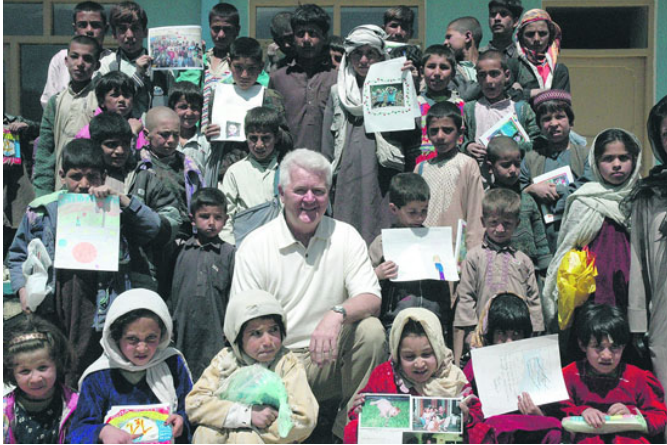


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Budd MacKenzie, a Man Consumed by his Passion for Freedom

By *Sophie Braccini*



Budd MacKenzie Photo courtesy of TIE

rebuilding effort."

MacKenzie's first cause in Afghanistan was educating women. "Even now in the villages I cannot talk directly to women, when I arrive they disappear to the back of the house," he says. MacKenzie confesses that there is no better way to appreciate women than having to deal only with men. The Afghan government has affirmed its objective of educating women, but in reality, when cuts are made it is to girls' education. Girls in school number about 1/3 of their male counterparts and most parents don't see the need for girls' education past the elementary level, if at all.

In Lalander and neighboring villages TIE pays for 27 full time teachers; more than half of the 839 students are girls and a new school has been built, with swing sets. All of this has been done with the cooperation and support of local leaders and the Afghan Department of Education. "One key to success is to involve the villagers and their leaders in the process and to make the program transparent and verifiable," says MacKenzie.

The second cause is 'food-clothe-shelter.' "Once I got involved and after visiting Afghanistan, there was no pulling back," said MacKenzie. "Working for education is working for the future," he adds, "but these people have seen their country devastated, their economy ruined; it all has to be rebuilt." On these issues as well MacKenzie is working in partnership with local experts and authorities, while learning to avoid the risks of corruption.

Among other accomplishments, TIE has enabled the planting of over 22,000 fruit trees, has provided 300 sheep (5 per farmer for 60 farmers) through its microcredit program, has provided 5600 lbs of clothing, blankets and other items, funded the building of four bridges and has transferred the technology of a hydraulic ramp pump that does not require electricity or gas with the help of Solano Community College students. "The purpose is not to sprinkle emergency help, but to engage in a long term strategy of development that will bring independence to these people," says MacKenzie.

Along the way MacKenzie and his team decided to support the Aschiana Project, a well organized and controlled program that sponsors Afghan street children and sends them back to school. For \$20 a month, parents commit to sending their child to school instead of the street. "Our permanent project managers in Kabul help follow up with every one of the kids, making sure they indeed go back to school," says MacKenzie.

MacKenzie gives regular talks to the community to present his results to those who have donated and raise the interest of new partners. His next speaking engagement is on September 9th at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church (MVPC) at 8:00 a.m. "I'd like many people to come and hear what has been done," says MacKenzie, "bring

From the danger zones of Afghanistan to the comfort of his Lamorinda life, Budd MacKenzie is a tireless traveler working for reconstruction and long-term development. He is a man who wants to change the world; on a more modest scale, a man who wants to bring permanent development and freedom to men and women living in regions of Afghanistan where an uncommon journey has taken the man who was President of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce in 2006 and 2003-2004 Lafayette Citizen of the Year. Over the past six years, his non-profit "Trust in Education" (TIE) has achieved results that would make any international NGO proud.

In 2004 TIE reached an agreement with the villagers of Lalander (16 miles south of Kabul) to construct a secular school for boys and girls. Politically engaged, MacKenzie believes that no nation should topple another's government without taking on the reconstruction that follows. "Our commitment is clear," says MacKenzie: "Be part of the

a friend, and ask questions, I'll be there just for that." MVPC is at 10 Moraga Lane and the event is opened to the public. A \$3 breakfast will be served. RSVP to Bob Prindle, 631-1142. For more information go to www.trustededucation.org.

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