

Rakib - A Christmas Message - 2009

One month ago I was very doubtful that Rakib would be able to raise the money to pay his admission fee if he was admitted to a medical college. I started to look outside of scouting for additional funds. By chance I found Dr. Ahmed. Dr Ahmed and his wife are humanitarians who spend much of their time and money helping other people or helping other people to help others. Dr Ahmed wanted to pay for 50% of Rakib's admission fee but, after consulting with his wife she reminded him that that they had made commitments to several other charitable projects. They could only commit to 25%, \$3,000 US. They would like to pay for 50% of Rakib's continuing monthly expenses. I am hopeful that Troop 1776 will continue to raise funds for Rakib's monthly expenses, and to continue to support him throughout his time at Dhaka National Medical College. Somehow between us we were able to help Rakib gain admission to one of the better medical schools in Bangladesh and to help him pay his admission fee.

The day after Rakib was admitted to medical college Dr Ahmed called me to tell me to had verified that Rakib was indeed admitted. The first thing he said to me was "You are a great scoutmaster". I did not tell him I was only an assistant scoutmaster. He asked "how did you find him"? How were you able to identify that he was sincere and honest. Many people in Bangladesh will ask for money, if you give it to them you may never hear from them again. I told him that if not for the Boy Scout connection, and Rakib's desire to help other people, I don't think I would have attempted to help him. He went on to say that Rakib was a special young man. The more he talked to him the more faith he had in him and his potential. He said he asked Rakib if he had written the letter he gave me in Bangladesh by himself. This is the letter that Rakib asked me to read to the scouts when I returned to the US. Rakib said yes. Dr. Ahmed was very impressed with the honesty, sincerity and humility that was conveyed in that letter. He also told me he was impressed about how polite, respectful and determined Rakib was in the conversations he had with him. Dr. Ahmed was awed how a boy not yet seventeen years old had such a vast knowledge of worldly matters, current events, and politics. One last thing he told me was how Rakib was humbled and stated that he was sure God was responsible for putting the people together that helped him achieve his goals.

Dr. Ahmed went on to state that he too felt that God had brought all of us together. The odds of this happening are a billion to one. Something had convinced him to connect with Rakib, trust him, and want to invest his personal money in him.

Dr. Ahmed then told me; God gives us money. It is not ours, he expects us to use a little for ourselves and to use the rest to do good things for people who cannot do for themselves. Dr. Ahmed and his wife are very special people.

I must admit that for the past few years, since my Katrina volunteer experience in Biloxi MS, I have felt something guiding me to do things and to go places I never thought I would go.

Dr Ahmed said that he would like to meet me and told me about a project he has started; a very large number of women in developing nations and poor countries are dyeing at a young age from breast cancer. They do not have access to doctors so by the time they do get to a doctor the cancer is too far advanced to save their lives. Dr Ahmed is starting a pilot program to do mobile breast screenings in Bangladesh. He feels that many lives can be saved or extended if there were early detection. The area he has targeted for the pilot program is Bagerhat. This is the district (county) where Rakib lives. If the program is successful he would like to expand it to other countries. He had secured the interest of the National Cancer Society as a possible source of funding. He said he would like me to help him with the project. I'm not sure in what capacity. I certainly do not have the technical skills needed. From our conversation I deduct that he would like me to help with logistics and with helping to securing volunteer personnel to administer the project.

In closing; Thank you to all who supported the Rakib service project and helped raise funds for him over the past two years, everyone's effort is sincerely appreciated. Many scouts walked up to me and donated a dollar or two or five. Those donations are just as much appreciated as the large ones. Rakib's family is aware that this time of year is the most holy time of year for many Americans. He said his family would pray for us that we may have a joyous holiday season.

It has been brought to my attention that due to the economy some Troop 1776 scouts may need assistance with the cost of scouting in the future. The troop maintains a campership fund to help offset the cost of outings for scouts that may need help. Donations of any amount help the troop to continue offering assistance. This holiday season give some thought to making a donation to the troop 1776 campership fund.

May next year allow us to continue community service and all of the great adventures that Troop 1776 and BSA offers.

Merry Christmas / Happy Holidays,

Mr. Paley, ASM Venture Activities