



For Immediate Release

## Nomadic Tuareg Teen Receives New Eye and New Perspective in New Hampshire

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*Ahmed with Dr. Joyce Jahrling*

A New Hampshire nonprofit organization, Rain for the Sahel and Sahara (RAIN), has recently hosted for the summer a very special young man, Ahmed Kemil, a Tuareg nomad from Niger, West Africa.

Ahmed, 18, became blind in one eye from an accident at only nine years old. This would add even more hardship to the already daunting challenges of growing up in the Sahara. The son of nomadic herders, there was not much chance of him to ever have his damaged eye restored; let alone have the opportunity to travel to the U.S., to study at a prestigious academy.

But a group of dedicated people, along with Bess Palmisciano, Executive Director of RAIN, would come along and change that. With help from RAIN supporter Guy Marshall, Ahmed made the long flight from Niger to New Hampshire, where he attended the Summer Program of the Brewster Academy in Wolfboro, NH. According to Guy, "Bess told me about Ahmed and how his accident had changed how he was viewed in his community. She said he was motivated, curious, and smart, and needed nothing more than to be exposed to new opportunities and possibilities. I was happy to play some small part in making that happen."

At the Brewster Academy, Ahmed was an instant success with teachers and students alike. Doug Fallon, Director of Summer Programs, remarks: "Ahmed has an amazing energy; he just drew people like a magnet. He exhibited a wonderful spirit, a true sense of self that was captivating. For our Intercultural Diversity Day, dressed in traditional Tuareg clothes, Ahmed began dancing, and was soon surrounded by other students, all dancing in a big circle. We wouldn't hesitate to invite Ahmed back, and wish him the best in his continued studies."

But a new horizon in his education isn't all Ahmed would find during his stay in the U.S. With the help of Tom Haas, another RAIN supporter, and Jahrling Ocular Prosthetics in Boston, Ahmed would realize his dream of having a new eye. Over the summer, Ahmed would gradually be fitted with larger and larger lenses, until his eye was ready to be fitted with the custom prosthetic lens created just for Ahmed. The procedure is a great success, and now, thanks to the sponsorship of these and other generous people, Ahmed returns back home to Niger a happy teen, indeed, outfitted not only with greater vision, but greater prospects.

***If you are interested in learning more about Ahmed or about RAIN's programs, please contact us at [julia@rain4sahara](mailto:julia@rain4sahara) or 603-371-0676. RAIN's mission is to improve the lives of children and adults in Niger, West Africa, through locally developed programs in education, water resource development, agriculture and AIDS awareness. These programs promote literacy and economic security while sustaining vital nomadic traditions.***