

Local jewelers work to unlock a brighter future for Afghan children

Back in March 2009, **McTeigue & McClelland** was struggling to deal with the effects of the economic crisis. A small company that designs and hand makes precious jewelry, McTeigue & McClelland's business had come to a near standstill. **Walter McTeigue** remembers, "a crisis of recession mentality was taking its toll and the brutal process of laying off and cutting back the hours of the small group of coworkers that are like family was not helping".

In the midst of this, Walter received an email from **Alexandra Coolidge**, one of the founders of **The Rebuilding Afghanistan Foundation (RAF)**, to see if he would be interested in "partnering" with RAF on an upcoming fundraising event. The timing was terrible, but Walter agreed to meet Alexandra, partly as a courtesy to their mutual acquaintance **Dodie Kazanjian, Contributing Editor of Vogue Magazine**, who had referred Alexandra to him, and partly because he was intrigued by the idea.

RAF, a group of young New York professionals, had on its own initiative built an elementary school in an isolated village in Afghanistan, and had sponsored the school's operating costs for the past four years. "RAF'S budget is very modest and virtually all of the money they raise goes directly to the school," Walter remembers from the meeting. **"I knew we could bring something creative to the table that could be leveraged in a way that would make a difference"**. And so a new partnership was born, and the timing could not have been better: making an impact for the children of Afghanistan lifted the gloom of the recession mentality.

With a great deal of enthusiasm and creative energy, McTeigue & McClelland along with Alexandra and her **Co-Directors, Elizabeth Hartnett and Alisa Tugberk de Macedo**, collaborated to create a fundraising event that would be held in conjunction with the opening of **"Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art** in June. Each of the guests received a key but only one key opened the lock of an antique chest holding the piece of jewelry McTeigue & McClelland created and donated as the centerpiece of the very successful event. **Tim McClelland** designed a key inspired by the **Ariana butterfly, the smallest butterfly in the world which is only found in Afghanistan.**

The key turned out to be such a beautiful symbol of the work of RAF that it inspired the Foundation's next project – to sell the keys to raise funds and awareness for their ongoing projects. McTeigue & McClelland has designed and produced the Ariana Necklace as a gift to the Rebuilding Afghanistan Foundation so that **the proceeds from each necklace sold for \$250 will provide 3 Afghan children one year of education** at the RAF sponsored Mayar Elementary School in the province of Wardak, Afghanistan.

For more information please contact:

Walter McTeigue
McTeigue & McClelland
Tel. 917-841-2391
walter@mc2jewels.com
www.mc2jewels.com/ariana

Alexandra Coolidge
The Rebuilding Afghanistan Foundation
Tel. 917-566-5549
alexandra.coolidge@gmail.com
<http://www.rebuildafghanistan.org>