



IRAQI FUTURE  
FOUNDATION

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## *American Hadiyya* American Christians Reach Out to Iraqi Muslims

Ramadi, Iraq

September - November, 2005

This Eid holiday, children in Iraq will have a pleasant surprise. During *Eid al-Fitr*, an important holiday for Muslims, in which gifts are exchanged, among other traditions, Iraqi orphans will receive new toys and clothes. Thanks to the compassion and motivation of St. John's parish members in Collingswood, New Jersey, *haddiya* (gifts) were collected during the months of September and October.

When Mr. Chris Steinitz, coordinator of *American Hadiyya*, approached IFF for support, he explained the aim was to "foster this spirit of sharing between Americans and Iraqis, Muslims and non-Muslims."

The project was well orchestrated for maximum learning impact. *American Hadiyya* project had main objectives:

- 1) To provide material and moral support to the Iraqi people
- 2) To promote awareness in the US about the difficult situation of the Iraqi people
- 3) To pursue intercultural and interfaith understanding in the United States and Iraq

Coinciding with the donation-collection campaign, information sessions were held at each of the donation centers to increase awareness about the suffering of Iraqis. The session also addressed issues of Islam, particularly core beliefs which are common to those of Christianity and Judaism, as well as the significance of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr for Muslims. The presentations were accompanied by activities for children, such as making Eid cards, and lessons on how to write "Eid Mubarak" in Arabic.

Iraqis have had no respite - nearly a quarter century under a brutal regime, regional wars, sanctions, and now nearly three years of chaos, danger and misery. Here in the States we often hear the refrain to "Support Our Troops," but it is just as important to support the people our troops are fighting for - people who live outside the safety of a Green Zone.

*American Hadiyya* project hopes to begin to make a difference, by serving as an example. "We need more citizens reaching out...building people-to-people connections. It is the only way we can dispel the great myths that have created this mess," says IFF Executive Director.

Thanks to Iraqi Future Foundation's vast network of volunteers, we were able to transport the gifts into Iraq and distribution them to the orphaned and the needy. We would like to thank Mr. Steinitz, his family, and the members of his parish and community for reaching beyond the differences in order to appreciate the similarities.

For more information about the IFF,  
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