asquith Girls High in northern Sydney are reaching out to fellow students across the world and making a positive difference.

When Asquith Girls High principal Kris Needham heard Mahboba Rawi speak of her work in Afghanistan, she knew the 900 girls at her school would want to step in and help.

And she was right. When the pupils heard how less than one in 20 young Muslim women in Afghanistan have a chance to learn to read and write, they wanted to do everything they could to help Mahboba's Promise educate the girls of Panshir Valley. In this verdant valley not far from Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, Mahboba's Promise has established the beginnings of a school and medical centre to service the many people still suffering the aftermath of civil war.

"Adopting the Panshir Valley School as our 'sister' school helps our students learn global citizenship," said Ms Needham. "The fundraising has been driven by student leaders, especially members of the school's Social Justice team. Now every girl in the school knows about Panshir Valley, and they

take pride in our relationship with the school there." Ms Needham said that the entire school had got behind this program – "we are in it for the long-term" – and she urged other schools to do the same.

Mahboba Rawi praised the move by Asquith Girls High (AGH) and encouraged more school communities to follow suit, enjoying the kind of friendship and fellowship that the scholars of both schools fostered. Mahboba's Promise volunteers, Mahboba said, would distribute the aid and donations in kind directly to the school and provide updates to Asquith Girls High.

"We are very proud to be helping young women who do not have the advantages we have," AGH's principal said simply. "We realise they need everything from calculators to whiteboards to crayon pencils."

*Does your school want to adopt a sister school?  
Call Mahboba's Promise today on (02) 9887 1665.*



The 900 students at Asquith Girls High (top) in northern Sydney have adopted the students in Panshir Valley (bottom) as their 'sister' scholars and communicate regularly.



## HELP!!!

To continue doing its good work, Mahboba's Promise needs:

- Medical doctors who can work in Afghanistan for six months or more
- An office manager with superb administrative skills and a pro-active attitude to work at least three days a week in Ryde, Sydney
- Handy, hands-on volunteers who can help rebuild the war-torn lives of people in Kabul
- A media/PR liaison volunteer for the organisation.
- And we need computers in good condition!!!! **Call us today on (02) 9887 1665 if you can help.**



P O BOX 6234  
NORTH RYDE  
NSW 2113

AFFIX  
STAMP  
HERE