



Muslims, faith community challenge 'Muslim ban'



Love Thy Neighbor Event

CHICAGO RESCENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF GREATER CHICAGO

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#WeAreAllAmerica Unites Muslim Community and Neighbors Against 'Muslim Ban'

Neighbors and interfaith leaders joined the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), Downtown Islamic Center (DIC), and Mosque Foundation in a nationwide #WeAreAllAmerica action during noontime Jummah (congregational) prayer on February 3 to express opposition against President Trump's ban on Muslims and refugees.

The action at DIC began with a khutba (sermon) by Ahmed Rehab, Executive Director of CAIR-Chicago, followed by congregational prayer. Underscoring the importance of uniting with our neighbors, Dr. Zaher Sahloul, Civic Engagement Council Chair, then invited interfaith leaders including Rev. Avena Ward of St. Pauls United Church of Christ, Rabbi Lauren Henderson of Mishkan Chicago, Father Tony Pizzo of St. Rita Catholic Church, and Cleto Kiley, Priest of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago to share their expressions of solidarity with the Muslim community.

"We are here to pray with you and pray for you," said Father Tony Pizzo, St. Rita Catholic Church. Sharing the same sentiment, Kiley of the Catholic Archdiocese spoke of refugees in from a Biblical perspective, "If we do not welcome strangers, woe to us." Community leaders and congregants then came together outside of the mosque for a public demonstration to display their support for Muslims and refugees by singing "We Shall Overcome," and chanting "This is what America looks like!"

Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview joined faith leaders and neighbors in forming a human chain around the mosque to reiterate the message of solidarity against Trump's ban. Among the supporters were Oscar Chacon of Alianza Americas and Latino community activists as well as Rabbi Michael Davis of the Jewish Voice for Peace and members of the local Jewish community.

"In you, we see us. And we want you to see yourselves in us," Chacon said. "We've known what it's like to live in fear and to pray in fear so we feel in our hearts what the Muslim community is going through right now. And we're here to stand with them," Rabbi Davis added.

"We are here to pray with you and pray for you."

Father Tony Pizzo, St. Rita Catholic Church

"People are afraid of being in large gatherings of Muslims that might be targeted. So to see the human chain on an occasion like this is to feel that sense of security," said Deanna Othman of Mosque Foundation and CIOGC.

Dar-us-Sunnah in Evanston and the Mecca Center in Willowbrook also held #WeAreAllAmerica events for dozens of neighbors and faith leaders



from their local communities. CIOGC and its member organizations extend deep gratitude and appreciation for the overwhelming support received by faith communities and our neighbors on the day of action and in recent weeks.

"To see the human chain on an occasion like this is to feel that sense of security."

Deanna Othman, CIOGC and Mosque Foundation

The national #WeAreAllAmerica action is sponsored by CIOGC and organized by the We Are All America Coalition which includes Alianza Americas, America's

Voice, Church World Service, Human Rights First, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, National Partnership for New Americans, and Welcoming America. We Are America is a coalition of immigrant, refugee, and faith organizations that are working together to support our core American values as a nation of refuge for those fleeing persecution and violence, and as a pluralistic nation of immigrants and religious tolerance. ♦

CHICAGO MUSLIMS, INTERFAITH COMMUNITY RALLY AT PROTECTED BY FAITH EVENT

Husnaa Vhora

Hundreds gathered at the Islamic Center of Naperville (ICN) on February 26 for an interfaith solidarity vigil, which was co-sponsored by CIOGC and Protected by Faith. The event included leaders from all faiths, music, and a joint call to action.

Among the many speakers were Shoaib Khadri, President of ICN, Aadil Farid of the Islamic Center of Naperville, Father Corey Brost of the Children of Abraham Coalition, Rabbi Marc Rudolph of Congregation Beth Shalom, Sheikh Hassan Ali of MECCA Center, Bishop Wayne Miller, President of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago (CRLMC), Yuri Diaz of the Resurrection Project, Jamillah Rashad and Imelda Salazar of

"There is an ethical imperative facing us today. Now more than ever, we must learn to stand together."

Karen Danielson, Board member and Secretary of CIOGC

the Southwest Organizing Project, Rabbi David Wolkenfeld of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel, Karen Danielson and Husnaa Vhora of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), and Father Brendan Curran of Dominican University.

After Shoaib Khadri welcomed attendees, opening prayers were given on behalf of each faith community. Aadil Farid offered an opening prayer on behalf of the Muslim community, while Father Corey Brost and Rabbi Marc Rudolph did so on behalf of the Christian and Jewish communities respectively. This was followed by a prayer about the light of God, which was recited in English, Spanish, and Mandarin.

In his opening prayer, Rabbi Marc Rudolph narrated the story of four Muslim women, who knocked on his door, after the increasing amount of threats to Jewish Community Centers and synagogues. The women came bearing flowers, gifts, and a note of support. "I suspect that they came because they realize that these series of threats represented more than a hate crime against the Jewish religion. They realize that an assault on any

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Coming Events

- Mar. 2 - #YouAreMyNeighbor Interfaith Event
- Mar. 4 - Syrian Community Network Job Fair
- Mar. 5 - Mecca Center Annual Fundraiser
- Mar. 11 - Islamic Center of Wheaton Fundraising Dinner
- Mar. 11 - MCC Academy Annual Dinner

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CIOGC thanks Tabassum Haleem for Her Contributions to Chicago Muslim Community

Sister Tabassum Haleem served as the Executive Director of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) from May 2015 to January 2017. During her tenure as Executive Director, Sr. Tabassum led CIOGC's efforts in working with member organizations, interfaith partners, civic organizations, elected officials and government agencies to advocate for Muslim community interests, assist the American Muslim community in their positive contributions to our country and broader communities, and build coalitions to promote a fair and just society.

"I am confident that Sr. Tabassum will continue to contribute highly to the Chicago Muslim community which she always loved and scarified for. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors and thank her greatly for her tireless efforts at CIOGC." said Dr. Bassam Osman, Chair of CIOGC. "Sister Tabassum worked very hard for the Muslim community as the Executive Director of CIOGC, where she built relationships with interfaith and civic groups as well as local and state government.

"I am confident that Sr. Tabassum will continue to contribute highly to the Chicago Muslim community which she always loved and scarified for. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors and thank her greatly for her tireless efforts at CIOGC."

Dr. Bassam Osman, Chair of CIOGC

I had the pleasure of working with her on many occasions and feel lucky to call her a good friend." commented Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, Executive Director, Syrian Community Network.

Prior to joining CIOGC, Sr. Tabassum held various executive positions including, as Director of Government Relations at PolyBrite International, Regional Controller of BMW NA, and Financial Analyst at Paramount Pictures Corp. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Illinois at Chicago, Master of Public Policy and Master of Arts from the University of Chicago, and is a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA). Sr. Tabassum serves on the Board of Trustees for the Naperville Education Foundation (NEF), is a Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow and a McCormick Tribune Urban Policy Leadership Fellow, and has served as a co-Chair for DuPage United, a community organizing group and on the Advisory Committee for the Naperville Chamber of Commerce-Green Leadership Council. She is married to Dr. Azeem S. Haleem and has four sons. ♦

CIOGC Expresses Condolences for Former Vice Chair, Dr. Esmael Khoushanpur

CIOGC offers its prayers and deepest condolences to the family of Dr. Esmael Khoushanpur, former Vice Chair of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC).

Born in 1934 in Tehran, Iran, Dr. Khoushanpur served as an advisor to the Foundation on Islamic Affairs and was a distinguished professor of American-Muslim Relations at the Graduate Theological Foundation from which he received his doctorate.

He directed interfaith programs at the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago in Northbrook, Illinois for nearly 20 years and was Professor Emeritus at Northwestern Medical School, serving as chairman of numerous university medical school committees dealing with educational and administrative issues, as well as President of the medical school's faculty senate, during his 36 years there.

Dr. Esmael Khoushanpur directed interfaith programs at the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago in Northbrook, Illinois for nearly 20 years.

The third edition of his textbook, Renal Physiology: An Integrative Approach, is scheduled for publication by Springer Publisher. Dr. Koushanpour traveled extensively within the US and abroad to lecture, present papers, and chair scientific sessions at international scientific achievements and was a Fulbright Scholar at University of Heidelberg in Germany.

Active in interfaith programs and building bridges between Islam and other religions as the Council's Vice Chair, Dr. Koushanpour was the co-chairman of our Catholic-Muslim Dialogue Committee. He served on the Board of Directors of Gilead Outreach and the Referral Center of Chicago and has been honored by the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation with their Faith in Community Award for building bridges between faiths.

His contributions to medical science, community service, and Islamic education have cemented his memory at CIOGC and far beyond. He was a fixture in many important institutions in Chicago, leaving his legacy across a broad swathe of society, and will surely be missed.

Inna Lillahi wainnailaihiraji'un. To Allah we belong and surely to Him we shall return. ♦

CHICAGO CRESCENT

Mission of CIOGC

Our mission is to be the unifying federation of Islamic organizations of greater Chicagoland, the leading advocate of Muslim community interests, and a catalyst for enriching American society.

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The Chicago Crescent is a publication of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC). For over 20 years, the Council has served as the unifying federation of Islamic organizations in greater Chicagoland, the leading advocate of Illinois Muslim community interests, and a catalyst for enriching American society.

The views and opinions expressed in The Chicago Crescent are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of CIOGC.

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CIOGC Announces New Board of Directors

The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), a coalition of over 60 Islamic institutions across Chicagoland, has elected a new Board of Directors that has assumed responsibilities as of January 1, 2017. Staying true to its mission of promoting unity, the new CIOGC Board represents a cross section of the Chicago Muslim community. From medical and business professionals to educators and humanitarian activists, the CIOGC board is comprised of individuals that embody the spirit of Chicagoland Muslims.

Our new Board members are well-connected with the diverse segments of our community and bring decades of experience to the CIOGC table.

Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin, Co-Founder and former Chair, Ex-Officio Board Member

“The biennial elections and term limits enshrined in CIOGC bylaws ensure the infusion of new blood on a regular basis and has led to peaceful transition of power/responsibilities for the last quarter century. Our new Board members are well-connected with the diverse segments of our community and bring decades of experience to the CIOGC table. We are fortunate to have them at the helm of CIOGC as we unite and strengthen the Chicagoland Muslim community,” said Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin, co-founder and former Chair, who will also be a part of the Board as an Ex-Officio.

CIOGC’s new Chair, Dr. Bassam Osman, is a neurologist by profession and is a co-founder of CIOGC. He has served as the Chair of the CIOGC By-Laws and Membership Committees. He has

intimately worked with several CIOGC member organizations, such as Mosque Foundation, MECCA Center and Universal School. His work with CIOGC and its member organizations for over 20 years offers priceless insight and experience in his new role as Chair of CIOGC.

Syed Shahnawaz Khan, the new Vice Chair of CIOGC, has previously served at CIOGC as Secretary and Treasurer. He is a former Board member of the Mecca Center in Willowbrook and former Chair of Downtown Islamic Center (DIC) in

Chicago. His decades of experience with the Muslim community make him a valuable asset to the Board.

Karen Danielson, the new CIOGC Secretary, represents the Bridgeview area Muslim community as a leader at MAS (Muslim American Society) - Chicago and the Mosque Foundation. She has experience with CIOGC as a previous Board Secretary and as part of CIOGC’s Interfaith, Intra-faith, and Illinois Muslim Action Day Committees.

Tasneem Osmani, CIOGC’s Treasurer, has been associated with CIOGC for over 13 years, and has held positions of Vice Chair and Board Director with the organization. As the Chair of the CIOGC Annual Dinner Committee since 2013, she has led the preparation and planning for the organization’s yearly fundraising event which draws up to a thousand Muslims representing the diverse Chicagoland community.

Halil Demir, is a new CIOGC Board Member and represents Zakat Foundation of America, a Chicago-based global humanitarian organization and member of CIOGC. As a leader in the labor and interfaith community, he has also served on the board of ARISE-Chicago since 2014. His experience and accomplishments as a non-profit leader earned him CIOGC’s award of recognition as the 2016 Top Achiever.

Saleem Shaikh, a new CIOGC Board Member, has experience as a previous Board member and Treasurer, and member of the Human Resources Committee. As a community organizer, he has served as CIOGC’s representative to the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) and as Chair of the Education and Finance Committees at Islamic Foundation - Villa Park where he is also a founding member of its full time school.

Zahid Mohsin, is a returning CIOGC Board Member, and has previously served on the Personnel Committee. As a member of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) Shura, he represents the humanitarian group at CIOGC House of Representatives meetings. He has also previously served as the President of ICNA-Chicago for four years.

Deanna Othman is a journalist and educator who has a religion column on the Huffington Post. She’s also been published in the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-



Times, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Daily Herald and on Salon.com, Patheos, AlterNet, The New Arab and the blog Mondoweiss. She also served as the assistant editor of Islamic

Horizons magazine. Othman currently teaches literature and journalism at Universal School in Bridgeview, IL. She is also an AMP-Chicago board member and the chapter’s media coordinator. She holds a Bachelor’s in English and International Studies, and a Master’s in Journalism, both from Northwestern University.

Gregory Abdullah Mitchell, a licensed attorney in the State of Illinois, is chairperson for Leadership Development Institute and a board member of Masjid Al-Taqwa of Chicago, Illinois. Having served on the board of, and provided legal assistance to, many Muslim organizations over the past 25 years, Brother Mitchell brings a wealth of knowledge and experience concerning not for profit organizations to CIOGC.

The slate of Board Members of 2017 is listed below:
 Dr. Bassam Osman, Chair
 Syed Shahnawaz Khan, Vice Chair
 Karen Danielson, Secretary
 Tasneem Osmani, Treasurer
 Halil Demir, Board Director
 Saleem Shaikh, Board Director
 Dr. Zahid Mohsin, Board Director
 Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin, Ex-Officio Board Member
 The new Board will add three more Board members of their choice. For more information about CIOGC please call 312-506-0070 or visit www.ciogc.org.

CHICAGO MUSLIMS, INTERFAITH COMMUNITY RALLY AT PROTECTED BY FAITH EVENT

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one group is an assault on us all.”

In the spirit of solidarity, the crowd, led by Father Brendan Curran then stood up and joined together to sing, “We Shall Overcome.” During the verse “We’ll walk hand in hand,” everyone began linking arms and rocking side to side.” A loud, thunderous applause followed and attendees were seen embracing one another.

The final part of the vigil included a call to action from many community members. The first speaker to encourage attendees to take action was Karen Danielson, Board member and Secretary of CIOGC, who expressed the importance of solidarity, “There is an ethical imperative facing us today. Now more than ever, we must learn to stand together.”

Then, Father Brendan Curran, Husnaa Vhora, Imelda Salazar and Rabbi Megan GoldMarche each promised support to immigrants, refugees and faith groups other than their own. Husnaa Vhora said, “When our undocumented brothers and sisters are being torn apart from their families, I as a Muslim woman will stand with you.” Father Curran ended by engaging the crowd in a chant where he would ask, “Will you stand,” to which the crowd enthusiastically replied each time, “We will stand!” ♦

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Chicago Muslims Join Rally to Defend Immigrant and Refugee Rights

BY HUSNAA VHORA

The Council of Islamic Organization of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) and a number of Muslim community organizations joined the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) for a rally at the Chicago Teachers Union on January 14 to call on elected officials and leaders to make Illinois a safe and welcoming place for all of its residents including the Muslim community, immigrants, and refugees.

The rally which brought over 1,200 people aimed to challenge the incoming Trump administration's threats to deport millions of undocumented immigrants as well as establish a Muslim registry and ban Muslim immigrants. Alongside CIOGC were member organizations Arab American Family Services (AAFS), Syrian Community Network (SCN), Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) and its partners CAIR-Chicago and the Arab American Action Network (AAAN).

Dr. Bassam Osman, Chairman of CIOGC, set the tone for the rally through his strong opening prayer on behalf of the Muslim community. Dr. Osman drew loud cheers from the

crowd when he said, "Lord, this land is your land, it is not Trump's land." He also prayed for strength and resolve to fight discrimination and Islamophobia.

After hearing testimonies from diverse speakers, the energized crowd was encouraged to act by CIOGC Executive Director Tabassum Haleem who stated, "We want to let Governor Rauner know that we want him to make Illinois safe for immigrants and refugees by supporting the policies in

"Lord, this land is your land, it is not Trump's land."

Dr. Bassam Osman, CIOGC Chair

our platform." In order to send an even bigger message to the governor's office, Haleem urged the crowd to hold up their

"Make Illinois Safe" signs so that a picture could be taken and delivered to Governor Rauner's office.

A performance by the group Elephant Rebellion engaged the crowd very early in the program. One of the performers, activist and hip-hop artist Uran Kabashi, is a refugee from Kosova who came to the United States in 1999. Kabashi said that the event was very well organized and that the rally was

able to get the set outcome "because of testimony and action in combination."

Another immigrant and refugee, 31-year-old Rehab Alkadi, of the Syrian Community Network has been in the United States for four years with her husband and son. She reflected on her experience as a refugee, starting from scratch and how she and her family just want to be accepted. "We didn't want to be refugees here, but the difficult situation forced us to abandon our country. We're not trying to be a burden, we just want to live with peace and dignity."

During the event, attendees used the hashtags #WeWillResist and #HereToStay to show their solidarity and send the message that they will not back down. AAAN's youth leader, Nora, told the crowd that the Muslim



PHOTO CREDIT: Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)

registry equates to racial profiling and is unacceptable. "We will stand together against bigotry and hate," she added. More youth presence from the event came from The Korean American Resource and Cultural Center's Luke H. who is studying to become a scientist. He said, "I am undocumented, unapologetic, and unafraid!" A debriefing and reflection session followed the event for members from participating organizations on how community members can continue working towards immigration and refugee policies that protect liberty and justice for all. ♦

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CIOGC Engages in Dialogue with Latino Community Activists

CIOGC and Muslim community leaders met with the Alianza Americas and Latino community activists on February 3 for a dialogue to address President Donald Trump's ban on Muslim immigrants and refugees. Representing the Chicagoland Muslim community were Dr. Bassam Osman, Shahnawaz Khan, Karen Danielson, Dr. Zaher Sahloul, Suzanne Sahloul, Ahlam Jbara, Nareman Taha, and Itedal Shalabi

The program offered opportunities to discuss and develop common understanding and cause with each other. Earlier that day, Alianza Americas and the Mosque Foundation came together for a #WeAreAllAmerica action in which Muslims and their neighbors formed a human chain around the mosque as a symbol of unity and resistance against the 'Muslim ban.

"An attack on the Muslim community is an attack on all of us."
Claudia Lucero, Alianza Americas Board President

The dialogue, which was organized by Alianza Americas, allowed members of the Muslim community to share the challenges they are facing due to the ban. Members of the both Latino and Muslim communities then shared common experiences and struggles which helped illustrate the real-life negative impact the ban has had on the lives of their families and communities.

Reiterating the message that "an attack on the Muslim community is an attack on all of us," Alianza Americas Board President Claudia Lucero stated, "We believe that this is the time for our communities to see their own individual struggles as part of a larger shared struggle against prejudice, racism, and xenophobia." The groups are currently planning next steps for united action. ♦

CIOGC COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TRAINING A SUCCESS!

Forty-five people participated in CIOGC's Community Organizing Training on February 18 at Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview to learn how to build community power through utilizing key organizing tools. The training was sponsored by CIOGC in partnership with DuPage United and United Power for Action and Justice.

Participants found the presentation engaging, helpful, and relevant as President Donald Trump's recent executive orders have sparked not only condemnation but increased civic engagement from the Chicago Muslim community. "Bringing in real

examples of successful action was very helpful," said one attendee.

CIOGC's Community Organizing Training is aimed to help community members develop the necessary skills to become effective civic engagement leaders in their communities. The training is required for Senate Page Program participants who will take part in Illinois Muslim Action Day (IMAD), in which the Chicagoland Muslim community and partners will take a legislative agenda to Springfield on April 27. Learn more about IMAD and how you can join us! ♦

Cook County Sheriff's Department Works With Muslim Community on Hate Crimes

According to the FBI, the number of hate crimes against Muslims spiked with a 67% rise between 2014-2015.

BY CIOGC STAFF

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart introduced a 24-hour hotline (773-674-4357) last month for reporting hate crimes and incidents of discrimination in response to a “steady increase in the number of hate crimes” against Muslims and people who have been targeted for their religion, race, nationality, and lifestyles.

The hotline is intended to “help connect callers to other agencies, Sheriff’s detectives, or legal assistance” for matters that could be better addressed through a network of external resources, said an official statement by the Sheriff.

This initiative will serve as a tangible social service on behalf of Cook County to address a rising trend in discriminatory violence that has affected the nation. “Hate crimes should not be dismissed as a fleeting issue or only a problem outside of Cook County” said Sheriff Dart. “Any act of discrimination or targeted intimidation within my jurisdiction will be met by the full extent of the law.” According to the

FBI, the number of hate crimes against Muslims spiked with a 67% rise between 2014-2015. Last year also marked the largest wave of hate crimes against Muslims since the weeks following the 9/11 attacks with 257 reported anti-Muslim attacks.

The establishment of this hotline is a bittersweet development for Chicago and its diverse citizenry in the aftermath of a divisive election that many hold responsible for the uptick in tensions that appear now as a ubiquitous toxin in public discourse. There is no doubt

“Any act of discrimination or targeted intimidation within my jurisdiction will be met by the full extent of the law.”

Tom Dart, Cook County Sheriff

that the hotline has the support of local communities, but it is quite unsettling that the need for such a hotline is more immediate in 2017 than it has

been in previous years.

Even in a northern metropolis like Chicago, these tensions have had a tangible effect on the daily life of its residents and on the functions of civic institutions. “Sheriff Dart is very actively looking for ways to keep things safe,” says Professor Seema Imam of the National Lewis University and member of the Cook County Sheriff’s

Advisory Council. Dr. Imam is also a representative of CIOGC member organization the Tazkeyah Center. “The hotline that he announced is for ALL – whoever feels discrimination or fear. They route the calls to those who can help.”

It is more important now than ever that communities and law enforcement work together to rectify structural deficiencies and address biases in officers and civilians alike. The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) has been at the forefront of this endeavor, attending quarterly meetings with the Department of Homeland Security and other federal and local agencies to ensure that Muslims are not unjustly targeted or profiled and that the safety of Muslim communities are met.

Similarly, this hotline represents a step in the right direction in fostering a safer environment for all citizens. Speaking to progress in the face of fear, Sherriff Tom Dart said “What we are attempting to do is not solve all the problems, but we want people to know they do not need to live in fear...They can call this number. We will work with them.” ♦

CIOGC HOLDS LEGAL SEMINAR FOR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

CIOGC recently organized a three-hour legal seminar for member organizations on legal and administrative compliance. The seminar covered the differences between a religious institutions such as mosques and churches, and a non-profit organization, whether full-time employees can be asked to volunteer time beyond 40 hours a week, and what political and advocacy activities are permissible for 501(c)3 organizations. Nearly thirty leaders representing fifteen organizations were in attendance.

The presenter of the seminar was attorney Shari Crittendon of the Texas-based Constitutional Law Center for Muslims of America (CLCMA). The Muslim Legal Defense Fund of America (MLFA), which is a CIOGC member organization, established CLCMA to specifically serve Muslim organizations. In addition to the seminar, CLCMA has offered to conduct an audit of individual organizations (by appointment) that will be private and confidential under attorney-client privileges.

CIOGC offers its sincere thanks and gratitude to the Muslim Community Center (MCC) for hosting the seminar and treating the participants with breakfast and lunch. ♦

Report Hate Crimes & Discrimination to the Cook County Sheriff's Department Hotline: 773-674-4357

Increase Vigilance and Security at Your Mosques and Centers

An attacker opened fire on a Quebec City mosque on January 29 killing six people and injuring eight others. One man is being held as a suspect and another as a witness. CIOGC condemns this heinous and tragic atrocity and offer our sincere prayers and condolences to the victims and their families.

In Texas, The Islamic Center of Victoria was destroyed by fire early just days before. Victoria police and fire departments are coordinating with the FBI as well as other agencies to determine the cause of the fire.

These incidents come in the wake of Trump’s ban on immigrants and refugees originating from seven majority-Muslim Middle Eastern and African countries, which was halted by a federal judge, due to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Although there is a stay on the executive order, CIOGC recommends that those affected seek the counsel of immigration attorneys as outlined in our alert for foreign nationals published on www.ciogc.org.

CIOGC urges community members to safeguard their masjid (mosques) and institutions against anti-Muslim violence or vandalism by:

- remaining vigilant
- increasing security at their mosques and institutions
- informing local police of suspicious activity
- reporting any hate crimes or acts of discrimination to the FBI
- reporting hate crimes and discrimination to the Cook County Sheriff’s Department hotline: 773-674-4357 (if applicable)

Please keep in mind that these precautionary measures are only basic steps towards ensuring the safety and security of our institutions. CIOGC encourages the community to pursue long-term expertise and security professionals to safeguard your masjid and organizations. CIOGC also encourages our member organizations to increase security awareness by sharing safety protocols with your respective congregations, conducting drills, and developing and regularly updating your security plans. Local imams are currently meeting to address security concerns. ♦

CIOGC Condemns Bomb Threat Against Des Plaines Mosque

CIOGC condemns and expresses serious concern regarding the bomb threat made by a trespasser yesterday at the Islamic Community Center of Des Plaines (ICCD), a CIOGC member organization.

The suspect, a white middle-aged man carrying a backpack, entered the mosque and reportedly said to a congregant “everything here will be blown up by Friday.” The threat was reported to local police and the FBI by the ICCD and the suspect was taken into custody.

The threat comes in the wake of President Donald Trump’s ‘Muslim ban,’ the rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric from Trump’s administration and supporters, as well

“We take these threats seriously and are working with law enforcement and community partners to increase protection of Chicagoland Muslim institutions and communities.”
Dr. Bassam Osman,
CIOGC Chair



as the number of anti-Muslim hate groups tripling in 2016, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

CIOGC Chair Dr. Bassam Osman and Ex-Officio Board Member, Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin, attended a press conference led by CAIR-Chicago on February 16 to condemn the bomb threat and show support for ICCD.

“We take these threats seriously and are working with law enforcement and community partners to increase protection of Chicagoland Muslim institutions and communities,” said Dr. Bassam Osman, Chair of CIOGC. “We are currently maintaining close contact with the ICCD to provide our support during this challenging time.” ♦



THE COUNCIL
OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS
OF GREATER CHICAGO

For over 20 years, the Council has served as the premier federation of Islamic organizations in Illinois, the leading advocate of Muslim community interests, and a catalyst for enriching American society. The Council unites over 60 diverse Islamic organizations, collectively serving and representing over 400,000 Muslims across the state. Learn more at www.ciogc.org.

The Value of Youth Mentorship

ALIYAH BANISTER

To be honest, mentoring youth wasn't always my dream. In school I intended to become a counselor specializing in the Muslim American community for ALL ages. However, when I graduated with my masters at 23 my focus shifted.

I had recently moved to Chicago and didn't know anyone. I figured the best way to meet people was through my local mosque. To my disappointment, there were no programs for my age group. The aunties took one look at my counseling background and my bit of privately studied Islamic Studies and asked me to start a halaqa.

At first I took it personally. I resented feeling pushed towards the "kids." I thought the elders didn't take me seriously as a professional and wanted me to babysit. Yet before I knew it, I was booked every weekend to conduct workshops for youth all over Chicagoland. It became a passion that continues to consume my life.

So why mentor youth even after I "grew up" myself? My number one reason is the resiliency of youth. Though we can all learn to change at any age, it's much easier for a child. Youth are plastic and moldable on a neurological level. To watch a teenager

improve and blossom into a well-adjusted adult is beyond comparison.

Some minimize the Muslim youth experience. They say that "Youth is a 21st century construct." Historically, one was considered a child until puberty then given the responsibilities of an adult. However, neurologically when a child nears sexual maturity the synapses of the brain start to prune. The prefrontal cortex is poorly connected and the underdevelopment causes youth to be less rational and less able to consider consequences ahead.

Due to this structure, youth are prone to impulsivity and getting angry easily. This process doesn't complete until the age of 25! Ali (RAD) said "Youth is an insanity cured by old age."

Imagine dealing with all these chemical changes and still having to make the right decisions.

Being a youth is tough in any generation. Then tack on the Muslim

American identity and the current political climate. Muslim American Youth have the same concerns the larger American population has; abuse, neglect, bullying, gender identity, self-harm, substance abuse, premarital sex, trauma, and family issues, etc. We just hide it better or are in denial for longer.

When I first started as a youth mentor it's not because I was the most qualified. No one else was willing. "It takes a village to raise a child." Youth need positive role models in their lives in addition to parents. During this confusing time, sometimes the only person that can break through to a youth is someone that isn't in charge of the limits and boundaries placed upon them.

Very few are willing to take their time to get the proper training to fill the gap in services. Our mosques lack accessibility to the young. Sometimes we

"Being a youth is tough in any generation."

Aliyah Banister

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CIOGC IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS FROM MEMBER SCHOOLS

Three students from Aqsa School, six from Universal School, four from Islamic Foundation School, and 13 from CPSA were named 2017-18 State Scholars by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The State Scholar program distinguishes graduating seniors from high schools around Illinois with "superior academic potential" based on their ACT/SAT exam scores, class rank, and grade point average. CIOGC is happy to recognize the students and the schools:

Aqsa School in Bridgeview:

Lilia Abushaban
Wardha Mowla
Sara Salameh

Universal School in Bridgeview:

Laith Abuzir
Noor Alshrideh
Aya Hasan
Rowanne Murrar
Hamza Shahin
Shadi Zbeidi

Islamic Foundation School in Villa Park:

Hajar McHabeheb
Nimah Mohiuddin
Bilal Qureshi
Samer Wahood

College Preparatory School of America (CPSA) in Lombard:

Faraz Attar
Sana Basheer
Asma Basith
Eram Fatima
Areej Kalota
Mohammad Khan
Maimona Masood
Ayesha Mohammed
Izair Mohammed
Arfeen Mohiddin
Syed Raza
Zainab Siddiqui
Hamza Zaman

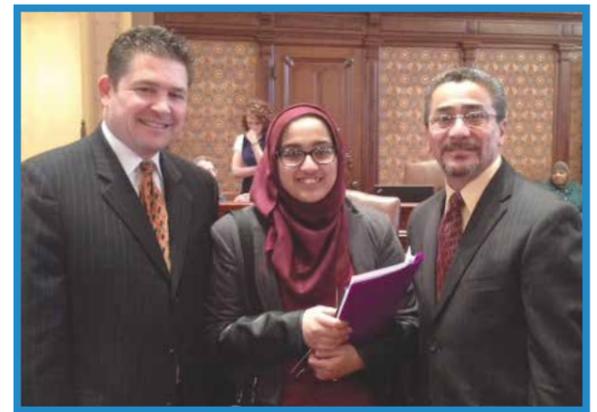
CIOGC extends its congratulations to all of these students, families, and schools, and thanks them for bringing pride to our community.

The People's Government: My Experience as a Senate Page

UMMESALMAH ABDULBASEER, ISLAMIC FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Abraham Lincoln said during his famous Gettysburg Address, "... government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." This is the government he believed in and if he were here today, he would be proud to know that its legacy lives on. America has been living on this principle of the people, by the people, for the people for more than a century. It helped form the fundamental idea of democracy, which allows us to be represented and to have a voice. We all have a voice here, so I want to be able to utilize it to its fullest and ensure others do as well.

Politics has been an area of interest for me ever since I saw a presidential debate on the television. The two politicians discussed the people's needs and that triggered something in me. I asked myself, "Do they know what I want?" and I knew the answer. Truth be told, they did not.



CIOGC's Senate Page Program offers Muslim youth a chance to shadow State Senators.

"I understand that it will take a lot of time to reach my goal, but it starts with one necessary step: understanding what it means to be an American Muslim."

Ummesalmah Abdulbaseer

I understand that it will take a lot of time to reach my goal, but it starts with one necessary step: understanding what it means to be an American Muslim.

The term American Muslim is very broad, considering it fits about five to seven million people in our country. It is very hard

to define, but to me, it is someone who enjoys their freedom to be who they are in the country. They are someone who values the foundation America has been built upon and acknowledges those who treat them properly. They do

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

SUBSCRIBE TO CIOGC'S E-NEWSLETTER

Get the latest news from and about the Chicagoland Muslim community. Sign up at www.ciogc.org!

BECOME A MEMBER OF CIOGC

Download and complete the membership form at www.ciogc.org or call us at 312.506.0077.

CIOGC Expresses Solidarity With Jewish Community at “Love Thy Neighbor” Event

WALID SANKARI

On the night of February 4, the Chicago Loop Synagogue was defaced by a lone vandal who destroyed several windows and pasted swastikas on the façade of the building. Video surveillance cameras at the synagogue captured images of the man acting on what is widely seen as a religiously motivated act of hatred.

In response, CIOGC Board members including Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin and Tasneem Osmani, as well as other Chicago Muslim leaders and members of the faith community, gathered on February 8 at the Chicago Loop Synagogue in a show of solidarity and support for the Jewish community and against anti-Semitism and hate. The event, titled “Love Thy Neighbor,” brought together a delegation of representatives from various Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities to offer words of comfort and support and send a message that the United States of America is and ought to be a diversely religious nation.

“We offer our support to our neighbors at the Chicago Loop Synagogue and stand firmly with the Jewish community against these acts of hate,” said Aymen Abdel Halim, CIOGC Communications Director, in a letter to the synagogue.

“During a time of increased Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, our communities’ resolve to overcome remains unshaken. This is a testament to our faiths, collective strength, and resiliency as communities to overcome hate. We stand closer today with the Jewish community to say hate has



no place in our neighborhoods and to reaffirm our commitment to fight against it with you every step of the way.”

Pastor Chris Harris of the Bright Star Church articulated the need for popular mobilization, reminding the congregants “we should say nothing about violence until we do something about violence. We should say nothing about hatred until we do something about hatred.”

Speaking to CIOGC after the event, Dr. Reverend Otis Moss III of the Trinity United Church of Christ elaborated on the need for interfaith action in preserving American civic life, and stated, “The broad nature of interfaith work ultimately strengthens democracy. To have a Muslim work with a Sikh who communicates to a Pentecostal who is standing with a Jew...this is the essence of civic life, it is the essence of ‘Love Thy Neighbor.’”

A suspect has since been arrested by Chicago Police in relation to the anti-Semitic vandalism perpetrated at the Chicago Loop Synagogue and is being held on \$150,000 bail. ♦

Muslim, Interfaith Community March and Rally Against ‘Muslim Ban’ in Morton Grove

HUSNAA VHORA

The Muslim Education Center (MEC) in Morton Grove held an “Empowering the Diverse Community” event on January 29 which brought together an estimated 1,500 people of all faiths and backgrounds for a solidarity march and rally against President Donald Trump’s executive order banning Muslim refugees from seven countries.

The event, which had been in the works for months, was expected to draw in 300 people, but President Trump’s executive order which sent a shockwave through the entire country, helped mobilize a crowd that flowed from the MEC basement to their parking lot.

Despite the cold, snowy weather, the event brought out politicians and religious leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities. The program started with musical performances by the Niles West Choir and Cantor Jay O’Brien, a member of Congregation Solel in Highland Park who played guitar as he serenaded the hundreds of people who squeezed tightly into the room. The crowd was then asked by Niles West Choir director, Matthew Hunter, to join hands with those surrounding them to sing “We Shall Overcome” in unison. The crowd followed suit and the entire room became one big human link.

The event drew in not only adults, but youth too. Miriam Berkson, a junior at Niles North high school and a Jewish American woman narrated the story of her school environment the day after Donald Trump was elected President. She explained how the first people she saw that day were her two very good

friends, a black woman and a Middle Eastern man, who were “sobbing and holding onto each other with fear and worry for the future.” Berkson left the crowd with words of encouragement by saying, “[Trump’s] hate can make us feel small, and fearful; but his hate can also unify us and make us strong.”

As the one and a half mile walk was set to begin, the hundreds of people waiting outside were taking pictures with signs and cheering. The loud crowd also got the sound of approval from cars that drove by as they rolled down their windows and honked their horns. Among those who marched was Anis Elahi of Lincolnwood who said, “I am so thrilled and so honored that all these people respect what’s going on.”

After the walk concluded, participants warmed up with a cup of hot chocolate and jam packed into a gymnasium to hear words from local politicians and event organizers as well as testimonies. State Representative Jan Schakowsky of the 9th district promised to stand with any group that the Trump administration attacked, “If God forbid, they build a registry for Muslims, we are all Muslims!”

Event organizers Dilnaz Waraich of the Muslim Community Center (MCC) and Lesley Williams of Jewish Voice for Peace closed the rally by encouraging people to contact Governor Bruce Rauner and urge him to make Illinois a sanctuary state, with Waraich reminding the crowd that, “This is a movement, not a one-day event.” ♦

CIOGC, Chicago Cares, and Zakat Foundation of America Team Up for MLK Service Day in Chicago

WALID SANKARI

On the day of Donald J. Trump’s presidential inauguration, dozens of community institutions across Chicago organized to participate in the National Day of Service, which saw service projects enacted to better local communities. Spearheaded by Chicago

Cares, many local nonprofits including the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), recruited volunteers who may have never participated in community service to give back to Chicago.

The MLK National Day of Service is traditionally held on January 16, the

official MLK Day, but this year CIOGC timed its Day of Service to coincide with the presidential inauguration so as to reimagine the day as one of optimism and local solidarity after a historically divisive election season.

One of these projects – a collaboration between South Side Community Services and CIOGC – saw meals provided by Zakat Foundation of America to over 300 elderly citizens in senior lodgings in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood, who enjoyed a lunch of chicken, potatoes, and greens while conversing and listening to gospel

music in the facility’s common areas. An interfaith and multiethnic collection of volunteers recruited from neighborhoods around the city embraced the spirit of service as they plated and handed out meals to the residents while exchanging stories and sharing perspectives on the news of the day.

“I think we’re in for an interesting four years,” said one senior citizen to another as the live broadcast of the inauguration played on a television in the common area. The incoming

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Chicago Muslims Rebuke Trump Refugee Ban at Press Conferences

The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) held press conferences on January 27 and February 20 to address the deeply troubling executive orders set by the Trump administration to ban refugees and Muslims from seven countries.

CIOGC led the January press conference and was joined by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), Syrian Community Network, CAIR-Chicago, Jewish Voice for Peace - Chicago, Chicago Sinai Congregation, and the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago (CRLMC).

President Trump's executive orders, which he signed on January 25, bans most refugees and suspends visas for Syrian citizens, including Muslims from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and Iran. According to Trump, the ban would remain for several months until more 'extreme vetting' is in place. Trump has made an exception to religious minorities escaping persecution.

"The Trump administration's decision to ban refugees contradicts the values we hold dear as Americans. The U.S. is and always has been a land of immigrants and refugees. The founding fathers of our nation escaped persecution and became the first refugees in America. To implement this ban would contradict the values of we hold dear as Americans," said Dr. Bassam Osman, Chair of CIOGC. With the humanitarian disaster in Syria worsening, thousands of displaced Syrians continue to flee their war torn country. According to the Pew Research



Aymen Abdel Halim, CIOGC Communications Director, at February 20 press conference

Center, in 2016, the U.S. accepted over 13,000 Syrian refugees. However, the Trump administration is closing America's door during a time of great humanitarian need.

On February 20, CIOGC joined faith leaders CIOGC joined dozens of religious leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities on February 20 at the Downtown Islamic Center for a press conference led by the group Protected by Faith, to form a united front against Trump's ban on Muslims and refugees.

Aymen Abdel Halim, CIOGC Communications Director, started the press conference on a spiritual note by sharing a verse from Surah Al-Baqarah of the Holy Quran which states, "But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; And perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you; And Allah knows, while you know not;" He explained that despite the outrage and trauma stemming from Trump's executive

orders, the silver lining for the Muslim community has been the outpouring of support and solidarity from the faith community. Abdel Halim thanked Trump for bringing communities together, strengthening friendships and reaffirming American values. ♦

"But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you, and Allah knows, while you know not."

Qur'an 2:216

CIOGC Participates in Sanctuary City Meeting with Mayor Emanuel, City Officials

CIOGC co-founder, former Chair, and current Ex-Officio Board Member, Dr. Mohammed Kaiseruddin, CIOGC Vice Chair Shahnawaz Khan and approximately 25 Muslim leaders met with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Deputy Mayor, Andrea Zopp, First Deputy Superintendent of Police, Kevin Navarro, as well as representatives from the Office of New Americans on January 12 to discuss safeguarding the Muslim community and immigrant and refugee communities in general in response to President Donald Trump's policies to deport millions of undocumented immigrants and impose a ban on Muslim immigrants.

Mayor Emanuel reaffirmed his support for Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance and Sanctuary City

Resolution which protect immigrant and refugee rights and promote the city's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Dr. Kaiseruddin thanked the Mayor for organizing the meeting and taking several actions aimed at protecting the immigrants and Muslims in the city, as well as meeting with the President-elect on behalf of Mayors of major cities. Upon asking the Mayor if it was possible to establish a hate crime hotline similar to the one established by Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, the Mayor stated that existing emergency lines (911 and 311) should be sufficient to report a hate crime. Shahnawaz Khan asked the Mayor about relief for Chicago mosques' water bills to which he said is aware and working on it. ♦

Senator Durbin, Legal Community Challenge 'Muslim Ban'



HUSNAA VHORA

Over 800 hundred people filed into Islamic Foundation in Villa Park on Sunday, February 5 to learn "How to challenge the 'Muslim ban.' The ban, which President Donald Trump served as an executive order late last month, restricts incoming travel from seven Muslim-majority countries, including refugees from war-torn Syria.

Attendees of the event all came with the same agenda - to learn about how the Muslim ban affects the community, what people should expect, and how to build coalitions to mobilize the broader community. CIOGC was joined by

Senator Richard Durbin, interfaith partners from Dominican University and the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago (CRLMC), Latino leaders from the Resurrection Project and Alianza Americas, and legal leaders from American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Council of American-Islamic Relations - Chicago (CAIR-Chicago), and the Muslim Bar Association (MBA) to directly challenge the ban.

This gathering was just one of the hundreds of movements happening around the country to educate people about all that the 'Muslim ban' encompasses, but more importantly to bring people together in spreading unity, love, and solidarity with Muslims and refugees. Father Brendan Curran of Dominican University started his speech by chanting "No ban, no wall, no ban, no wall," before addressing the crowd with his words of support. "I am called to stand with you. Now is not the time to turn away from plight, oppression and desperation. It is not the time to turn away from each of you, my Muslim sisters and brothers."

While the program was about the 'Muslim ban,' it also touched upon other marginalized communities like the Latino community, which is affected by Donald Trump's anti-immigrant policies.

Over 800 people filed into Islamic Foundation in Villa Park on Sunday, February 5.

"We don't know what the next executive order will say, but if they're coming for the dreamers, they'll have to come through me."

Senator Richard Durbin



Erendira Rendon, Director of National Partnerships at the Resurrection Project, spoke about how attacks on the Muslim community are an attack on the Latino community. "We know that these attacks will continue, and as deportations rise and

Muslims continue being attacked, we will make sure that we stand together and keep fighting together."

Groups like the ACLU, CAIR-Chicago, and CIOGC have been very active in response to the 'Muslim ban' by

working with public officials and the legal community on behalf of those whose rights have been violated. Colleen Connell, the Executive Director of the ACLU in Illinois, urged the crowd to continue supporting these groups as they work to defend individuals affected by the ban. She also said that now more than ever, "We must all stand united in assuring that our country and everyone in it knows that Muslims are not a threat to our national security, and it is unconstitutional and un-American to suggest otherwise."

Senator Richard Durbin, a longtime friend of the Muslim community, took the podium and won the crowd over right away as he began his speech with the words, "My fellow immigrants..." He later revisited that point by narrating his own story. "My mother was an immigrant from Lithuania and now her son has the honor of representing you in the United States Senate." Durbin promised to keep fighting for the community and stated that "We don't know what the next executive order will say, but if they're coming for the dreamers, they'll have to come through me." ♦

CIOGC, Chicago Cares, and Zakat Foundation of America Team Up for MLK Service Day in Chicago

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administration has raised a number of concerns among the nation's elderly, who are eagerly waiting to see how President Trump will handle vital services such as Medicare and Social Security.

"Regardless of who sits in the White House, it is necessary that we the people pick up the slack when it comes to looking after our own," one of the volunteers mused as she plated mashed potatoes from behind the row of heating trays, occasionally glancing up at the television as America's first

African American president climbed into a military helicopter and waved goodbye to the nation.

As tensions in society increase, we look around and we see an America not so unlike the America of King and Kennedy. Though King himself has long since passed, his ideals, his memory, and his methods will be carried by another generation of Americans as we take another step towards the ideal nation that we believe ourselves to be. ♦

Human Trafficking Awareness: An Interview with Itedal Shalabi

As part of National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, CIOGC interviewed Itedal Shalabi, Co-Executive Director of Arab American Family Services (AAFS) in Bridgeview, Illinois.

What is the definition of human trafficking?

Also known as “modern day slavery” human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, or harboring of persons against their will - by means of threats, use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, and deception. Human trafficking is the abuse of power, exploitation of a position of vulnerability or of the giving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person for the purpose of exploitation. Human trafficking is forcing victims into prostitution, subjecting them to slavery or involuntary servitude and compelling victims to commit sex acts for the purpose of creating pornography.

Are human trafficking and slavery the same?

Human trafficking and slavery can mean two different things though they are very similar. Human trafficking is when a person is recruited, harbored, provided, or obtained for the purposes of exploitation – often sold as an object. Modern-day slavery involves exploiting people, through forced labor or sex.

As Muslims, what is our perspective on human trafficking and slavery?

Islamic Law calls for the welfare and well-being of all humankind according to the principles of justice and mercy - especially by calling for the elimination of the institution of slavery, the prohibition of exploitation of human beings in all its forms, the rejection of oppression and hardship, and the promotion of the duty of the public to promote good and prohibit evil. On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (ra) who said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “Whoso-ever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is

not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.”

If we as Muslims need to live up to our principles we have to act on what Allah (swt) and his prophet (saaw) told us. We need to reject human trafficking; we need to be involved; we need to be educated; we need to fund programs; we need to pray for those who are working to end it and support them in their endeavor to do so. We need to have Khutbas in our Mosques.

Can you share some statistics on human trafficking in Chicago? Nationwide?

It is such a clandestine issue that we may never know an exact number, however, there are 27 million known cases worldwide. Nationwide, there are 5,748 known human trafficking cases and in Illinois, 153 have been reported.

Who are the victims of human trafficking?

Trafficking doesn't have a specific victim. Trafficking occurs to adults and minor children both nationally and internationally. Victims come from all sorts of economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Whether a victim is documented or undocumented doesn't really play a role here. Traffickers target victims using specific methods of recruitment and control that they find to be effective in evoking interest of the individual into forced labor or commercial sex. A majority of the time a person's circumstances and/or vulnerabilities tend to lead to higher susceptibility including runaway and homeless minors, immigrants looking for a better quality of life, individuals who experienced violence or trauma in their life, women who had a history of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, and people wanting to escape war torn countries.

What kinds of human trafficking cases do we see in Chicago?

Chicago sees its share of human trafficking. One of the biggest human trafficking cases seen in the Chicagoland area is sex trafficking in the forms of prostitution. According to traffickingfreedomil.org, Chicago is the most likely port of entry for trafficking victims.

Aside from sex trafficking another big issue in the Chicago area is domestic servants or labor trafficking. Again, since Chicago is the port of entry for most trafficking victims, many of the victims are brought into the city with intentions of dehumanizing them. Labor traffickers have intentions of making their victims their personal modern day slaves.

How do you identify a victim of human trafficking?

These are some red flags when identifying a victim of human trafficking: They are never alone and/or always have someone translating or answering questions on their behalf; they have unexplained bruises or cuts or other signs of physical abuse; they're not in control of their own finances; they appear to be in a relationship with someone who is dominating; they are under 18 and providing commercial sex acts or at any age unwillingly providing commercial sex acts; they present with secrecy or are unable to answer questions about where they live.

What should people do if they suspect a human trafficking situation?

If human trafficking is suspected it should be reported right away to law enforcement. Have law enforcement investigate the situation and resolve it. Do not get involved, but if you can offer support to the victim, by knowing where to refer them it would be great.

What can a community member do to help stop human trafficking?

A community member can educate the victim and provide hotline numbers, or help them call the police. They can also refer them to the closest agency in the community but first community members need to be educated on how to identify a person as a victim of human trafficking in order to offer any help.

How can community members show support to victims/survivors?

First, they should never blame the victims/survivors. Many people are scared to come out and talk about their experiences because they are worried about being judged. Building an environment that is welcoming will not only help them emotionally but it may also cause others to step up and seek assistance. Another thing community members could do is help victims/survivors find resources to help them cope and empower them.

The Illinois National Human Trafficking Hotline is a great source to learn about human trafficking and allows survivors/victims to find various places that can help them. The last thing is education for not only the survivors/victims but also community members. Seminars open our eyes to the things that are happening around us. I attended a lecture at my community college that made me feel blinded to the fact that this is still happening!

It changed my perspective completely because society makes us believe that the survivors/victims are at fault that this happened to them which is not true. Even after discussing what I had learned with friends and family, people still denied that this is still an issue today. This is why seminars and faith-based programs should be readily available to the public. These programs will let survivors/victims know that they can seek assistance with whatever they need. These programs will also educate the community to be able to step up and help those who are survivors/victims of trafficking. ♦

THE NATIONAL HUMAN
TRAFFICKING HOTLINE
888-373-7888

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP SYRIAN REFUGEES

1. Donate to a local organization doing humanitarian work for Syrians. In-kind donations are always appreciated (such as coats, medical supplies, etc.) especially if you have access to a large unused stock, but cash is more useful in filling the gaps.
2. Volunteer for a local organization! Your money is valuable, but your time and your labor goes a lot farther in providing services to newly arrived refugees. Organizations like Syrian Community Network, Zakat Foundation of America, and ICNA Relief are the best places to start.
3. Visit refugees in the hospital – many refugees requiring medical attention are hundreds of miles from family and friends so even a visit from a stranger helps to break the monotony.
4. Defend their dignity when you can! If you hear or see your peers express disparaging sentiments towards refugees, do not be afraid to express your solidarity with them. It goes a long way to reducing social stigma and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.
5. Offer your genuine friendship. Most refugees arrive in this country knowing very few others, if any. The best investment you can make is to be their friend, invite them to a meal or a movie, and give them a way to stay in touch. ♦

SAVE ALEPPO

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) is mobilizing to help the people of Aleppo. Recently, ZF entered Aleppo and distributed 8 cargo trucks' worth of food packages. Help ZF continue its emergency relief efforts.

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“Clearing Up Controversy” Event Offers Platform for Discussion

On February 27, the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) partnered with United Muslims Moving Ahead (UMMA) at DePaul University to present the first of a six-part lecture series titled Clearing up Controversy. The lecture, titled “Law of Allah? Law of the land? Or both?” focused on Shariah in the 21st century and societal expectations of law and religion. Dozens of students joined the discussion led by Abdul Malik Ryan, Muslim Chaplain for DePaul University, and engaged in discussion on the many issues of law and how it is enforced, the differences between fiqh and shariah, and the relevance of Shariah in the United States.

“It was a beautiful exchange that led to the understanding that as Muslim Americans we have a duty to protect the sanctity of our religion’s most trusted rituals and expectations given to us by God, but that we also have a duty to uphold the values of our US Constitution. Contrary to popular belief, Shariah and our Constitution have many, many parallels.” said Jameel Karim, CIOGC Youth Coordinator. Abdul Malik Ryan added to this sentiment and reminded the audience, “Shariah is beautiful and a path for people to be guided... We should love it and look to it for guidance as well as show others its beauty and not be afraid of it.” ♦

“Shariah is beautiful and a path for people to be guided... We should love it and look to it for guidance as well as show others its beauty and not be afraid of it.”

Abdul Malik Ryan, Muslim Chaplain for DePaul University

The People’s Government: My Experience as a Senate Page

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not appreciate discrimination and will try to stand against it and whatever else is wrong. In my opinion, they might be scared to have a voice because of what the media might say or because of the rising Islamophobia. However, they are willing to break their shell to show the country that they are proud American citizens. They want to do what it takes to see positive changes in the country they call home.

That is exactly how I perceive myself and countless others to be: willing to do what it takes to make America even better. After seeing a few politically proactive Muslims in my community, I

realized that there is nothing stopping me from taking a part in government. It was made for people like me to voice opinions, represent, and lead. I just need to begin walking in the right direction.

My experience as a Senate Page put me in the middle of the action. It allowed me to see how the legislative process takes place. It was an experience I am building on and helps me get closer to my goal of becoming a government official one day. I have been in school government for a few years, and I enjoy leadership roles. The Senate Page Program was an opportunity for me to apply what I have learned and also experience the political process on a bigger scale. Also, the Senators I met represent my state, so it helped me understand what legislation is worked on and who it applies to. Becoming a Senate Page allowed me to see firsthand the kind of government Lincoln thought of when he proclaimed, “Of the people, by the people, for the people.” ♦

The Value of Youth Mentorship

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

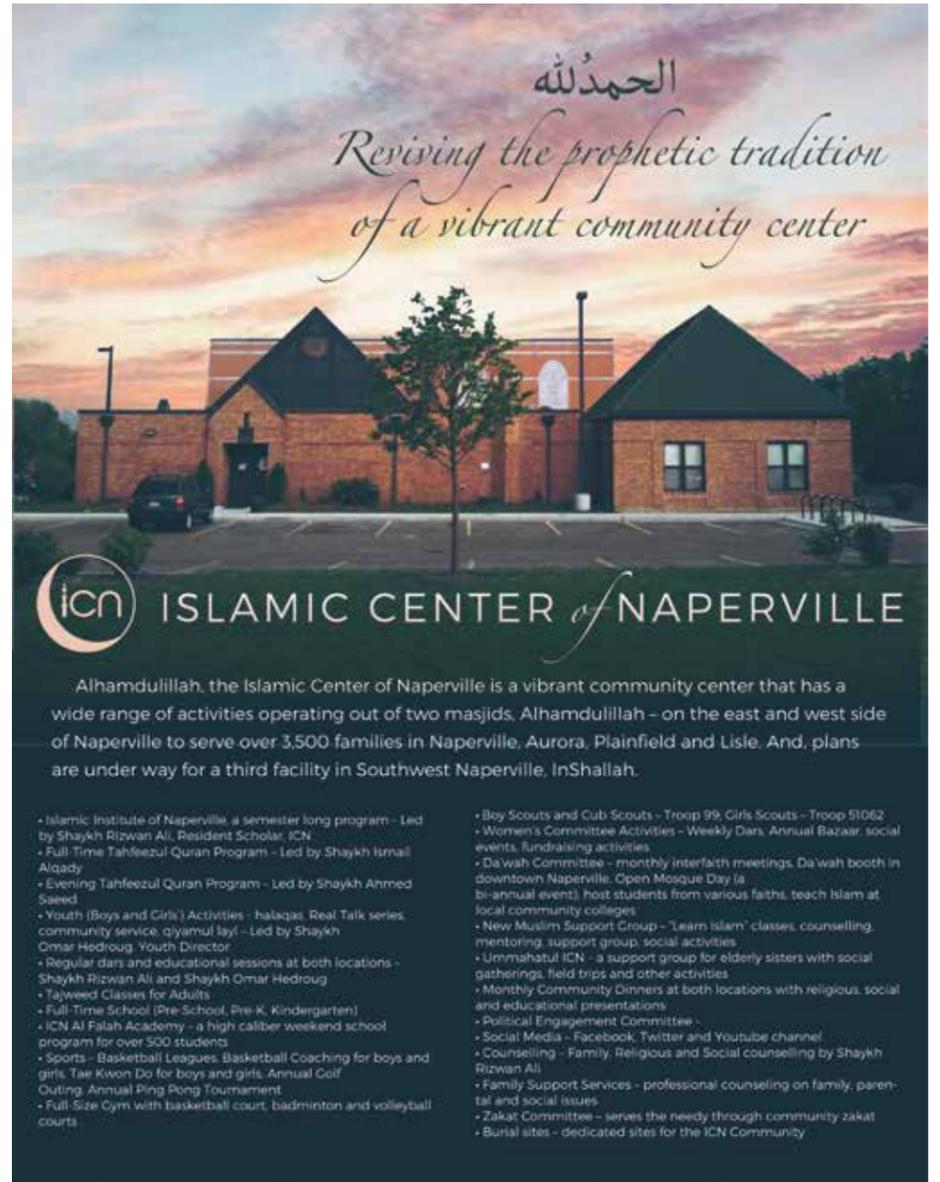
have the mentality that ‘If we keep doing “A” the results will be “B”,’ in almost every situation. However, every child is different. We have to find resources that interest youth and make sense in their cultural context. Working with mosques, we find that the last item of importance is hiring a qualified Youth Director. We are willing to pay for anything except this. Why fund the gym floor when there are no youth to play on it?

Once one decides to get involved there are so many lessons to learn. The best thing I’ve learned is that the results are up to Allah (swt). You may pour everything you have on a child, make yourself sick worrying about them, but in the end the results are up to Him (swt). I would be crushed when a youth didn’t take my advice and ended up choosing something that hurt them. I would stew over how I could have handled it better. But I needed to realize

that it had nothing to do with me, and everything to do with Allah (swt) and the youth’s own personal journey.

The great thing about mentorship is that it builds your patience. It makes you a better person in the struggle. All the Prophets (AS) were shepherds. It trained them for something bigger. It takes so much patience to lead and guide sheep, but more so for humans! Allah (swt) won’t ask you about the results of your mentorship. He (swt) will ask us if we tried our best and did everything we could to make a difference. If we don’t invest in our youth now, who will be there to carry on the struggle? ♦

Aliyah Banister is a Licensed Counselor specializing her work with the American Muslim community. She graduated with a master’s degree from University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, focusing on clinical social work with an emphasis on marriage, family, and children.



ICN ISLAMIC CENTER of NAPERVILLE

Alhamdulillah, the Islamic Center of Naperville is a vibrant community center that has a wide range of activities operating out of two masjids, Alhamdulillah – on the east and west side of Naperville to serve over 3,500 families in Naperville, Aurora, Plainfield and Lisle. And, plans are under way for a third facility in Southwest Naperville. InShallah.

- Islamic Institute of Naperville, a semester long program – Led by Shaykh Rizwan Ali, Resident Scholar, ICN
- Full-Time Tahfeezul Quran Program – Led by Shaykh Ismail Alqady
- Evening Tahfeezul Quran Program – Led by Shaykh Ahmed Saeed
- Youth (Boys and Girls) Activities – halaqas, Real Talk series, community service, qiyamul layl – Led by Shaykh Omar Hedroug, Youth Director
- Regular dars and educational sessions at both locations – Shaykh Rizwan Ali and Shaykh Omar Hedroug
- Tayweed Classes for Adults
- Full-Time School (Pre-School, Pre-K, Kindergarten)
- ICN Al Fajrah Academy – a high caliber weekend school program for over 500 students
- Sports – Basketball Leagues, Basketball Coaching for boys and girls, Tae Kwon Do for boys and girls, Annual Golf Outing, Annual Ping Pong Tournament
- Full-Size Gym with basketball court, badminton and volleyball courts
- Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts – Troop 99, Girls Scouts – Troop 51062
- Women’s Committee Activities – Weekly Dars, Annual Bazaar, social events, fundraising activities
- Da’wah Committee – monthly interfaith meetings, Da’wah booth in downtown Naperville, Open Mosque Day (a bi-annual event), host students from various faiths, teach Islam at local community colleges
- New Muslim Support Group – “Learn Islam” classes, counselling, mentoring, support group, social activities
- Ummahatul ICN – a support group for elderly sisters with social gatherings, field trips and other activities
- Monthly Community Dinners at both locations with religious, social and educational presentations
- Political Engagement Committee
- Social Media – Facebook, Twitter and Youtube channel
- Counselling – Family, Religious and Social counselling by Shaykh Rizwan Ali
- Family Support Services – professional counseling on family, parental and social issues
- Zakat Committee – serves the needy through community zakat
- Burial sites – dedicated sites for the ICN Community



The Mecca Center Hiring Youth Coordinator

JOB DESCRIPTION

The responsibility of the Youth Coordinator is to provide development, coordination and oversight of youth services, and to build a positive youth program. He or she must integrate recreational and artistic activities with educational and spiritual components and provide leadership to youth, including but not limited to tutoring and mentorship programs, community service, education and cultural programs.

GOALS OF THIS POSITION

- To instill the American Muslim Identity in the youth by educating them about the basics of Islamic faith and practice within the American cultural context.
- Increase self-confidence and self-esteem in youth by developing youth leadership, facilitating positive peer-group relationships, and promoting bonds of friendship
- Expand the youth activities and nurture culture of volunteerism.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in humanities, counseling and social sciences and Islamic scholarship.
- Must be fluent in the English language, oral and written.
- Must have extensive experience in working with youth and managing volunteers.
- Involvement in Islamic educational work, program development and successful implementation.
- Must be familiar with issues faced by youth raised in North America.
- Use of MS Office/Google Docs and the ability to create and maintain databases in Excel.
- Works well in a team environment and networking opportunities.
- Planning/organizing/implementing large-scale events/programs/activities as needed.
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of Islam.

Work hours

This is a full time job (40 hours) that requires work in the evenings, on holidays, and the weekends.

Contacts

Enthusiastic and qualified applicants, please email your resume to: haniatassi68@gmail.com.

More info and details are available at: meccacenter.org.



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Hina Mujadad, C14, B.S. Biology, graduate student in Public Health, Glendale Heights





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