



Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller

Speech on Birdik School Grand Opening

**Birdik village, Alamudun district, Chui province
September 1, 2009**



General Hostage, Ambassador Gfoeller, and First Deputy Governor Toktobolotov cut a ribbon for Eureka school. 09/01/09

Good morning. I hope that everyone is excited about the first day of school!

Several months ago in April we assembled on this site to celebrate the beginning of this renovation project. Today I am delighted to be here for the grand opening of the Birdik School and I am pleased with how beautiful everything looks.

It is very appropriate that we celebrate this grand opening on the first day of lessons, because our motivation has always been to provide these students with an environment that is more conducive to learning. As I noted in April, these children, who today begin a new school year in new facilities, represent the future of Birdik Village, and indeed the future of Kyrgyzstan itself.

These children can now focus on their studies, regardless of the season.

This project is also but one example of the many cooperative programs that the United States executes in conjunction with its Kyrgyz partners. Through the Office of Military Cooperation at the US Embassy, we execute many mutually-beneficial programs in Kyrgyzstan. Birdik School is actually the fourth school that we have renovated in Kyrgyzstan in the past four years. The total amount of these school renovations alone totals nearly \$5 million.

In fact, tomorrow we will celebrate the grand opening of a new Special Forces training compound for the Ministry of Defense. Our \$1.5 million renovation project at the Besh-Kungey hospital is nearly complete. We are actively considering several other future projects to benefit the people of Kyrgyzstan.

Again, I would like to thank everyone who played a part in this project, giving special thanks to Colonel Holt from the Transit Center and to our distinguished guests from Centcom, General Hostage and General Cleveland. This school renovation project is an example of what the people of two great nations, the United States and Kyrgyzstan, can accomplish when they work together.

