



 FRIENDS OF RIDHWAN

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Published in May 2019

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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD

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Dear Diamond Approach students and other friends of the teaching,

We are grateful for your support of Friends of Ridhwan in 2018 and are pleased to share with you the results of your generosity, which supports the sustainability of Ridhwan and expands the availability of the teaching in the world. As students of the Diamond Approach, we on the Friends board are committed to serving the needs of the School while also remaining impeccable stewards of your generosity. A part of this report also shares our broad priorities for 2019 as well as current opportunities for support.

This year is a particularly auspicious occasion, as we celebrate Hameed's 75th Birthday. Of course, first and foremost we celebrate the teaching every day with our work and practice, and by living it "in the world." But Hameed's Diamond anniversary also gives us a poignant reason to also appreciate the vehicle the teaching chose to make itself known in the world. We join our beloved teacher, the rest of Ridhwan, and all friends around the world in gratitude, reverence, and love as our community celebrates the teaching and the teacher we hold so dear.

Please contact us if you have questions or ideas for providing further support of the teaching. Additionally, if you are currently not a donor to Friends, we would welcome your participation now or in the future.

With appreciation,

## **The Friends of Ridhwan Board:**

*Sam Barakat, Angelika Boehme, Guus Brackel, Laurie Chestnut, Seth Schapiro, Scott Vachon and Richard Wallstein*

## ABOUT FRIENDS

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Friends of Ridhwan is a student-run organization designated by the Ridhwan School's Obsidian Synod as the body responsible for both short-term and future-oriented fundraising on behalf of the School. It acts cooperatively and co-evolves with the School and its various manifestations.

Established in 2015, Friends of Ridhwan is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in California as an Affiliated Auxiliary of the Ridhwan Foundation. Friends is recognized by the United States IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization. Gifts to Friends are tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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In 2018, funds donated by individuals and foundations to Ridhwan (via Friends or the Ridhwan Foundation) totaled \$905,000. This represents an increase in donations of \$245,000 over 2017. Of the \$905,000, 45% was unrestricted.

We established a new fund to support the planning and development envisioned for Diamond Net, which will encompass the current Diamond Approach Online and other opportunities for new and current students to engage the teaching.

The scholarship donations listed here represent only a portion of the scholarship donations given by students for their groups. Many Diamond Approach groups have scholarship funds that are not held or managed by Friends of Ridhwan. The funds shown here are for less than half of the groups in the school.

Of note:

- Funds are now paid or pledged to fully cover the construction of the Berkeley Center parsonage, which was completed in November.
- Proceeds from the sale of retreat recordings are being donated by Hameed and Karen to support teacher training.
- Funding continues to come to Ridhwan from a long-term charitable trust established decades ago by a deceased Diamond Approach student. The impact of this trust has been critical to sustaining School operations and supporting the purchase and renovation of the Berkeley Center. Funding from the trust continues to diminish every year.

## 2018 Friends, Ridhwan Foundation and Other Fundraising Revenue

	Total Given
Unrestricted donations	\$403,452
Scholarship funds – restricted *	\$178,126
Diamond Net planning and development – restricted	\$75,258
Other restricted **	\$248,164
<b>2018 Fundraising Revenue</b>	<b>\$904,962</b>
Charitable trust***	\$63,200
Donated proceeds from sales – restricted****	\$18,181
Parsonage – restricted	\$381,150
<b>Total Given</b>	<b>\$1,367,493</b>

\* California and Colorado Diamond Heart Groups, Diamond Heart Retreat Groups, seminaries, and various Diamond Approach Groups.

\*\* Accounts include: Endowment, Friends of the Logos (book editing), operational support funds, future sustainability fund, infrastructure and property funds, and various community support funds.

\*\*\* Annual payment from a deceased student's trust established in the 1990's; payment is diminishing each year.

\*\*\*\* Proceeds from sales of retreat recordings and other fees that would have passed to Hameed or Karen, which they directed to support teacher training.

## WHERE FUNDS WENT IN 2018

Most of the gifts Friends of Ridhwan received in 2018 came through the year-end appeal and will be used in 2019 to support key initiatives of the School and its operating costs. Through the generosity of donors, we provided funding for new-book editing and promotion, support for content programming through Diamond Approach Online, and planning for future possibilities of providing the teaching through the Diamond Net.

Last year, \$1,330,778 in grants and awards was made possible by donations to Friends of Ridhwan in 2018 and previous years. We constructed and completed the parsonage in 2018 and all the funds to cover the costs are paid or pledged.

### 2018 Grants & Awards

	Total
Unrestricted funds to support operations, and restricted funds for administrative upgrades and support	\$445,159
Funds granted to editing and publicizing books	\$9,468
Scholarships awarded	\$129,847
Restricted funds for Diamond Net planning and development	\$11,430
Restricted and unrestricted funds to support teacher training	\$82,871
Capital spending on website and school-wide portal	\$29,386
Parsonage construction and completion	\$616,713
Other restricted funds	\$5,904
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,330,778</b>

## ACTIVITIES THAT DONORS SUPPORTED IN 2018

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- **Further exploration of new ways to offer the teaching through Diamond Approach Online (DAO).** Online teaching programs—produced both internally and with partner organizations—drew nearly 4,000 participants across Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, the Middle East, and North and South America and created over 40 engagement opportunities for Diamond Approach teachers. Fully half of the online participants were new to the Diamond Approach.
- **Planning and developing the unfolding vision for the Diamond Net.** This will subsume the DAO within a broader plan for making the teaching available in a sustained way online and employ varied interactive approaches. Donors began supporting outside consultants to assess the technological and communication needs for the next steps in this development. This will be a multi-year process.
- **Continued development of ways to make the Diamond Approach more visible and findable for interested new people.** Projects include developing content for the monthly e-newsletters which highlights teachers, new groups and special programs. Projects in the findability category include videos and stories of “Diamond Approach in the World.”
- **Book Editing and promotion.** Five books from A.H. Almaas are close to completion: a three-book series on Love, one on Phenomenology of Experience and one on Keys to the Enneagram.
- **Ridhwan strategic planning process.** Through the generosity of a donor, Ridhwan concluded the first phase of a broad strategic planning process. Given the continuous unfoldment of the Diamond Approach teaching and the accompanying evolution of its home in the world—the Ridhwan School—this process is necessary now. The same donor generously agreed to fund the second phase of planning in 2018 and continues to support the implementation of this plan in 2019.
- **Continuation of support for students** who require financial assistance to participate in the teaching and/or events.
- **Strengthening the sense of community within the school.** Donor generosity also provided financial support to enhance the existing Ridhwan community through in-reach communication efforts, including the facilitation of online forums and affinity groups, publication of the *Student-Only Digest*, “Community Conversations with Hameed,” the establishment of the CARE committee.

## ADMINISTRATIVE, LEGAL & FUNDRAISING COSTS

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The fundraising, administrative, and legal costs of Friends in 2018 were just shy of 5% of the funds raised. According to the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the overall fundraising cost in the United States is 25%. The expected costs of processing online donations alone can range from 3% to 7.5% of the amount of each gift.

In 2018, a professional fund-raising advisor whose costs were covered by a donor assisted Friends in the year-end campaign. This enhanced our effectiveness and kept our out-of-pocket costs very low.

Friends has a part-time staff person dedicated to overseeing all donor communications and acknowledgements. We also contract with the Ridhwan Foundation for the management of our fundraising activity, the receipt and processing of all donations, gift acknowledgement, and fund management. We use external vendors for material design and website management and retain legal counsel as needed.

## 2018 FRIENDS OF RIDHWAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- **Increased Overall Fundraising.** We received \$905,000 from many generous donors. This represents an increase of 37% over 2017 fundraising.
- **Co-hosted a community meeting for over 300 students at Hameed's summer retreat at Asilomar State Park, California.** We presented information about the history and evolution of the School, current status and challenges, and the overall financial picture. A lively discussion followed the presentation. The high attendance and active interest revealed that members are very interested in this sort of information, transparency and dialogue. More such meetings are planned for 2019.
- **Funded development and distribution (to students and other friends of the teaching) of a series of video interviews** with Hameed, Karen Johnson, and other teachers and administrators. These covered topics such as needs for new book editing and publishing; Diamond Approach Online and the emerging Diamond Net; and the benefits of planned giving through wills and trusts.
- **More than doubled ongoing monthly giving.** With the extra incentive of a matching challenge of \$50,000, donors increased their pledges for ongoing monthly giving and more than met the challenge. The annual amount of unrestricted donations coming in via monthly commitments is now about \$72,000.

# RIDHWAN NEEDS

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The Synod asked Friends of Ridhwan to seek support for the following projects and areas:

- **Unrestricted donations** to support emerging opportunities, promising ideas, and general operations that support our global organization and presence.
- **Continuing contribution to the Ridhwan Endowment for the Future.** The current amount in un-spendable principal from which Ridhwan may draw interest is \$390,000.
- **Editing and promotional costs** for A.H. Almaas's upcoming books.
- **Growing development of our online capacity, via Diamond Net and Diamond Approach Online,** to offer the teaching of the Diamond Approach online.
- **Expansion of a school-wide scholarship fund** to help ensure that the teaching remains accessible to as many students as possible.



Friends of Ridhwan

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