

## Support a young Afghani Woman to complete her education and assert her right to self-determination.

Dear Friends,

**‘I am interested to help people. I know many girls think like me and together we can change Afghanistan. Soon there will be women who can teach, be doctors, lawyers, judges, and serve in the government, having the freedoms to chart their own course in life and help make their society a welcoming place for all men, women, and children. All of the soldiers and weapons and mean-spiritedness in the world cannot stop a group of determined, educated, and empowered women to make a better society. But before all of these things, first I need to stand on my own feet myself.’ Humaira Rezayi, Afghanistan, age 22.**

We, Sandy Maine (local entrepreneur and past Reh Center Board member at Clarkson) and Steve Molnar (founder and director at Little River Community School, a social justice-focused K-12 School in Canton, NY) have been working with Humaira for the past five years. Sandy tutored Humaira online through SOLA, an English immersion school to provide young Afghan girls with a rigorous education that promotes critical thinking and a sense of purpose and respect for self and others. In 2017 Little River accepted Humaira with a full scholarship for her senior year of high school. Unfortunately, her visa was denied and she was unable to travel to the US. However, we stayed in close contact through many emails.



Humaira is currently finishing her second year at the American University Afghanistan (AUAF) in Kabul. She has struggled to get an education in a war-torn country where few girls have the opportunity for higher education. Her schooling and safety are now under threat with the US pulling out of Afghanistan and the Taliban poised to take control of the country. Under Taliban rule from 1996-2001, girls and women faced brutal repression and were forbidden from being educated, forcing girls to leave schools and colleges. In recent years the Taliban have targeted and attacked the AUAF, killing and injuring students and abducting teachers. US funding for the AUAF has diminished for the past several years and may disappear altogether as American troops leave Afghanistan. Two weeks ago a girl’s school in Humaira’s neighborhood was bombed, killing 85 schoolgirls and injuring 150.

We are very concerned about Humaira and what may follow the US withdrawal in the coming months including the possibility of civil war and the Taliban’s return to power. So, we are embarking on an urgent campaign to bring Humaira to the North County to complete her undergraduate studies.

Humaira applied to and has been accepted as a junior to study at Clarkson University with a \$38,000/year scholarship. Clarkson is submitting the I-20 for her student visa.

However, Humaira’s choice to finish college is dependent, in large part, on the financing of her college experience.

We have been in awe as we watched Humaira graduate from Marefat High School, participate in the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA), study English to enter college, and begin attending AUAF. Though she had an interest to study to be a doctor, there are few class offerings at AUAF, so she started with what was available to her by taking business and computer science courses. She is currently finishing her fourth semester in software engineering with a 3.0 average. At every turn, Humaira has shown perseverance and determination to continue with her education.

Humaira is always reaching out for opportunities. She was involved in the Afghan Women’s Writing Project, participated in the Global Citizens in Action, a youth virtual exchange program, and did Anti-Violent Extremism Workshops with SOLA and the United States Institute of Peace. She applied to Little River Community School for her senior year of high school. At AUAF, she has obtained scholarships and does work-study to cover her tuition, and her grades have improved each semester. Her family, though poor, is very supportive of her education.

Humaira aspires to graduate and work to be a part of positive change in Afghanistan. She is fully aware of the obstacles, particularly as a young woman in a country at war. Yet she is determined to be empowered and educated to work for a better society. She believes education is the only way to bring that change and would like to become an expert in her field so that she could help create jobs and a new society.

Will you help Humaira complete her undergraduate studies with a pledge of funds? She needs \$30,000 a year for two years to attend Clarkson for tuition, room, and board, and expenses. We can bring that price down if we find suitable housing in town. You could not find a more determined and hard-working student. We believe in her ability to help change the world. We hope you will join us in making that very real possibility a reality.

Sincerely,



Steve Molnar  
Director of Little River Community School



Sandy Maine  
CEO of Adirondack Fragrance Farm

<b>I (we) would like to Pledge to Humaira and bring her to the North Country</b>	
Name	
Address	
City, State, ZIP	
Phone or email	
Donation amount:	(or) Pledge amount:
<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Pledge (June 2021 – June 2023)	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Pledge (2021-22, 2022-23)	\$ _____

Please send donations or pledge to:  
The Humaira Project  
1227 County Route 25  
Canton, NY 13617

We will contact you about activating your pledge when Humaira is successful in obtaining her educational visa.

**Thank you for your support!**