

Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership Announces

2007 Gleitsman International Activist Award Recipient

*Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, founder and executive director of the
Afghan Institute of Learning, to be honored at Dec. 4 event*

CAMBRIDGE, MA—The Center for Public Leadership (CPL) at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government will present the **2007 Gleitsman International Activist Award** to **Dr. Sakena Yacoobi**, in Cambridge on Tuesday, December 4. Yacoobi is the founder and executive director of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), which she established in 1995 to provide teacher training to Afghan women, to support education for boys and girls, and to provide health education to women and children.

"We are honored to be able to recognize a social activist who has truly made the world a better place in which to live," said CPL executive director Donna Kalikow. "Dr. Yacoobi's commitment to improving the lives of Afghan women and children through education and literacy is a contribution to the improved welfare of all Afghans, regardless of gender. We hope that the world will find inspiration in her story."

Until the fall of the Taliban in 2001, AIL operated underground, supporting home schools for more than 3,000 girls, and was the first organization to open Women's Learning Centers which taught women to become economically independent. With the adoption of a new Afghan constitution, women have been allowed to return to work and some have been appointed to prominent positions in the government. AIL now serves 350,000 women and children each year and employs about 415 Afghans, over 70% of which are women.

Upon learning of her selection for this award, Dr. Yacoobi said, "When an award is given to any Afghan woman, it is really given to all Afghan women. It gives us hope and courage and we know that the world has not forgotten us and, despite our troubles, we know that we will continue to study and become educated, work and support our families and continue the struggle for our human rights."

The International Activist Award program was created in 1993 by retired television executive Alan Gleitsman to reward and encourage leadership in social activism by individuals whose selfless efforts have improved the quality of life in their countries. Gleitsman died in May 2006, but was generous enough to ensure that the awards program would continue by establishing a permanent endowment under the stewardship of the Center for Public

Leadership. The Award is given biennially and includes a prize of \$100,000. Past honorees have included well-known leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Yunus, and lesser-known activists such as Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, the founder of the Working Women's Forum.

The 2007 Gleitsman International Activist Award Ceremony

Event Hosts: Ambassador Swanee Hunt and David Gergen

When: 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Where: Allison Dining Room
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
Taubman Building, 5th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02138

What: Presentation of the Gleitsman International Activist Award to Dr. Sakena Yacoobi.

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The Center for Public Leadership (CPL) at Harvard's Kennedy School is dedicated to excellence in leadership education and research. It is equally committed to bridging the gap between leadership theory and practice. CPL serves people in government, nonprofits, and business through courses, seminars, workshops, conferences, executive programs, and fellowships. For more information see the website: { HYPERLINK "http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership/" \t "_blank" }

Harvard's Kennedy School of Government maintains an abiding commitment to advancing the public interest by training skilled, enlightened leaders and solving public problems through world-class scholarship and active engagement with practitioners and decision makers. The school offers the depth, reflection, insight, and excellence of ideas and teaching that can shape future leaders, affect public policies, and make an impact on people and their daily lives. For more information see the School website: { HYPERLINK "http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/" \t "_blank" }