



Bosnian Student Project

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JUNE 1995

Dear Friend,

Thank you for being an important part of a miracle called the Bosnian Student Project. When first I became involved in this project, I told the board of the Fellowship of Reconciliation that I hoped to bring twenty



Aida, from Bihac, a graduate student at Fairleigh Dickinson Univ.

Bosnian students to the US to continue their education. Little did I know that two years later we would have placed *sixty-five* Bosnian students—most of whom have lost their homes and everything that they own—in some of the best schools in the United States. Despite having been forced to study in a foreign language in a new culture thousands of miles

from everything they know, all have been exceedingly successful academically. All this is a miracle!

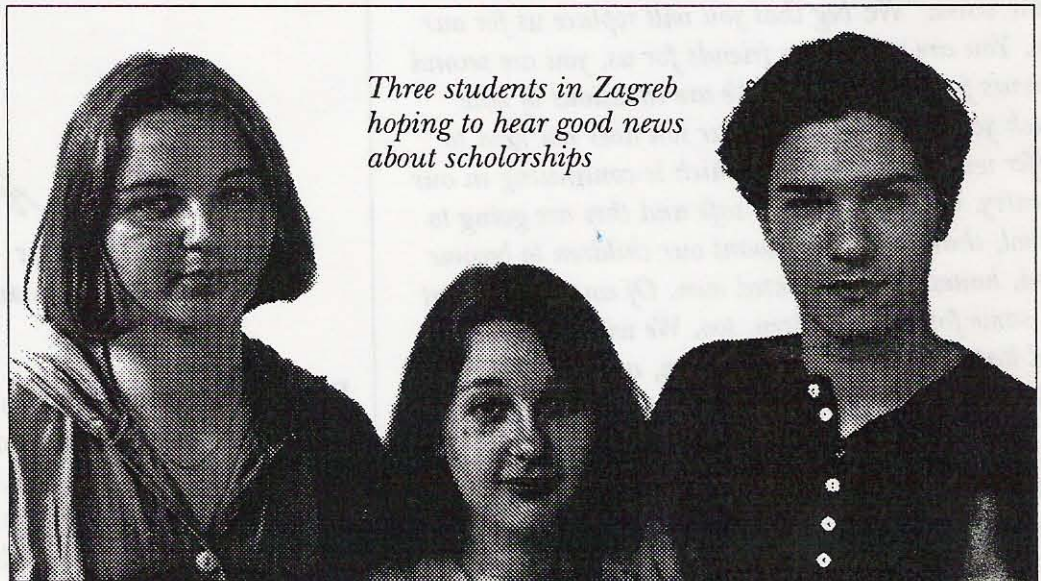
The FOR could offer an office, some administrative support, a small computer, two phones, access to a fax machine, and a portion of my staff time. To this modest beginning, others have added great gifts of hospitality, time, money, and education. Students' tuition has usually been contributed by the schools in which they have enrolled. Funds for travel, postage, phone,

and other expenses associated with the project have also been donated as special gifts for the project. Our work could not exist without the volunteer assistance of many individuals.

In Zagreb and Sarajevo, the World University Service, an Austrian-based organization, helps to screen students, secure passports and visas, and make travel arrangements. In Rockland County, New York, the Jerrahi Order of America, a Sufi Muslim organization, has provided inspiration, encouragement, and innumerable hours of volunteer help in matching students and schools, arranging travel, and communicating with students and host families.

Most scholarships which have been granted to Bosnian students do not include room and board. All of the high school students and about half of the college students studying in our program are therefore living with host families who give them room, board, and psychological support. Even those who are in dorms or student apartments still usually have host families to visit for vacations and holidays.

Living with a host family is very important for these students. All of them have been ripped from their homes and communities, often under traumatic circumstances. I do not know



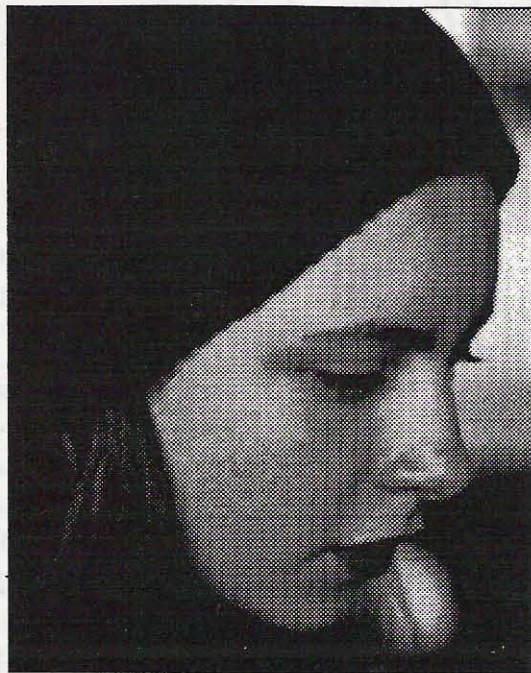
Three students in Zagreb hoping to hear good news about scholarships

the stories of all, but those I have heard relate suffering that could scar the healthiest person. Some of our young people have lived for months in basements or bomb shelters with no heat and very little food, while their cities were being destroyed around them. Others have endured Serbian Army occupation in areas where as Muslims or children of mixed marriages, they were not free to leave their homes or attend school. All have lost close friends and relatives. Often they witnessed their friends and neighbors being killed with impunity. Some lived for months or years in refugee camps or in the homes of friends, and a few have survived concentration camps.

The trauma of their lives is hard for us to comprehend, and for many the tragedy continues. I know that within the last year one of our students has lost his mother, three have lost their fathers, another has lost her sister-in-law, and many have lost cousins to the war.

Hosting survivors of this tragedy is a sacred task. A Bosnian mother and father whose only two children are students in the Project wrote recently to the American host family of one of their sons: *"We beg that you will replace us for our son. You are more than friends for us, you are second parents for our children. We are conscious of how much you sacrifice so that our son does not need to suffer with us in this war which is continuing in our country. Our children are safe and they are going to school, thank God. We want our children to become good, honest, and educated men. Of course, we want the same for your children, too. We wish you a long and happy life with your children, and that you will never be in a situation such as we have known."*

The students themselves have helped to bring a taste of the miracle of reconciliation to this country. Bosnian Muslim and mixed-family



Taida, 16, from Banja Luka, will be completing her junior year at the Green Meadow Waldorf School this spring

students who have been driven from their homes in Bosnia by Serbian Christians have been welcomed into the homes of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in this country. One Muslim student whose father was killed in Sarajevo by a Serbian shell only a year ago is now living in a Serbian-American Quaker home in San Francisco. Americans of all religious backgrounds have come together to support these young people whose country has been destroyed by religious bigotry and intolerance. In many communities in which Bosnian students have been welcomed, Muslims, Jews, and Christians

have found themselves working together on a common project for the first time.

Giving love and shelter to these students is an important part of the healing process for the children, ourselves, and our world. As one of our students who has lost her father recently wrote, "I hope that all of our efforts will bring more goodness and humanness to this planet." Whatever your contribution to the Bosnian Student Project—as host family, volunteer, or donor—I would like to thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Doug Hostetter

Director, Bosnian Student Project

P.S. Scores of excellent students in Bosnian towns and cities under bombardment are still waiting for the word that a school, a home and transportation have been found for them. We have faith that the miracle will continue.