

THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

ISSUE #08

AUGUST EDITION



THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

WELCOME AFGHAN REFUGEES TO SAINT LOUIS

We want the Afghan community to grow and for everyone to tell friends and relatives..

THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

I am committed to bring untold positive stories to the Afghan and non-Afghan community in Saint Louis.

A CULTURAL TREASURE AND DIVERSE ART HAVEN

The Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) is a prestigious art institution in the United States, housing...

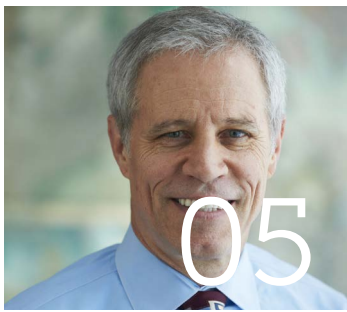
THE AFGHAN NATIONAL MUSEUM'S UNWAVERING SPIRIT THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES

The Afghan National Museum, established in 1919 under king...

AFGHAN ACTRESS USING CINEMA TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIAL ISSUES AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Leena Alam's being named one of the BBC's 100 Women in 2021. Her work continues to inspire and impact audiences worldwide.





**CAPTURING COUNTLESS TALES
IN A SINGLE SNAPSHOT**



AFGHAN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Afghan Community Center is a vibrant and inclusive space in Saint Louis that serves as a hub for the Afghan community and fosters connections with the broader community.

The Afghan Community Center seeks to develop a center that reflects the diverse needs, aspirations, and cultural heritage of the Afghan community in the United States. The ultimate goal is to create a welcoming environment that promotes social integration, empowerment, and mutual understanding.

The Afghan Community Center aspires to create a dynamic and inclusive space that celebrates Afghan culture, fosters social cohesion, and empowers individuals and families to thrive within the St. Louis community.

CONTENTS

- 04 THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE AFGHAN JOURNAL
- 05 WELCOME AFGHAN REFUGEES TO ST. LOUIS
- 06 THE ART AND THRILLS OF AFGHAN KITE FIGHTING
- 07 THE AFGHAN ACTRESS USING CINEMA TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIAL ISSUES AND EMPOWER WOMEN
- 08 AFGHANISTAN'S ENCHANTING TRADITIONAL DANCE
- 09 A CULTURAL TREASURE AND DIVERSE ART HAVEN
- 10 THE AFGHAN NATIONAL MUSEUM'S UNWAVERING SPIRIT THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES
- 11 A TASTE OF AFGHANISTAN IN ST. LOUIS
- 12 OPERATION FOOD SEARCH CREATES FOOD SECURITY RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ST. LOUISANS
- 13 ROYAL KEBAB
- 14 **AFGHAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT COMPETITION - ROUND 3**

THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

Meet Hamdullah Hamdard, an accomplished Media and Communication Expert who has made an indelible mark on Afghanistan's media landscape. With over 12 years of experience, Hamdard's journey began at Mashal University, where he honed his skills in Mass Communication and Journalism, driven by a passion for impactful storytelling.

Hamdard's talent is through his diverse skill set, which includes writing, photography, videography, and multimedia expertise. Throughout his career, he has held various significant roles, from voice artist to marketing coordinator, communication officer, development director, and owner of Chamma Media in Afghanistan.

A standout accomplishment was his tenure as the Media and Communication representative at Welthungerhilfe, Danish Refugee Council, Skateistan, HELA, and, Agricultural Development Fund in Afghanistan. Here, Hamdard effectively managed and streamlined communication efforts, increasing the organization's visibility and reach. He built strong alliances with media outlets, government stakeholders, and donors, highlighting the positive impact of these local and international organizations.

As a passionate advocate for media production, Hamdard established Chamma Media production company in Afghanistan, collaborating with international media giants like BBC and Reuters, 27Km Media, and Grain Media to produce positive stories out of the warzone. He also produced TV commercials, documentaries, and video clips, bringing essential stories to a global audience.

Beyond media production, Hamdard's dedication to social causes is evident through his work in Chamma Media. He trained and equipped youth and children in need with media skills. While supporting a family-founded organization in the training of 10k+ youths in MUN, Women2Business, English language classes, and Filmmaking.

Hamdard's work is recognized globally and he received acclaim from UNESCO Paris and UNESCO Bangkok for his photography and arts, also he has been awarded for his work locally. His work on "Poverty Impact on Children" earned him accolades at the prestigious Plural+ Film Festival in New York.

Hamdard is now serving as the Editor of the Afghan Journal, Hamdard is committed to bringing untold positive stories to the Afghan and non-Af-



ghan community in Saint Louis. Hamdard is Fluent in English, Pashto, Dari, and Urdu, therefore the Afghan Journal will connect diverse audiences and bridge cultural gaps through this monthly publication. Besides serving the Afghan Journal, Hamdullah believes in the power of visual stories therefore he founded his first production company ([Owlsion Pictures](#)) in Saint Louis..

Hamdullah believes that his dedication to media and impactful storytelling can add to the future of a great community.

For inquiries related to the Afghan Journal and Afghan Community Center matters, please feel free to reach out to us at 314-827-1821 or through email at hhamdard@afghancenter.org. We value your interest and look forward to connecting with you to discuss any questions, contributions, or collaborations you might have. Your engagement is essential to our mission, and we appreciate your support in fostering a vibrant Afghan community.



Jerry Schlichter Founder of Arch Grants
Developer of the Afghan Support Program

WELCOME AFGHAN REFUGEES TO ST. LOUIS - JERRY SCHLICHTER

Afghan refugees have faced tremendous challenges and dangers as they uplifted their lives and their families to come to America. We here in St. Louis wholeheartedly welcome all Afghan refugees who are already in St. Louis and others who want to come. We're not just talking about it, but have a tremendously welcoming community, hundreds of volunteers, and over 80 organizations helping meet you and your family's needs. In addition, members of the Afghan community who have built their lives here for many years are deeply involved in assisting recent arrivals. But, there's much more. No city in America offers the programs and support that St. Louis offers. These include the many components that will enable you and your family to build your lives in St. Louis. It's called the Afghan Support Program. It is administered by the International Institute of St. Louis, and includes:

A major housing fund enabling Afghan refugees to find suitable and affordable housing, an Afghan Community Center, which is newly established and thriving on South Grand Boulevard, an Afghan Chamber of Commerce to help Afghan entrepreneurs to start businesses in St. Louis, I-Pads and 2 years of cell phone service for Afghan families, computer coding classes for 12 weeks of programming, business grants of \$15,000 to recent Afghan arrivals to start businesses through a competition, soccer programs for Afghan children, a native Afghan coordinator, Moji Sidiqi, to work with refugees to help them with the program.

This newspaper, the Afghan Journal, to provide important information about St. Louis and Afghanistan. We didn't wait for this program to take years to develop. It is fully in place and fully funded, which gives a head start to Afghan refugees to build the institutions needed to make St. Louis their home.

The Afghan Support Program is administered by the International Institute of St. Louis, which plays a key role in facilitating the integration of Afghan refugees into the local community. The Institute offers a range of vital services, including housing assistance, employment training, English language classes, business loans that can add to the grants above, and cultural orientation. A recent very successful EID festival was a part of making Afghan refugees feel "at home" in their new home. All of this is happily provided to ensure that Afghan refugees have a strong foundation from which they can rebuild their lives in St. Louis.

What sets St. Louis apart is its focus on long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency for refugees. The city's innovative approach includes a robust job placement program, connecting Afghan refugees with local employers who are actively seeking to diversify their workforce. Another supportive organization, [The Mosaic Project](#), helps place Afghan refugees obtain jobs. Good paying jobs for Afghan refugees have been plentiful. We in St. Louis recognize the need for support, but we also know that we as a community have a need for the Afghan refugees as well. Unlike other cities, we feel we need the vitality, diversity, talent and skills of Afghan refugees. You add much to our city, strengthen our neighborhoods, and build our economy.

St. Louis also recognizes the importance of education in empowering Afghan refugees for a brighter future. The St. Louis Public Schools offer specialized programs for Afghan children to learn English, and greatly values Afghan students within the education system. The United States government has recognized that St. Louis stands apart from any other American city for its program of support for welcoming Afghan refugees with open arms, and providing the deep support needed to build a strong, vibrant Afghan community in St. Louis.

We want the Afghan community to grow and for everyone to tell friends and relatives throughout the United States and in Afghanistan as well that St. Louis is here for you!



THE ART AND THRILLS OF AFGHAN KITE FIGHTING

In the ancient city of Kabul, a unique battle unfolds high above the streets, where the skies are adorned with colorful kites, not metallic planes. Afghans have transformed kite flying, also known as “Gudiparan Bazi,” into an art form, with kite fighting being a central attraction.

Once banned during the Taliban’s rule in the 1990s, kite flying has made a triumphant return since [the Taliban’s fall in 2021](#). Today, Kabul’s skies are once again dotted with hundreds of vibrant kites soaring gracefully.

[Kite fighting](#) in Afghanistan is a thrilling two-person activity. The “Charka Gir” holds the wooden spool around which the wire is wound, while the “Gudiparan Baz” is responsible for controlling the kite’s movements in the air. Wherever there are kites in Afghanistan, kite fighting is sure to follow. During these battles, two kites are flown close to each other, with the objective of using the wire of one’s kite to cut the oppo-

nent’s wire and set their kite free.

The kite fighting experience hinges on the quality of the wire and its preparation. Glass is ground finely and mixed with an adhesive to create a strong and sharp coating for the wire. Kite runners often wrap the tape around their fingers for protection against the taut wire that can cause cuts. Professional kite runners take pride in preparing their own wire, spool, and kite.

When a kite is successfully cut free, it drifts like a colorful, dying bird through the city skies. These liberated kites are called “Azadi” (Freedom) and are often retrieved by neighborhood children to fly another day.

Shor Bazar, the [oldest street](#) in Kabul, is a treasure trove of kite shops where enthusiasts can find kites of various sizes, locally known as “Parcha,” indicating the number of pieces the kite is made from. The prices range from 2 Afn (\$0.023) to 10,000 Afn (\$114.29),

making it accessible to people of all backgrounds.

The popularity of kite flying peaks during winter in Afghanistan due to strong winds and school closures prompted by cold weather. However, despite the joy it brings, kite flying can be hazardous, with many injuries occurring as people chase free kites or lose focus during battles.

Today, kite fighters in Afghanistan can be found battling on Tapeii-i-Maranjan ([Nader Khan Hill](#)), just outside the capital city. The area, rich in history, is also used for various recreational activities such as kite running, horse riding, and motorcycle riding.

In the skies above Kabul, the colorful dance of kites continues, embodying the spirit of freedom and joy for Afghans of all ages. With kite fighting as an exhilarating pastime, the skies above the ancient city will forever remain filled with the beauty of soaring paper and string masterpieces.

THE AFGHAN ACTRESS USING CINEMA TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIAL ISSUES AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Leena Alam is a prominent Afghan film, television, and theater actress known for her work on projects addressing significant social issues such as child marriage, gender inequality, women's rights, and social conflicts. Born in Afghanistan, she relocated to the United States with her family in 1991 due to the civil war in her homeland. Alam embarked on her acting and cinema career in 1998 and has since made a notable impact in the entertainment industry.

She gained widespread recognition for her role in the groundbreaking feminist television drama, "[Shereen](#)," produced by Kaboora and Tolo TV. The show, directed by Ghafar Azad, earned her the nickname "Shereen of Afghanistan." It was also nominated for Best Mini-Series Drama at the [Seoul International Drama Awards in 2016](#), competing against renowned series like *The Night Manager*, *Mr. Robot*, and *Deutschland 83*. It's worth mentioning that Leena has also been nominated as best actresses at this festival.

Throughout her career, she has featured in several impactful films, including "[Kabuli Kid](#)," "[Black Kite](#)," "*Loori*," "[A Letter to the President](#)," and "[Hassan](#)." She is highly regarded for her ability to portray complex and compelling characters. In addition to her acting endeavors, Alam has also contributed to the growth of Afghan cinema by supporting young filmmakers through her involvement in various short films. She has been part of prestigious film festival juries, such as the International Feature Fiction Jury member at Adelaide Film Festival, Australia, Jury at Imagineindia International Film Festival and the Afghanistan Human Right Film Festival.

Apart from her artistic achievements, Leena Alam is an advocate for human rights and social justice. She was named a peace ambassador for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) in 2009. Alam's commitment to human rights activism was evident when she participated in a re-enactment of the tragic killing of Farkhunda, a 27-year-old Afghan woman who was falsely accused of burning a Quran and subsequently beaten and burned to death in 2015. Alam portrayed Farkhunda in the performance, which aimed to raise awareness about the impact of violence against women in Afghanistan.

Beyond her work in film and television, Leena Alam showcased her versatility by taking on theater roles. She played the character of Solveig in Henrik Ibsen's "[Peer Gynt](#)" during the 68th Bad Hersfelder Festspiele in Germany, directed by Robert Schuster.

Leena Alam's contribution to the arts and her commitment to social causes have garnered her recognition and respect, including being named one of the [BBC's 100 Women in 2021](#). Meanwhile she would be the Jury President at Sama International Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden 2023. Her work continues to inspire and impact audiences worldwide, shedding light on important issues while showcasing the talent and potential of Afghan cinema. "The Afghan Journal showcases civilized Afghan society to its readers and a civilized society shapes peace, freedom, and education," Said Leena.



AFGHANISTAN'S ENCHANTING TRADITIONAL DANCE

Attan, the [national dance of Afghanistan](#), has its roots in the tribal Pashtun regions of Afghanistan and Northwestern Pakistan. This spirited dance is often performed during weddings, engagements, informal gatherings, and even during times of war. In history, Attan was used to boost the morale of [Pashtun](#) warriors preparing for battle against colonizers like the British. Today, it has become a symbol of national pride and is embraced not only by the Pashtun ethnic group but also by other ethnicities in Afghanistan.



Photo Credit: danceafghanistan.com

Dance Movements: The dance is typically performed in a circle to the rhythmic beats of drums and pipes. The dancers start with slow steps, gradually increasing their pace, sometimes continuing for hours without breaks. The dance involves clapping inside the circle and can include movements like extending arms into the air and stretching legs. It is an energetic and vibrant display of culture and tradition.

Instruments: The primary instrument used during Attan performances is the [Dhol](#), a double-headed barrel drum. The zurna [surnay](#), a wind instrument, is also commonly used in some variations.

Attire: Performers don [traditional regalia](#) during the dance. Men may wear turbans called [Lungee](#), symbolizing their tribal origins, while women adorn themselves with [colorful dresses](#) decorated with tiny mirrors, signifying light and adding sparkle to their movements.



Photo Credit: City Dance Studios

Styles and Types: [Attan varies in style](#) and technique depending on the region and tribe. Some of the popular variations include:
 Kochai/Kochyano: A nomadic style with handkerchiefs and intricate movements.
 Logarai: Originating from the Logar province, known for spins and interruptions.
 Paktiawal/Khostai: A 5-7 step style with head movements and jet-black hair flicking.
 Shinwari: Done by the Shinwari tribe from Nangarhar province.
 Wardag/Wardaki: Involves many turns, twists, and handkerchiefs to accentuate spins.
 Khattak Attan: Performed by Khattak Pashtun tribesmen, featuring continuous drumbeats and sword movements.
 Mehsud Attan: With long black hair flicking and proud, fierce dancing with guns.
 Kabuli Attan: A modified Attan with modern music, often performed by people from Kabul and non-Pashtun groups.

Attan's Timeless Appeal:

Attan continues to captivate audiences, representing the rich cultural heritage of Afghanistan. The dance's symbolism of unity, celebration, and the indomitable spirit of the Afghan people remains cherished. Its enduring popularity is a testament to the resilience and vibrancy of the nation's traditions. Attan is more than just a dance; it is a cultural treasure that has withstood the test of time. As it continues to be passed down through generations, Attan remains a symbol of Afghan identity, resilience, and celebration.



A CULTURAL TREASURE AND DIVERSE ART HAVEN

The Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) is a prestigious art institution in the United States, housing a diverse collection of paintings, sculptures, cultural artifacts, and ancient masterpieces from around the world. Located in [Forest Park](#), St. Louis, Missouri, this three-story museum attracts up to half a million visitors annually. Notably, admission is free, thanks to funding from the cultural tax district for St. Louis City and County.

Beyond its permanent collections, the museum offers a variety of rotating [exhibitions](#) and installations, including the Currents series, showcasing contemporary artists, and exhibitions dedicated to new media art and works on paper.

The museum's rich history dates back to its founding in 1879 as the [Saint Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts](#), initially an independent entity within [Washington University](#) in St. Louis. Led by director Halsey Ives, the institution provided art education and studio classes, fostering generations of local artists and artisans while maintaining a museum collection.

After the [1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition](#), the museum relocated from downtown to the Palace of Fine Arts, one of the fair's lasting structures. However, a legal dispute over an art tax marked the formal separation of the museum from the university in 1909, leading to the creation of three separate civic institutions: the City Art Museum (evolving into the Saint Louis Art Museum), the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, and the St. Louis School of Fine Arts.

Over the years, the museum continued to grow, adding an extension in the 1950s to accommodate an auditorium for films, concerts, and lectures. To secure its financial future, a tax district was established in 1971, expanding the museum's support

base to include St. Louis County, and it was subsequently renamed the Saint Louis Art Museum in 1972.

In 2005, plans to expand the museum were set in motion, with renowned British architect [Sir David Chipperfield](#) chosen for the design. The expansion, completed in 2013, added over 224,000 square feet of gallery space and an underground garage, made possible through private gifts, foundation support, and the sale of tax-exempt bonds.

The museum's collection boasts more than 34,000 objects spanning from antiquity to contemporary times, organized into nine categories. Notable highlights include works by European masters like Matisse, Gauguin, Monet, Picasso, and Van Gogh. Additionally, the museum houses the world's largest Max Beckmann collection and outstanding pieces from various cultures, including Oceanic, Mesoamerican, and Turkish art.

The Saint Louis Art Museum has received several significant donations, including a promised gift in 2021 from Emily Rauh Pulitzer, featuring artworks by renowned artists such as Picasso, Braque, Brâncuși, and others.

As part of its commitment to contemporary art, the museum also features a site-specific work by British artist Andy Goldsworthy, called Stone Sea. This artwork comprises twenty-five arches made of native limestone, inspired by the region's Pre-historic past when it was a shallow sea.

The Saint Louis Art Museum stands as a beacon of artistic diversity and cultural appreciation, providing free access to art for thousands of visitors annually and contributing significantly to the cultural heritage of St. Louis and the nation.

THE AFGHAN NATIONAL MUSEUM'S UNWAVERING SPIRIT THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES



Photo Credit: Babak Fakhamzadeh

The Afghan National Museum, established in 1919 under [King Amanullah Khan's](#) rule, holds a rich collection of artifacts that reflect the country's cultural heritage. Originally housed in the [Bagh-e Bala Palace](#), the museum later moved to its present location in 1931. Over the years, it has faced numerous challenges, including looting during the civil war in the 1990s, resulting in the loss of 70% of its displayed objects.

During the civil war, the museum endured rocket attacks and was used as a military base, causing significant destruction. In 1996, the remaining staff managed to catalog the remaining materials, but further damage occurred in 2001 when the [Taliban destroyed numerous pieces of art for religious reasons](#).

Efforts to restore the museum began in the early 2000s, with [UNESCO](#) and Interpol aiding in the recovery of over 8,000 artifacts, some found in vaults in Kabul and others abroad, including a collection in Switzerland. Substantial funds were invested between 2003 and 2006 to refurbish the building, and many precious objects were recovered and inventoried.

Despite the challenges, the museum has continued its mission to preserve Afghanistan's [cultural](#) heritage. In 2013, it collaborated with the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on the Mobile Museum Project, which brought 3D replicas of artifacts to schools across Afghanistan, aiming to promote cultural awareness and education.

In recent years, the museum's directors, including Mohammad Fahim Rahimi and Mo-

hammad Zubair Abedi, have worked tirelessly to safeguard the collection, especially given the concerns following the 2021 Taliban offensive and the Fall of Kabul.

The museum's collection is diverse and includes ivory carvings from the [Kushan Empire](#) and early Islam eras, the famous [Rabatak Inscription](#) of [King Kanishka](#), and many other archaeological treasures from different periods in Afghanistan's history. Among these are painted frescos, inscriptions, sculptures, coins, and metal objects recovered from various excavation sites.

The museum boasts an extensive numismatic collection with around 30,000 coins, which has been the subject of archaeological publications, although it remains closed to the public and scholars.

Certain important parts of the collection, like material from Bagram, [Ai-Khanoum](#), [Tepe Fullol](#), and gold jewelry from excavated burials at [Tillya Tepe](#), have been on traveling exhibitions since 2006. These artifacts have been showcased in various museums around the world, with plans to eventually return them to the Afghan National Museum.

Despite its tumultuous history, the Afghan National Museum remains dedicated to preserving and showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage for future generations to cherish and learn from. It serves as a testament to the resilience and determination of the people of Afghanistan in safeguarding their history and identity amid adversity.

A TASTE OF AFGHANISTAN IN ST. LOUIS



When visiting St. Louis, there is at least one place you can be sure to get authentic Afghan food. [Sameem Afghan Restaurant](#) offers both dine-in and carry-out menu items to help ensure your meal experience is the best it can be. This year, be sure to visit Sameem's booth at the International Institute's annual [Festival of Nations](#) Celebration.

"Attendees who come to the festival are naturally curious and love the international cuisines. This allows opportunity for folks like me to engage with them by not only serving food but also handing out cards and flyers too," said Sameem owner Fahime Mohammed. "Most people who come to the restaurant reference the initial meeting at the festival and ask for the same food."

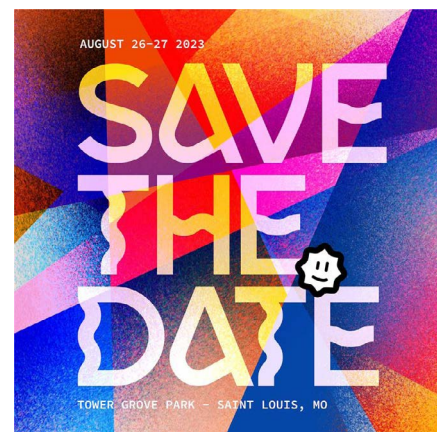
Each year, the Festival of Nations draws thousands of people to Tower Grove Park to participate in a two-day event of music, food, dance, cultural exchange and community. Visitors return year after year to experience more than just an event. Families create core memories. Friendships being and extend. Heritages are preserved. By providing a space for cultural crafts and food to be showcased, the festival maintains many small businesses in the area.

"The business owners normally get a chance to walk around to explore and we learn who serves what, who is selling what this year,"

said Mohammed. "Throughout the weekend, we usually either barter with our fellow booth vendors or exchange business cards which leads to more advertising. We're all here to support each other, too."

For many, Festival of Nations also serves as a launching point for many small businesses to gain popularity and acknowledgement within the community. "Festival of Nations has fast-tracked our popularity by reaching our name to folks outside the city limits, something that wouldn't have been possible except through social media."

Be sure to visit this year's [Festival of Nations](#) on Saturday, August 26 & Sunday, August 27.





OPERATION FOOD SEARCH CREATES FOOD SECURITY RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ST. LOUISANS

Operation Food Search is a St. Louis-based non-profit organization dedicated to ending hunger in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. More than 3 million dollars' worth of food and household essentials are distributed annually to 330 community partner agencies, which in turn feeds 200,000 people in need each month – nearly one-third of whom are children. One of those agencies happens to be the International Institute of St. Louis.

For the fifth year in a row, [Operation Food Search](#) is providing free summer meals for youth in the Youth Program & After School Tutoring Programs Monday through Thursday. In addition, so far this summer, seventy-six meals have been distributed to a wider client base on-site at our bi-weekly [Community Bazaar](#). Operation Food Search provides their [MetroMarket](#) onsite for clients to purchase fresh, cost-effective produce too for those who may not have access to food resources otherwise.

"Since 2018, Operation Food Search has been a wonderful partner for our Teen Program. Knowing they can rely on OFS, our youth clients can focus on improving their English, getting good grades in school, and socializing with their friends," said Katherine Schoeberle, Teen Program Coordinator.

"Food security is essential to the successful integration of our refugee and immigrant youth in St. Louis," said Shoeberle. "We are incredibly grateful for our partnership with OFS and we

look forward to continuing this fall with another year of Afterschool Meals. Refugee and immigrant high-school students attending St. Louis Public Schools who enroll in the program receive a free meal from OFS, homework help, English practice, and academic and social skill development. This is much needed support for our new students and youth in our community."



Royal Kebab

Taste the Essence of Afghanistan and Persia



Indulge in a culinary journey that takes you straight to the heart of Afghanistan and Persia at Royal Kebab Restaurant. Mehdi with a genuine passion for cooking and an unwavering commitment to quality, Mahdi Haidari invites you to savor the authentic flavors of his homeland.

The story behind Mahdi Haidari's success is one of resilience and gratitude. Having arrived in America with limited means and support, he found assistance from the International Institute, which helped him and his family settle into their new home. Now, Mahdi pays it forward by sharing the rich culinary heritage of Afghanistan and Persia with new Afghan refugees, crafting each dish with love and dedication.

At Royal Kebab, new customers are warmly welcomed with a special treat. Upon your first visit, you'll be treated to a complimentary dessert of your choice - the mouthwatering homemade baklava or the luscious Jalebi. This delightful gesture sets the tone for an extraordinary dining experience that will leave you craving more.

Conveniently located at 3611 Bates Street, Royal Kebab is easily accessible to locals and visitors alike. Stepping inside, you'll be embraced by the warm hospitality characteristic of Afghan and Persian cultures. Whether you choose to dine-in, take out, or order online, you'll be met with a friendly and attentive team, ensuring your visit is nothing short of exceptional.

Looking ahead, Mahdi's dreams of expanding his culinary haven, opening new branches to make these delightful flavors accessible to even more people. Buffets filled with a diverse selection of Afghan and Persian dishes, alongside

a range of tantalizing desserts, are part of the future vision.

At Royal Kebab, each dish embodies the heart and soul of Afghanistan and Persia. The combination of authentic flavors and warm hospitality creates a dining experience that goes beyond just food—it's a celebration of culture, taste, and togetherness.

Address: 3611 Bates Street

Phone: (314) 571-9971



AFGHAN COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT COMPETITION ROUND 3

EMPOWERING AFGHAN ENTREPRENEURS

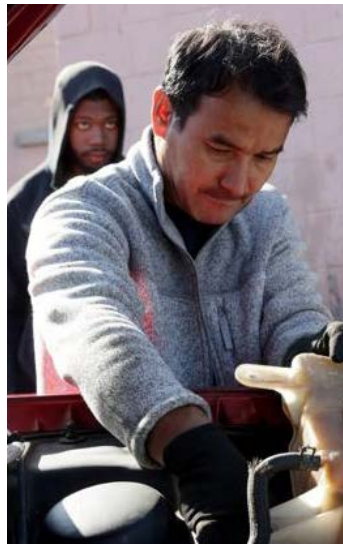
In a world that constantly challenges us with uncertainties and adversities, it is often the resilient spirit of entrepreneurs that paves the way for progress and prosperity. The Afghan Support Program, a beacon of hope and assistance, is now offering grants to Afghan refugees and immigrants who dream of establishing or expanding their businesses in the United States. This program aims to not only empower individual entrepreneurs but also to foster community development by creating employment opportunities for new refugees and immigrants in the Saint Louis City or County.

UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL: APPLY NOW!

The Afghan Support Program invites eligible candidates to unlock their entrepreneurial potential by applying for the \$15,000 grant. This grant aims to provide much-needed financial support to new arrivals who aspire to develop businesses and contribute to their communities. Whether you have a groundbreaking startup idea or seek to expand your existing venture, this program is ready to bolster your dreams and ambitions.

If you fit the eligibility criteria and have a business dream that deserves to be realized, waste no time in applying. The deadline for application submission is **August 31st, 2023**. Females, in particular, are highly encouraged to apply, as the program seeks to promote gender equality and inclusivity in entrepreneurship.

TWO SHINING EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



The Afghan Support Program has already witnessed success stories from its past beneficiaries, inspiring hope and determination within the community. Two notable winners, Hamdullah Hamdard and Mohammad Reza Hassani, have demonstrated the true potential of these grants. Hamdullah Hamdard, the visionary founder of Owlslion Pictures, has used the grant to make his mark in the world of video production, captivating audiences with unique storytelling and artistic prowess. On the other hand, Mohammad Reza Hassani, the enterprising owner of auto car repairs, has transformed his passion for automobiles into a thriving business, providing top-notch services to the local community.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

1. Be an Afghan refugee, immigrant, asylee, green card holder, or parolee.
2. Have moved to the US after August 2021.
3. Intend to either start a new business or expand an existing one.
4. The business must be located in Saint Louis City or County.

REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Business license, Business entity registration, and Employer Identification Number (EIN).
2. A comprehensive business plan, including detailed financial statements.
3. An overview of the overall business budget.
4. A comprehensive breakdown of how the grant funds will be utilized to drive business growth and success.

APPLY NOW




SCAN QR CODE



Afghan Journal is thrilled to announce that our newspaper is now open to submissions from talented local authors. Share your captivating stories with us and let your voice be heard. Send us your articles today!

 3611 South Grand, Suite 105, St. Louis, Missouri

 +1 (314) 827 1821

 Hhamdard@afghancenter.org

 www.afghancenter.org