

Postcards from Afghanistan

Touching lives

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Hello to all my family, friends and coworkers!

I've been in Afghanistan now for about 21 months and I feel that we are making a difference. The work that we're doing here is touching the lives of many people.

I'm working as a civil engineering technician for AED. At home I provide contract administration support for construction projects in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area for the Louisville District. Here in Afghanistan I oversee the contracts that hire local nationals as construction inspectors, project engineers and administrative personnel. I don't get to see any of the 200 families that are touched by this effort, but I know that we're helping provide money and work experience to help the Afghan people better themselves.

Some of the Afghan people I work with have told me stories of how their families had to leave their country because of the Taliban. I think they're pretty brave. They treat me with respect and "old world" chivalry. They've expressed regret that they can't take me to their homes to meet their families and see how they live.

Sometimes, I provide personal care products to some of the Afghan women working here. One of them recently gave me a bracelet that says "I love you" and said to me "I

love you." Although the bracelet is like something out of a gumball machine, it was the thought that touched me. She doesn't know very much English, but she knew those words.

Through this experience, I have grown and changed as a person. I spent 30 years as a National Guard wife. For the last 15 of those 30 years, whenever there was any type of emergency, my husband had to go. He was only a few months away from retirement when the war started and his unit was called up. However, because they were out of the country participating in a humanitarian mission their unit was replaced by another one. He retired as planned when he returned from that mission. A few months later his unit got called to Iraq. Because he had already retired he was unable to go. My deployment was an opportunity for me to do my part for my country. It was the right decision for me and I'm proud to be a part of "making a difference" in Afghanistan.



L to R: Bimi Multani, Jawid Paykaar, Connie Parks, and Seyar Ziayeen at a Qalaa House Bazaar that Connie coordinated.