



AIS-R

Mawade'ah

Topics

December 2010, Volume 11 Issue 1



Make a Difference!

AIS-R's Mission

As a school committed to excellence, we will educate and inspire our students to be responsible, productive and ethical world citizens with the skills and passion to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively and learn continuously. We will accomplish this in an American educational environment characterized by high measurable standards and a clearly defined, appropriately interrelated college preparatory curriculum, implemented by a superior staff in partnership with students, parents, and the community.



Mansade'ah

means "topics" in Arabic. In this case, the name conveys the idea of topics that form an ongoing conversation on what's going on in our school.

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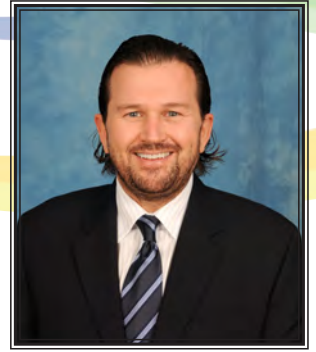
Front Cover:

The Early Years activity, "Plant & Grow" promotes making a difference to our planet.

Above:

Elementary School doors promote making a difference to our community.

In this Issue ...



*Act as if what
you do makes a
difference. It does.*
~ William James

Dear AIS-R Friends,

AIS-R is *MAD*... madly inspired about our first-ever, school-wide theme, *Make A Difference*. AIS-R's mission challenges and inspires us to be "responsible, productive and ethical world citizens" and this is exactly what our *MAD* campaign is all about. To nourish this objective, the AIS-R community has been immersed in a range of learning activities that demonstrate the many ways in which we can and do make a difference in our world—locally and globally. And, as the cover page depicts (in an endearing way), we are reinforcing the idea that even the smallest acts and gestures can help us to grow and blossom together to reach this worthy goal. While we will continue on this mission-driven adventure throughout the school year and beyond, this edition of Mawade'ah is our way to recognize, share and celebrate our learning and growth thus far.

*Unless someone
like you cares a
whole awful lot,
nothing is going
to get better. It's
not.*
~ Dr. Seuss

In this edition, Jan Young, ES Principal, plants some *MAD* seeds in a humorous and thoughtful manner by recounting the countless ways we can live this year's learning theme (and, if you haven't heard the one about the mosquito or the mummy, get ready for some fun). As you peruse the article, you will note that it buzzes loudly (like the mosquito and Ms. Young 😊), reminding us of the internalized fulfillment and joy that results with random acts of kindness, good choices and making a difference in the lives of others.

We also are fortunate to have two AIS-R parents contribute their *MAD* stories about 'paying it forward' through volunteerism. Dr. Saad—parent to three AIS-R children and spouse of our school nurse Artien—shares how a group of health professionals from the King Faisal Specialist Hospital make a difference through offering their time, expertise and support for disadvantaged cardiac patients throughout this region. Also, Dr. El Dukair—father to two AIS-R students—offers insightful realizations regarding an emotional journey taken to the earthquake zone in Haiti. Seeing how AIS-R parents are also making a difference in our world is truly inspirational.

*If you have much,
give of your
wealth; if you
have little, give of
your heart.*
~ Arabian Proverb

Upon reading some *haunting* "bedtime stories"—*Three Cups of Tea and Stones into Schools*—AIS-R's MS teachers, Crystal Van Cleef and Dagne Furth, soared into action to introduce a school-wide initiative, *Pennies for Peace*. These dedicated educators share how AIS-R students and faculty are embracing the concept of universal education, "one bracelet at a time."

Another story making headlines is Mrs. Nicole Jawad and her students who are bringing humanitarianism and environmentalism to a whole new level. In her motivating article, Mrs. Jawad shares how collecting of soda-can pull tabs is making a life-changing difference for amputees in Thailand. Without a doubt, you will never open a soda again without considering how you too can change a life!

More *MAD* stories abound throughout this inspired edition of our school's magazine. Mr. Thomas Leonas, MS Counselor, writes about the many ways that Middle Schoolers are living the AIS-R mission. Additionally, three High School students, Hyoung Min Pak, Iman Nizami, and Youca Cabir share their perspectives about making a difference for the Pakistan flood relief efforts. Moreover, HS Principal, Danny Gordon, Assistant Principal, Ben Keeley, and Athletic Director, Tony Anderson, inspire us about the inaugural year of WWW (Week Without Walls) and how it is designed to help the entire High School membership live and internalize our *MAD* theme. Finally, Matt Sipple shares the idea that giving and receiving at AIS-R is a necessary part of being a non-profit educational organization.

*If you think you
are too small to
be effective, you
have never been
in bed with a
mosquito.*
~ Betty Reese

As you read the energized stories throughout this edition of Mawade'ah, you will readily assess AIS-R is *MAD* in so many ways—and proud of it! We are wholeheartedly committed to continuing on this mission-driven learning expedition because we understand that touching the lives of others—locally and globally—is a critical part of our 21st century educational process and an essential part of our human journey.

As always, we invite you to be... *MAD* with us!

Dr. Brian Matthews
AIS-R Superintendent



Random Goodness

Jan Young, Elementary School Principal

Who can make a difference? Well, we believe it is absolutely essential that the job belongs to everyone, big and small. It reminds me of a saying that I'll paraphrase: if you think you are too small to make a difference try being locked in a room with a mosquito. So, one important element in being a contributor is to believe that everyone can make a difference and that small deeds by the smallest among us are important.

In the elementary school, we display a "Make a Difference" bulletin board. Central to that board is the word "Peace", and around it are suggestions like "Let's Get Along", "Help Each Other", and "Care About the Earth", ideals we hope to live and practice every day, like a persistent mosquito, buzzing with goodness, however random. Because the early years are so critical in terms of developing lifelong skills and attitudes, we hope to take a long-term approach with a view to keeping a child's compass pointed toward goodness throughout his/her life.

Another quality necessary to sustain commitment to being a contributor is the quality of empathy. This reminds me of a joke: "Why do mummies have trouble keeping friends?" Have you guessed? "They are too wrapped up in themselves!" Empathy is the opposite of being a self-absorbed,

mummy type. Empathy is the ability to walk in another's shoes, to feel and understand another's needs. Have you ever noticed that in a room full of toddlers when one cries, there can follow a chorus of empathetic crying? Or, have you ever observed busy adults talking while their three-year-olds interact?

In addition to an innate empathy that exists in children, there is a genuine desire to help. One child drops his cookie, his lip starts to quiver, the other child notices, picks up the cookie and offers it to the relieved child. When children hear or see

someone is sad, they want to help. When they hear of a problem they want to help and will offer—with every bit of genuine concern and magical thinking—to stop the bad guy or heal a wounded Earth. One of our elementary assembly themes was about pollution, classes of four year olds seriously dialogued about how to help Mother Earth so she wouldn't be sad. The little ones are quick to apologize after a disagreement, hopeful about "making it all better", quick and generous, and without prejudice, offer loving hugs.

Once we have established the idea





that yes, everyone can contribute in big and small ways and we continue to develop the quality of empathy in our students, our next task is to give them the necessary skills to support their effectiveness. As a school, we mean to follow our mission and prepare our students to be contributing global citizens. Most schools are committed to these goals, but what is different about our

approach is that it is based on learning theory; our method is fundamental to the idea that students will continue to seek more because they love to learn. Best practices are essential or we kill the spirit innate in all humans—the desire to wonder. It is sobering to see children sitting, bored but diligent, doing repetitive tasks, trying for perfection to please a teacher or parent.



Conversely, there is nothing more joyful than a room full of children excited, engaged, and curious, alive to their learning. That means offering them opportunities, offering an invitation to the magic of words, words that open the world to them, the world of imagining and learning. We hope to develop in our students a love of reading so they can pursue all interests and every dream. That is, not simply the skill of reading

words, but the joy of reading meaningfully. And we offer our students the invitation to be writers, writers who love words and realize they can communicate everything

that is in their hearts and minds by putting words to work in a writing piece. We want them to learn about and wonder about all aspects of their world; their community and ultimately come realize who they are, their value as individuals, as important contributors to our world community.

Above all we intend not only to keep alive but ignite that part of them that is empathetic, caring and motivated to be good; to help randomly, not because it feels good but because it is the right thing to do, even and especially, without waiting for appreciation or acknowledgement. We want making a difference to be internalized so that its external manifestation is natural and becomes a part of who they are. Our students are eager to be of service and want to make good choices. They are coming to realize that each day they express a random goodness, in whatever small way, they contribute to a positive class environment, school environment and ultimately make our world a better place. 🍌



Charity Cardiac Surgery in Developing Countries



**Elias Juan Saad MD, Consultant Intensivist,
King Faisal Heart Institute, King Faisal Specialist Hospital &
Research Centre,
(Father of Anna G7, Stephan G9 and Sebastian G11)**

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed.

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

As per definition in Wikipedia, charitable giving is “the act of giving money, goods or time to the unfortunate, either directly or by means of a charitable trust or other worthy cause.”

Most forms of charity are concerned with providing food, water, clothing, shelter, and tending the ill, but other actions may be performed as charity: visiting the imprisoned or the homebound, providing dowries for poor women, ransoming captives, and educating orphans. Donations to causes that benefit the unfortunate indirectly, such as donations to fund cancer research, are also charity. From the religious



aspect, early Christians particularly recommended the care of the unfortunate to the charge of the local bishop. In Islam this is called Zakat, and is one of the five pillars upon which the Muslim religion is based. Whatever religion or belief you follow, charity seems to be essential with the principle that if you do not give, there is no clear meaning of what you have earned.

Philanthropy in the developing countries is suboptimal and has no solid tradition. Africa and the Middle East, the world’s most unequal region, is a good example of relatively modest but increasing philanthropic efforts with many opportunities for leadership.

Not everybody is poor in the emerging countries. There are often people with enough education and resources to organize and participate in local philanthropic efforts, to help their own “have nots.”

Based on the above principles, a group of health care professionals at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh embarked on a charitable mission to provide cardiac surgery in developing countries. The aim of the mission in cardiac surgery is based on the following statistics: The results of a worldwide survey

published in 1999 clearly defined the differences that exist in cardiac care in developed vs. developing



countries. The survey showed that there are approximately 4,000 cardiac surgical centers in the world, with a striking mal-distribution of access.

In North America, each center serves approximately 120,000 people. In Europe and Australia, each cardiac surgery center serves a population of 1 million people. In Asia, there is one center for every 16 million people; while in Africa the number is one to 33 million people. This mal-distribution has a significant impact on the number of operations performed in these countries.

The average number of cases performed in North America, Australia, and Europe per million people, and possibly the ideal number, is 860. The average number

of cardiac operations performed for every million people in South America, the Russian Federation, Asia, and Africa is approximately 60. Based on these figures, it is possible to calculate that 4.5 billion people (93%) living outside North America, Australia, and Europe have no access to cardiac surgery. It is entirely reasonable, therefore, to consider these areas the “less privileged parts of the World”. The fact that modern cardiac surgery is not available to people in the most impoverished nations of the world is indeed no great surprise. Poor access to cardiac surgery is just one of the problems generated by sheer poverty and inequality in the developing world where, in general, cardiac surgery is not a priority, and cannot be performed because of lack of money or infrastructure. For the most part, the minority that can afford an operation in a private hospital or can travel abroad for surgery, have no problems.

Leadership, patience, perseverance, dedication, and the capacity to adapt to adversity have been the keys to our success. Our sense of mission, commitment, enthusiasm, dedication, and our clear objectives, supplemented the insufficient support of the institution that never fully met our needs.

When we retrospectively reviewed our operations undertaken over the period 2007 through 2010 we found that simple methods imposed by limited resources allowed generally good results in patients treated surgically. In the environment of the study, many patients must have died before presenting for surgical treatment.

Simple methods are often sufficient for standard cardiac operations.

The medical volunteers are just that, volunteers. Usually, we schedule trips during our vacation time to accomplish our humanitarian efforts. Airfare, food and lodging are provided to us. We always return from a trip with an overwhelming feeling of having done something very important and meaningful.

Equipment donations include monitors, ventilators, syringe pumps, bypass machines, echocardiogram and electrocardiogram machines, and medication. Education at all levels is an important component of the program. The team of physicians, respiratory therapists and nurses educate their local counterparts. Local health care professionals are incorporated into the delivery of care in such a way that at some point the visitors are serving as advisors not deliverers in the operating room and intensive care unit.



Most of the team are professionals at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre. We decided to commit to this charity program with the leadership of Dr. Zohair Al Halees, a well known cardiac surgeon in Saudi Arabia. This charitable task started in 2007. Our first mission was in Mauritania. For

seven days, we performed cardiac surgery for fourteen in-need patients. The mission was successful, and we continued with an average of 2 trips per year to places such as Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Iran, Sudan and Egypt.

The mission team consists of a small number of health care providers who are highly skilled in the field of cardiac surgery. The Head of mission, Dr. Zohair Al Halees, has the most experience in humanitarian situations. His job is to deal with the main organization and cardiac surgical procedures. Medical volunteers include surgeons, physicians, anesthetists, nurses and respiratory therapists. Non-medical staff at King Faisal took care of organizing the team; they are experienced managers and financial and administrative experts.

As I mentioned earlier, we are just volunteers. Our reward is helping people who, without our work and effort, would have lost their health and the possibility of a fruitful and healthy life. Also, team members who have been exposed to work in adverse conditions have fed us with a particular strength and close friendship enriching our professional lives. Every time that I return from this humanitarian mission, I have tried to teach my children that, if you are unable to give without any other interest than helping people in need, no matter how much you have, it means nothing.

In summary, I hope I have been able to deliver the message to the reader that charity is an important task in our life and we all can play a role in improving our society. *M*



Making a Difference One Bracelet at a Time; Our Pennies for Peace Campaign

**Crystal Van Cleef, MS G8 Humanities Teacher
and Dagne Furth, MS G6 Humanities Teacher**

Hope is an emotional state, a belief in a positive outcome even in the face of contrary evidence. Hope often opposes despair, such as a village plagued by poverty that invests in a school.

~ Karin Ronnow, Central Asia Institute

Last spring, three AIS-R teachers, Dagne Furth, Jaison Norris, and Crystal Van Cleef, got together and decided that Greg Mortenson's books *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools* were just too riveting to put down. They certainly weren't bedtime stories one could read and then barely recall weeks later. These testimonies were the stuff of legend, the kind that humbled you, haunted you, and then inspired you. On the final pages of

each book, numerous ways to help support Greg's educational efforts were listed, including a very special campaign called Pennies for Peace. This fundraising initiative was started by kids, for kids, and it was all heart. Its mission: to put pencils in the hand of every child who wanted to learn throughout the remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and open the door to literacy. This was something that AIS-R had to get in on!

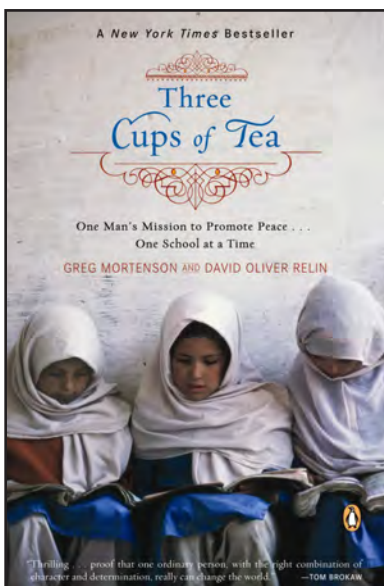
As the summer approached, we would run into each other and throw out different ideas for how we could support Pennies for Peace. Finally, we decided the easiest way to raise the largest sum of money would be to market "wristbands with a message," or Pennies for Peace bracelets. Instead of just dumping riyals into a bucket and the students not really understanding what the money was going towards, the focus would be on raising awareness and creating a sense of community. By simply wearing a bracelet, teachers

and students would send a message without even realizing it: "I believe everyone has the right to learn."

Once the fall rolled around, the Pennies for Peace Campaign hit the ground running. Students learned about Greg Mortenson's story, his foundation called the Central Asia Institute, and the more than 58,000 children who were now receiving an education due to his efforts. In addition, AIS-R students




learned about the creation of the Pennies for Peace organization, which was started by Mortenson's mother (an elementary school principal) to support the building of his first school in Pakistan. Since the publishing of Mortenson's books, a global literacy movement has dawned, and AIS-R was quickly becoming an extension of that story. Students originally from Pakistan, like Muhammad Zubayr Khan, stated, "Everyone was moved and motivated by the fact that we are helping kids in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We started fundraising at the right time because, as the floods [in late summer] hit, people were already concerned about that





deprived of the right to learn and 78 million of them are girls. And yet, if students like Tamara Biary, Lamis Jawhari, and Belal Salih continue to make a difference by giving of their time, energy, and resources, this figure doesn't have to be the last word. In fact,

is to transform the life of another, we wonder what other fantastic ideas you will soon dream up. Greg Mortenson urges us to, "always remember that...with education, you have hope and with hope you can do anything."

So if you could do anything, what would you do? We cannot wait to see!
We would like to send a special thank you to Marcelle Khoury and Alex Braden for their efforts in helping us with the Pennies for Peace bracelet sales. 

region of the world." Karam El Solh and Fawziah Al Mana, mentioned, "It was nice to know that everyone could make a difference just by contributing, and it was really good to get an awareness of how many children are still uneducated in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

These days, we think our students at AIS-R realize just how fortunate they are. While students in many classrooms solve equations on the SMART Board, cozy up to Netbooks in the library, or work on their latest video projects, they understand that not everyone has it so good. Not long ago, they watched videos of their peers in villages like Korphe, Pakistan, huddle around makeshift stoves and etch their lessons on collective chalkboards. They listened as the children expressed their dreams and hopefulness despite the bitter cold and inevitable reality that many of them will never experience a sound education. We witnessed our students begin to understand the impact that education can have on people around the world.

UNICEF reports that there are currently, 120 million children

over the course of the last few weeks, the elementary, middle, and high school collectively sold almost 1,000 Pennies for Peace bracelets and raised over 16,000SR! Wow! Congratulations AIS-R student body!

Now that you've realized how easy it



Haiti



Emad El Dukair MD , Senior Advisor to The Management Board, InterHealth Canada Ltd, and Owner of The Eldukair Medical Center on Olaya (Father of Abdulaziz G10, and Leen G5)

As the plane approached Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, we could see the beautiful shores of this island nation. As we got closer and were about to land, however, we could see a level of destruction that was beyond imagining: buildings transformed into piles of rubble, houses left half standing, and tents everywhere for all those families that survived the earthquake in May 2010. Two-hundred thousand were estimated to have perished, and a further two million were left homeless.

As we drove to the hotel, tents and rubble filled the sides of the road. We saw lots of green and red buckets, which had been distributed by the relief agencies—green for clean water to drink and wash with, red for waste. All around, we saw children and old men and women sitting on what was left of the

pavement, watching the cars passing by, and smiling. I wondered how many of them had lost their loved ones, and yet they were still able to smile.

When we got to our hotel—one of the very few hotels that were not damaged by the quake—we saw across the street dozens of tents filled with hundreds of men, women and children who had lost their homes and their livelihoods.

My hotel room was very basic, and though it had an air-conditioner, the air-conditioner was not working properly. When I asked to change my room because of this, the receptionist was very courteous and said that he would do his best, even though the hotel was fully booked. I was a bit embarrassed, complaining to the receptionist about a broken air-conditioner when it was quite possible that he was living in one of those small tents opposite the hotel with his



Streets of Port au Prince

family. Despite temperatures that reached 35 degrees C, I was quite certain that those tents lacked all basic comforts, including air-conditioning. We visited the local hospitals, a few of which were field hospitals as the main hospital had been destroyed by the earthquake. We saw children with amputated arms or legs, mothers holding the hands of their children as they tried to provide a sense of security, men trying to help their wives or mothers walk to the toilets. There was so much pain and misery in these places, but still smiles were quick to appear whenever we looked at or talked to any of these people.

It is amazing how one's life can change forever within the space of a few minutes. Many of the people we saw went to bed one night with



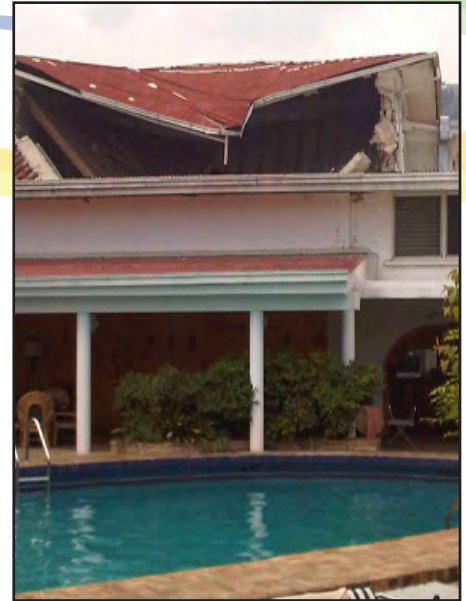
Salesmen in the tent community



The tent community

dreams and hopes and plans for tomorrow, but nothing has been the same since then.

meters. We all forget how fortunate we are to have legs with which to walk, vision to see our loved ones, and hands to use to complete our homework. We cannot imagine being confronted with a situation where the only music to listen to is the humming of our own voices or a mother singing a lullaby to her baby boy.



Part of our hotel

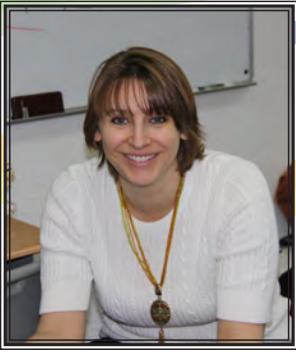
The more I saw the following day, the more I thanked God for his blessings. We often do not realize how lucky we are. We complain about hard work in the office, too much homework from school, having to wait for the car in the sun for a few minutes. When confronted with food that is too cold, mineral water that has run out, and internet that is too slow, we often lose our tempers. We get upset when we do not get a parking space close to the stores and have to walk a few extra

We have just opened two hospitals in the Turks and Caicos Islands that are a 40-minute flight from Haiti. We hope that we will be able to treat and rehabilitate as many earthquake victims as we can from an injured and traumatized population. 🙏



The destruction in Port au Prince





Nicole Jawad, Grade 5 Teacher

A Forgotten Recyclable Put to Good Use

“MOMMY!” shouted an excited child as he popped through the kitchen door waving a note from his school. “My teacher says we need to collect those things from the top of soda cans.” He added, “They use them to make new arms and legs and heads for people who lost theirs!”



As I read the note, I realized he was talking about pull tabs (or ring pulls as the British call them) and that heads were not actually on the list. The note also mentioned that the pull tabs were being melted down and made into prosthetic limbs for people who could not afford them. “What a great idea!” I thought, “We should collect them.” Our family has been collecting pull tabs from soda cans since that day 5 years ago, and that excitement is as alive today as it was then.

This took place in Bahrain, and the pull tabs we collect here in Riyadh are taken to Bahrain.

From there, they are sent to The Prosthesis Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand which is leading a campaign

worldwide and estimates that more than 3,000 ring pulls are needed to make an artificial leg or arm (Grieve).

“The Ring Pull (pull tab) Project was the brainchild of Dubai-based Thai-restaurant owner Poy Booncham, who collects and delivers the ring pulls to the Prosthesis Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand. The project was launched in Bahrain in May 2005 by the Rainbow for Kids school principal and co-owner, Christine Hasan.” (The O&P EDGE) “Since its inception, more than 400kg of pull tabs, about 400,000, have been collected and sent to Thailand free of charge, previously courtesy of DHL. The first shipment was sent out in February 2006 weighing 90kg. There have since been many more shipments like this one.” (Grieve)

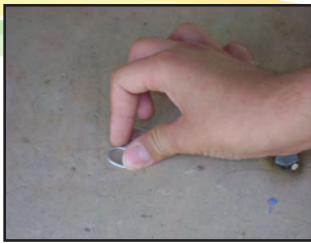
People often ask me why we just collect the pull tabs and not the whole cans. My standard response to that is twofold. First, the pull tabs are small and can be packed into a smaller container than the whole cans can. Then there’s the fact that the tabs are a forgotten recyclable. Many times they are just discarded or tossed carelessly on the roads, parking lots, or ground.

I’m also asked if I encourage kids to drink more sodas in order to collect the pull tabs, however, the answer to that is, of course, no. If you think about it, there are many places to get a collection started. Some kids say that their moms, dads, or other

family members drink them, so they start from there. Others collect them at parties or from the ground especially at supermarkets or where there is a vending machine around. Last year, one AISR student enlisted the help of the Australian Embassy to collect them during their parties. Grade 5-A collects them around the school every other Saturday after RYSA games have taken place on the weekends. The list could go on.

Whenever I hear that unmistakable click, ‘phsssss’ of a can opening, I often ask for the pull tab. People either politely thank me for taking it off their hands, or they shoot me a perplexed look. However, many start their own collections when I let them know what the tabs are being used for. It’s a good feeling to start a new chain of collectors; I say chain because they often tell their friends, who tell their friends, and so on. Every few weeks or so, someone brings their collection to me or leaves it anonymously in my mail box at school, and I get so excited





to see how
this is
spreading
like
wildfire.
In a place
where

recycling is not often thought of, this project has not only started people recycling, even if only on a small scale, but recycling to help others.

Many people believe that in order to make a difference, one needs to make a grand, monumental gesture, but there are small things that we can do to make a huge difference in the lives of people we may never know. I often wonder, do the people who receive these prosthetics know where the material originated? Will they know who joined in the collection? Do they know that the raw materials came from so far away? The bigger question is, does it really matter? The important part of all of this is that people are being helped, and they feel the difference we are making. 🙌

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AIS-R Gives and Receives

**Matthew Stipple,
Educational Advancement Director**



As in previous years, the AIS-R community has raised money this year to donate to worthy causes. In August, 9,400 SAR was donated toward the Pakistan Flood Relief effort by AIS-R community members. These funds were forwarded to an international aid organization called Action Against Hunger (<http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/>) with a letter requesting that they be used specifically to assist those in need of food and water in Pakistan. Another AIS-R group composed of students and teachers has been selling colored bracelets to raise money for an organization called Pennies for Peace (<http://www.penniesforpeace.org>). Inspired by Greg Mortensen's book, *Three Cups of Tea*, Pennies for Peace is an international service learning project that schools can run to raise money for the education of girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Finally, various groups at AIS-R, including the Girl Scouts, the High School Student Council, and the World Peace Café, have been raising funds for the Children of Haiti project (<http://www.childrenofhaitiproject.org/>). Last year, AIS-R began to sponsor the education of two children through this program. Their names are Jonas Cherizier and Mikerlange Fleurissant and they are both 6 years old. AIS-R continues this support this year as their country continues to recover from the devastating earthquake which struck them in January of 2010.

In addition to donating funds, AIS-R has recently received funds from generous supporters as well. Last spring the American Business Group of Riyadh kindly donated 100,000 SAR, which was put toward the new High School computer lab, and the Exxon Mobil Corporation gave AIS-R 75,000 SAR, which is going toward a new robotics program. The Office of Overseas Schools also gave AIS-R a \$35,000 GRASP grant award, which has been used to support teacher professional development, as well as \$161,000 for security enhancements. The PTSO generously donated 35,000 SAR which was used to purchase a beautiful baby grand piano, and the Riyadh Youth Sports Associated donated the funds to pay for the Avenue of Nations. Finally, just a few weeks ago, AIS-R received almost 17,000 SAR from the Riyadh Concert Band, which will be used to improve our music program. Generous donations like these directly benefit AIS-R students and are greatly appreciated. 🙌



Middle School Makes a Difference

Thomas Leonas, Middle School Counselor

Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.
~Mohammed Ali


Make a difference! It's the theme at AIS-R this year and hopefully a way of life for years to come. So often we think in terms of huge projects involving many people when we hear the words, "make a difference," and many times that is the case, but it certainly does not have to be. The first quarter of the school year has already seen the AIS-R community making a difference with the Pakistan food relief project, which sent several truckloads of supplies and materials to people in desperate need, the MUN Pennies for Peace bracelet sales generated a significant amount of money, and the UN Day celebrations had a strong message

of giving. These are all examples of large groups of people coming together to work towards a common cause, and the impact of the generosity can be widespread.

We all need to remember that making a difference in the world need not be a huge endeavor. Mother Teresa said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." This is the exact message we are trying to send to our students. The middle school advisory program has adopted Wednesdays as Make a Difference Day so that throughout the year, we can explore ways to do small things that can have large impacts. Making a difference to the world may seem like an enormous task, but it is, in fact, the collective

effort of everyone to make small contributions with a lot of heart that matters most. This year, AIS-R is trying to teach students that it is our responsibility to seek ways to contribute, large and small, locally and globally. You don't have to be concerned you're only capable of making small contributions. What counts is the effort.

Grade 7 student Miran Schendel recently found 10 Riyals on the floor in the hallway of the middle school. He turned the money in to the office and walked away knowing that he had done the right thing. Two days passed, and it was clear that nobody was going to come looking for the money. The ten Riyals might not be a huge sum of money, but it was enough to donate to a charity that takes small donations and feeds people one at a time. The responsible actions of one AIS-R student allowed for a person who would have otherwise gone hungry, to eat a meal. This is a perfect example of how something that seems small and insignificant can, indeed, make a big difference.

Marian Wright Edelman once wrote, "We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee." 



Students Make a Difference For Pakistan

Iman Nizami, Grade 10

On September 1st, 2010, I stayed after school with Ravina to help pack some supplies for the flood victims of Pakistan. I was shocked to see that so many people showed up and how many more kept coming. It made me proud to see that so many students wanted to help those poor people who had no relation to them whatsoever. I think it was different for me because I'm from Pakistan; I was helping my own people. Every night when my dad would turn on BBC, I saw all those helpless people wading through waist deep water or actually having to use a raft to get to their families. It made me so angry to think that it was only getting worse for those who would suffer more than anyone else. I couldn't even do anything to help, but when I entered the Mat Room that day and saw all those bags of clothes, food, shoes, and so much more filling up an entire section of the room, I realized I could help. It didn't even take two hours to unfold the boxes, pack everything, label and then transfer them outside. That's how many people showed up to help. In the end, looking at all those boxes piled way above my head, I thought of all those children and their parents and how much we were helping them. Those Pakistanis suffered more than I can ever imagine. They lost their homes, their clothes, their food, everything, but we were doing something to change that. We made a difference.

I made a difference.

Hyoung Min Pak, Grade 11

Not long after school opened, the school had a project which they were going to send food and clothes to Pakistan. I thought that it was a good idea that I participate in this since it's for a good cause. After school, I went to the mat room. It just seemed like there were endless boxes with endless amounts of food and clothing, so we divided the jobs: organizing the goods, taping the boxes, and sticking an AIS-R label onto the box. Although I helped out only from 3 – 4 P.M, it seemed endless. It was quite tiring repeating the same job over and over in the heat; however, since what I was doing was for the good of the people in Pakistan, I didn't feel so annoyed that I was repeating the same job over and over again. I actually felt happy, since I was doing something that would help others, even if it was something so little that nobody would notice. If there's an opportunity like this in the future, I'd like to try to help out again.




Yonca Cabir, Grade 12

AIS-R truly has made a difference!

We were able to bring back the smiles on many people's faces through a collaborative aid campaign that took place during the last week of August. The AIS-R community actively collected items such as clothes, shoes, blankets, towels and food to donate to the victims of the flood that struck Pakistan this past summer. After all the items were collected, we began sorting and packing the goods on September 1st. This process happened in the MAT room, where all the collected items were stored.

When I got there, I was very surprised by what I saw. The entire room was loaded with donations. The feeling I had when seeing how much was there was both excruciating and uplifting. I was astonished that our community had managed to collect such a myriad of donations in such a short period of time, and thought to myself, "Packing all this is going to take a while!" I called a few of my friends to come and help so that we could finish before the truck driver, who was picking up the items, arrived.

So now, it was time for the actual work to begin! Without any breaks, we worked hard sorting and packing all the donations. As time passed by, more and more people came to help, and everybody was working together as a team. After we were done, we looked at the huge number of boxes we had packed, and we were able to give ourselves a pat on our shoulders. What we had accomplished within a short time was simply incredible. This proved to me that as a team, we can indeed make a difference, and we did make a difference! 

Week Without Walls



Daniel Gordon, HS Principal
Ben Keeley, HS Assistant Principal/IB Co-ordinator
and Tony Anderson, Athletic Director

We are very pleased to introduce a Week Without Walls (WWW) program to the American International School—Riyadh. Each grade level will have a unique experience designed to support AIS-R's mission and increase each individual's understanding of how he or she can make a difference. It also promises to provide educational experiences that will create memories to last a lifetime.

Week Without Walls involves every student, teacher, counselor, and administrator in the high school. The organization and implementation of the program is a significant undertaking involving many hours of planning and meeting. We ask that parents and students do their part by meeting all the requirements by the published deadlines. High school teachers, counselors, and administrators will chaperone and lead all activities. Student safety is a top priority.

This year's inaugural Week Without Walls (WWW) will be held February 24 to March 3, 2011, and the focus of the week will differ by grade level:

- All Grade 9 students will participate in adventure-based teambuilding activities as part of their Week Without Walls

experience. Such activities have been proven to help teenagers develop positive self-concept, a better focus of control, as well as strong leadership skills (J.Cain). As a school dedicated to educating the whole child, we feel that our WWW program for 9th graders will allow us to help our students develop some of the essential skills needed to be successful leaders who believe in themselves and have the tools to make the right decisions.

- For Grade 10 and 11 students, the Week Without Walls program will consist of a trip abroad. Students will be exposed to a different culture and will participate in transformative experiences. They will have the opportunity to become informed about contemporary issues facing the communities they visit, to meet and talk to key players who will expose them to varying perspectives, and as a result, challenge them to think critically before forming opinions. Finally, they will partner with local community members on service projects that will help them develop deeper personal connections and hopefully inspire them to make the world a better place, to Make a Difference!

- Grade 12 students will also be involved, however on a much different level. Considering when Week Without Walls is occurring on the calendar, this is an ideal time for our Seniors to experience IB Mock Exams. This will create an atmosphere of a testing scenario that our students have never before encountered. These exams will be treated as if they are being conducted in May and will help expose our students to the stresses that are associated with exams before they actually take place. This means that our students will be prepared for the mental and physical commitments that accompany three weeks of exams and, consequently, will be able to focus more on the IB content of their courses to help them be more successful this May.

The Week Without Walls program is an invaluable experience that our students will remember for the rest of their lives. The learning that these students will experience over the course of this week will shape the way in which they become life-long learners. It is with great enthusiasm that AIS-R is introducing the first annual Week Without Walls!