Dire Situation In Tajikistan: You can Help with a donation

The Covid-19 situation in Tajikistan. After weeks of claiming there were no cases of Covid–19, and after not urging the population to take precautions or follow WHO advice, the Tajik government has admitted there are cases of Covid-19 in the country. There is now a quarantine. Children are home on “unplanned vacation,” people who can are working from home, “the streets are half empty”. A Tajik friend wrote: “It has exploded since late April. Officials formally admitted there was Covid in the country April 30. There was an immediate rush to drugstores for supplies, cleaning them out. There had been no immediate preparation. …” International “assistance is tied up in bureaucracy and logistical challenges. Small groups of individual Tajik business-people and entrepreneurs are organizing fundraisers for medical supplies and for food for medical staff and hospital patients. The country has “miserable emergency resources, challenging geography, location and very limited capacity.” Our Tajik friends working with small businesses are trying to provide what is needed. Many Tajiks living abroad and friends of Tajiks are sending funds to friends to provide essentials to targeted hospitals and medical providers to buy supplies and food for patients and medical workers.

You can make a tax-deductible donation at the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities website https://www.boulder-dushanbe.org/, and we will transfer the funds to Maarouf and others working directly in Tajikistan. PLEASE consider making a donation. This is a very dire situation. Donating funds will help our long time trusted friends and allow them to help their fellow Tajiks who are providing direct services to address immediate needs. Spread the word. Thank you!


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Teahouse Sign

Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities has been hoping to see an interpretive sign of the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse for many years. Finally, the idea is becoming a reality. In partnership with the City of Boulder and Stantec, BDSC board members have been working to have an interpretive sign mounted in front of the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse. Current and former board members Rett Erli, Sophia and Peter Stoller, Vern Seiroe, and Nathan Jones contributed to the content of the sign and Hanaan Llewellyn, environmental design student at the University of Colorado Boulder, worked on crafting the design. We hope that the sign will be fabricated and installed in 2020. The Teahouse sign will provide a history of not only the Teahouse but of our sister city relationship and its focus on peace and mutual understanding. It will be representative of two cities’ geographical relationship and our cultural friendship. Funds for the sign were allocated and set aside by the city several years ago. We are all looking forward to its appearance!

Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse Reopening

Lenny and Sara Martinelli extend their thanks to all those who contributed to their GoFundMe Site. It allowed them to assist their staff with food during the start of the pandemic. The Teahouse has just opened for takeout: Sunday-Thursday 11:00 am-7:00 pm, Friday and Saturday 11:00 am-7:30 pm. They are also offering a fun Afternoon Tea To-Go on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Check their website www.boulderteahouse.com for details.

Maruf’s Return To Boulder

In 2018, Marufjon Mirakhmatov, a young Tajik artisan, worked on Teahouse restoration and co-taught Central Asian Design and Restoration at the University of Colorado Boulder. Everyone was left in awe and excitement with Maruf’s completion of the Boulder Teahouse north side exterior facade. The City of Boulder would like Maruf to return to Boulder in January 2021 to complete restoration of furniture and the east exterior facade of the Teahouse. The complicated visa application process will begin when the pandemic eases. Again, his visit will be a collaboration between CEDaR at the University of Colorado, the CU school of Environmental Design, the City of Boulder, and BDSC. We all look forward to Maruf’s return!


**Open World Report 2019**

Open World 2020 has been postponed due to COVID-19 until further notice. In October 2019, Boulder Dushanbe Sister Cities hosted a delegation of six Tajiks, focusing on Innovation in Education. The group was accompanied by BDSC Board President Rett Ertl and Past President Joe Stepanek. Jeff Magnuson, BDSC Board vice president, put together a stellar program for them: On Sunday evening, the delegation attended a reception at the Dushanbe Teahouse featuring Boulder City Councilman Bob Yates. On Monday morning, which was a school holiday, the group was briefed at the Teahouse by retired high school administrator Iris Williams, and then spent the rest of the day in Rocky Mountain National Park. Starting on Tuesday, the delegation visited Boulder private elementary schools Mountain Shadows Montessori and Bixby School, and Boulder Journey School, a preschool and training center. They also visited two public schools: Columbine Elementary, a public school that specializes in bilingual education, and Eldorado K-8, where they spent time with administrators from Boulder Valley Schools. Each of these schools has a different approach to education, and the directors and teachers took great pride in explaining the philosophy behind their teaching.

For a higher-level look at education, we spoke with Jamy Stillman, the Director of the Elementary Teacher Education Program at the University of Colorado School of Education, as well as Lindsey Jaeckel, the Executive Director of the Office of School and District Transformation of the Colorado Department of Education in Denver. This department works with the schools that are not performing up to standards. The group also visited a couple of non-school environments: the WOW! Children's Museum, which specializes in experiential learning; and Greenhouse Scholars, a Boulder non-profit that provides personal and financial support to high-performing, under-resourced college students who are the next generation of community leaders. On Wednesday evening, each delegate presented a look at education in Tajikistan to a group of Boulderites, including several BDSC board members. The visit was capped on Friday by a presentation of certificates to the delegates, and dinner at the home of Board Members Sophia and Peter Stoller.

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**Navruz 2020 Cancellation**

For years, the Colorado Tajik Community, BDSC and the Teahouse have celebrated Muslim New Year’s - Navruz, on the plaza just north of the Teahouse in Boulder. It is a celebration with traditional food, music, dancing, games, and Tajik delicacies. Unfortunately, this year, we had to cancel our celebration due to Covid-19. Stay safe and healthy!

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**A New Employee Joins BDSC**

Itgelmaa Chavgaa recently joined BDSC as the Communications Assistant to the organization’s leadership board. She has been working in this capacity since December, 2019. Itgelmaa is a recent graduate from the University of Colorado Boulder, with a degree in Environmental Studies. Five years ago, she came from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia to Boulder, Colorado to get her bachelor’s degree. After her graduation, Itgelmaa began working for the Community Engagement Design and Research Center, which is a close partner of Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities (BDSC). In her role as the Communications Assistant, Itgelmaa assists the BDSC board with outreach and social media. Her main responsibility is social media maintenance, data management, event support and grant research. Due to similar cultural values of her home country, she has a strong understanding of Central Asian countries and their cultures. Itgelmaa speaks fluent Russian, which will potentially aid the communication with delegates from Tajikistan who do not speak English. At the same time, she has a strong willingness to learn Tajiki in the future.

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**Interested in Joining the Board?**

Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities would like to expand its board of directors. If you are interested in international people-to-people connections and would like more information, please contact Rett Ertl at: rettertl@hotmail.com

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**Renew or Join BDSC Today**

If you are not a member, consider joining BDSC with an annual membership. Membership fees help support ongoing and future sister city programs. Annual membership fees are:

- Student/senior $20
- Individual or household $30
- Business $130
- Silver Teapot Supporter $250

All members will receive a membership card which offers 10% discount at the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse and other Three-Leaf restaurants (Huckleberry, Chautauqua, Zucca, and Leaf). All new members are entitled to a free lunch at the Teahouse.

To join, visit the BDSC website: [www.boulder-dushanbe.org](http://www.boulder-dushanbe.org).
Click on “membership” and follow the instructions. Or, send a check to BDSC, 764 Sunshine Canyon Drive, Boulder, CO, 80302

Thank you for supporting Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities!