

## OBAT AWARENESS EVENT/IFTAR- HOST GUIDE

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***Thank you so much for considering to host an OBAT awareness iftar/event for us. We promise, we will make this as easy and simple for you as possible!***

### PRE EVENT PREP

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**Here are some suggestions for what you can do to prepare for the event**

1. The OBAT office will provide you an event invitation and flyer. You can invite your friends and family by emailing the event flyer, through Facebook, by distributing fliers at local mosques or community centers, etc. It would be great if you could start circulating the invitation as soon as you have identified a date for the event. We can also set up an Eventbrite invitation for you so that you can keep track of your invitees.
2. People forget easily so try to send reminders frequently, asking friends to register and to share with their networks.
3. If you want to invite many friends and don't know how to begin preparing, here are some suggestions for forming committees to make the event easy for you to plan and conduct. Suggestions for committees that can be responsible for various aspects of the Iftar are:
  - a. Food and set up (ensure enough food, cutlery, plates etc. are available for the number of people expected)
  - b. Outreach (inviting people and spreading the word about the event)
  - c. Finance (responsible for collecting and keeping track of donations)
  - d. Clean up
  - e. Hospitality (responsible for welcoming guests, showing them where to sit, ensuring sign ins, distributing any printed materials to guests and looking after their needs during iftar)
  - f. Media (in charge of ensuring presentations and videos can be played and all equipment is available, ready to use and pre tested; also responsible for taking photos during the event)

If you have any questions at all along the way, just send an email to our staff in the Indianapolis office:

Saima Hassan: [shassan@obathelpers.org](mailto:shassan@obathelpers.org) or to: [contact@obathelpers.org](mailto:contact@obathelpers.org)

## **PROGRAM**

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1. It would help to invite people at a time that is an hour before IFTAR time in your city.
2. We will email you a sign in sheet in which people who are attending, can PRINT their contact info.
3. You may begin the program with the short introduction provided in this document.
4. Show OBAT's documentary (links to two short documentaries will be provided. If time permits, both can be shown).
5. Wrap up with closing statement (enclosed in document).
6. Invite guests to break their fast with dates and drink
7. Prayer
8. Dinner (PLAY SLIDESHOW- we will provide this as well)
9. As guests leave, one of your helpers could hand them a brochure for OBAT. The brochure will be mailed or emailed to you.

## **INTRODUCTION TO OBAT**

"Dear friends, thank you for joining us today. My name is xxxxxxxx and I live in xxxx (name area). You are present at one of the several awareness Iftars for OBAT Helpers being held around the world. We are going to break our fast together while at the same time get to know about the very worthy work of this organization headquartered in Indianapolis. An awareness iftar is an occasion for Muslims and Non-Muslims to come together as one, to celebrate the spirit of compassion that is promoted by all religions. It is an opportunity to discuss humanitarian issues around the world and try to play a small role in helping other people be aware of and care about them. By spreading care and compassion, we all can participate in the spirit of Ramadan.

OBAT Helpers was formed by a Pakistani American, Anwar Khan, in 2004 after his trip the year before, to the camps in Bangladesh. Some of you might already be familiar with how the camps came about. I will give you a brief introduction to this humanitarian issue. In 1971, when Bangladesh gained its independence, the Urdu speaking community, widely known as “Biharis” or “Stranded Pakistanis,” were stripped of their possessions and placed in make-shift camps. The reason: they had expressed allegiance to Pakistan during the independence war and wanted to be repatriated to that country. They ended up paying a very high price for their preference and loyalty. Pakistan accepted only some of them and Bangladesh denied them citizenship. Since 1971, they have remained in those slum-like camps, living in extremely terrible and subhuman conditions, lacking access to any amenities of living. They remained stateless until 2008 when the Bangladeshi government granted those born after 1971 with citizenship. Because of deep-rooted and widespread discrimination, however, even those who do have an ID card still have trouble obtaining a passport or receiving access to services extended to ordinary citizens.

Anwar Khan witnessed the extent of the horrific circumstances in the camps when he visited them in 2003. He vowed to return to Indianapolis and help by forming a nonprofit, OBAT Helpers. The mission of OBAT is to empower these unfortunate people with tools such as education, to provide them with training and income earning opportunities, and to give them access to health care. The conditions in these camps are more than dismal. People live in 8 foot by 10 foot areas that contain their entire existence. In this tiny room, made out of cloth or tin and bamboo, as many as nine people sleep, eat and cook. Clean water is rare, and diseases are widespread due to the lack of access to health care and the unhygienic living conditions. Many camp residents lack access to bathrooms, must step over open sewers and navigate around exposed piles of trash. Children work to help their parents eke out a living. Most families survive on less than a dollar a day. Having a camp address limits opportunities for employment since camp residents are discriminated against because they (or their parents or grandparents) supported the wrong side in a war that took place almost five decades ago.

OBAT operates many programs to help the camp residents, including education, health-care, infrastructure development, and self-empowerment.

In October of 2017, OBAT also started responding to the critical situation that came about after an influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh who were escaping persecution and genocide in Myanmar. It formed the “Humanitarian Assistance Program,” a coalition of local volunteers, donors and organizations, jointly working together to address the Rohingya crisis. OBAT's current relief strategy has and will be addressing medical, educational, nutrition and emergency needs of the Rohingya refugees. The following are some of the projects that have been undertaken and are currently ongoing:

- 26 Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) built; 23 currently in use

- 2,320 students enrolled in TLCs: 1,098 girls and 1,222 boys
- Pilot Digital Learning Center in camp with 90 students
- Two medical centers that see 400 patients per day
- 1,504 shelters built, helping over 7,520 individuals
- 4,600 shelter kits distributed, helping over 23,000 individuals
- 78 deep tube-wells constructed which are still in use today
- Nine bridges and twelve pathways constructed which are still in use today
- One community playground built, which is being rebuilt late-March due to heavy damage
- Two community centers constructed
- “Edie’s Kitchen” construction has finished; the kitchen will be in use late-March reaching around 400 families
- Food Distribution Program will begin late-March, benefitting 200-270 vulnerable refugees
- 1,350 solar lights distributed to families
- Women’s Empowerment Center constructed
- Women’s Sewing Project running, benefitting 64 women
- Women’s Digital Learning to begin in late-March, with a pilot group of 90 women
- Host Community Digital Learning Class with 25 local students
- Community Outreach Classes will begin in late-March to skill-up and train Host Community youth

Please take a look at a video to learn about the inspiring work of this organization. (These will be provided as well to you.)

### **PLAY “The Path to Empowerment” Video**

**(video is about 13 mins long)**

After documentary is done playing, you could display the slide in the slideshow (sent to you) that shows OBAT’s contact info, website and phone numbers. In your closing remarks, please thank the audience for coming. It would be great if you could ask the audience to check out the website, like the Facebook page and write to OBAT at the email address provided if they have any questions. Please also encourage them to create a fundraiser for OBAT on Facebook. Please distribute to the people a copy of the donation form.

If there is any time left for iftar, the presentation (sent to you) could be played in a loop.

### **BREAKING OF FAST**

While people eat, please play the slideshow (shared with you) of photos.

## **END OF EVENT**

Collect the donation forms from the people and keep them securely as they might contain credit card information.

## **WHAT TO DO AFTER THE EVENT?**

After the event, you can try following up with the friends who had promised to come and were not able to attend. You could also forward them the information from the event. We will provide you with an email to send to them. Also, please scan the sign in sheets and donation forms and email them to the OBAT office at [contact@obathelpers.org](mailto:contact@obathelpers.org). OBAT office will inform you about how to send any donations collected. Usually all the checks collected are mailed and any cash collected is deposited in OBAT's account (Chase Bank).

***THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR HELPING US SPREAD COMPASSION!***