

Manitoba MUSLIM

April 2023

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Eid Mubarak

Your Community Magazine



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Manitoba MUSLIM

Eid-ul-Fitr Issue

April 2023 | Volume 24

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About

Manitoba Muslim Magazine is a publication of the Muslim community in Manitoba under the auspices of the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA).

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Peace be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings.

It has been my honor to Chair the Board of Directors for Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) during this past year. It has been a privilege to lead such a highly talented, driven, and incredibly competent team that rose to the challenge of dealing with regular issues and planning for our growing community. With new faces on our Board of Directors, Manitoba's Muslim community continues to serve a population that's both underserved and has been seeing unprecedented growth. The community in Manitoba is diverse and the MIA board reflects this.

The MIA team, volunteers, supporting staff and Board of Directors are committed to maintaining an organic relationship with the community and take on the challenges it faces and turn them into opportunities. The existing MIA's facilities are not adequate to provide space for our booming population. Maashah Allah, we are struggling to fit a regular Jumma'a prayer at one time at the Grand Masjid, or regular Taraweeh at the Pioneer Masjid.

We are looking forward to expanding the space at Grand Mosque to accommodate the growing demand. As Eid prayers are moving toward the winter season and our population has grown larger than anticipated, prayer space at RBC Convention Center is not available for Eid-ul-Fitr prayer and no confirmation of availability in future Eid prayers as well. A new arrangement for Eid prayer in the city is in progress during this message under publication.

In our rapidly growing community, MIA is working hard toward to open a full time Islamic School at the Waverley premises in 2023. I would like to express my gratitude to all volunteers on the school committee for their hard work.

In all that we do, MIA aims to strengthen the ties with all communities regardless of faith through outreach activities, charities, and community acts. The Muslim community in Manitoba is the most diverse group of people with people hailing from all over the world. Our cultural diversity adds many shades to the beautiful tapestry of the Canadian spirit of multiculturalism and inclusion, unifying us all. MIA is trying to strengthen this unity through Islamic education with Canadian values of freedom, diversity, and inclusion to become fully realized Canadian Muslims in our homeland.

Thanks to our community members, donors, volunteers, staff, and all well-wishers, we're able to channel your support into hard work to benefit you. When the publication is distributed to the community it will be Eid-ul-Fitr 2023, celebration of the successful observation of the holy month of Ramadan.

I wish you all Eid Mubarak, May Allah reward you well.

Khawja Abdul Latif

Chair, Board of Directors
Manitoba Islamic Association

Editorial



The recently published Statistics Canada census confirmed the noticeable growth of the Muslim community in Manitoba, which grew by 113% over the last ten years to reach an estimated figure of 27,000 Muslims. This is certainly a phenomenal growth, representing 2% of the population of Manitoba. This growth isn't reflected in numbers only, but also in scope. Manitoban Muslims with their deep roots in Manitoba -going back to beginnings of the 1900- proudly serve in every sphere of life of the province. They enrich the diversity of the province and foster its welcoming outlook.

Internally, this phenomenal growth creates some opportunities but causes some challenges. Maintaining the community's sense of cohesion and familiarity will be one of the key challenges. With growth comes greater diversity in perspectives and approaches, leading to the emergence of multiple organizations and institutions. Finding a seamless medium between multiplicity and collaboration will be key to future wellbeing of the community. As the stats numbers show, more than half of the community has been in the province for less than ten years. The community through its flagship organization, the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA), has a rich repository of community experience. Tapping into this rich repository, while welcoming new ideas without disrupting the natural progression will be critical.

The community has come a long way and has had many accomplishments in addition to many challenges, which it overcame reasonably. The last thing the community needs is reinventing the wheel. More importantly, this growth needs to be translated into an active participation by all members of the community. The future opportunities for community are boundless. However, achieving them requires focused vision, bold strategy and a daring and thriving mindset.

Eid Mubarak!

Words of Revelation

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort justice or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do."

Quran: Sûrah al-Nisâ': 135



A'idh ibn Amr ... said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: "The worst of guardians is the cruel ruler"

Hadith



"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from worry and grief, I seek refuge in You from incapacity and slackness, I seek refuge in You from cowardice and niggardliness, and I seek in You from being overcome by debt and being put in subjection by men".

Supplications of the prophet (PBUH)



ANNOUNCEMENT

A NEW MIA ISLAMIC SCHOOL OPENING IN THE COMMUNITY!

DELVINDER ZAMIR*

Assalamu Alaikum! We are thrilled to announce the opening of a new Islamic school in our community. The school will open its doors to students from Kindergarten to Grade one and Grade two, starting from Fall 2023.

The MIA School is dedicated to providing high-quality education with a strong emphasis on Islamic values, morals, and ethics. Our experienced and dedicated staff and volunteers will work tirelessly to ensure that every student receives a well-rounded education that prepares them for success in this life and the hereafter.

The MIA School will be starting operations at the MIA Masjid on Waverley and foresee an expansion in the coming years. We will need your support to achieve our goals of expanding our grades from K-12 and developing a facility safe for our youth.

As a community-driven school, we welcome the participation of parents, families, and community members to help us create a positive and supportive learning environment for our students. We invite everyone to attend our upcoming information sessions to learn more about our school and meet our staff and volunteers.

We are excited to embark on this journey of education and growth with our students, and we look forward to serving the community.

For questions, queries, you may contact MIASchool@miaonline.org.

Jazakum Allah Khairan.

**Delvinder Zamir, is a revert and is volunteering with the Manitoba Islamic Association and on the Board. She is also the Chair of the MIA School Board working with a team of passionate community members representing the diversity of Manitoba.*



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a foundation for a strong community



*Eid
Mubarak*



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Winnipeg, Manitoba



info@healthymuslimfamilies.ca



www.healthymuslimfamilies.ca

ARTICLE

ON THE FOOTSTEPS OF PIONEERS, RELIVING HISTORY!

ISMAEL MUKHTAR*



Ali Abas and Jemillia

In 1914, a daring couple took a train from Winnipeg to Arborg in Northern Manitoba (about 120 KM) and from there they journeyed with an ox-drawn cart for another 60 KM to their final destination, a bushy piece of land around the town of Hodgson. This remote place became their home where they established a farm, raised their eight children and spent the rest of their lives. Coming far away from Lebanon and Syria and settling in an unfamiliar, far-flung place in the North was a phenomenal adventure. Ali Abas, a native of Kherbet Ruha, Lebanon, in his late twenties, first came to the USA in 1910 and a few years later went back home and married Jemillia, a 20-year-old woman from the city of Homs, Syria. On their return to the USA, through the UK, they were late in finding a spot on

the Titanic Ocean liner and instead they boarded a different vessel. They arrived safely to the USA, but their countrymen who boarded the Titanic perished when the Titanic sunk. Two years after their arrival in Minnesota, they took the long journey towards the North with a dream of acquiring a piece of farmland. In their new home, they endured the challenges of isolation, harsh winters, difficult farm life, the depression of the 1930s, but they persisted and became fully adjusted to their new life. In the late 1930s, a relative, Abdulrahman Omer, joined them in Hodgson and established a farm. Ali died in 1957 and Jemillia followed him in 1985. They were survived by their eight children, thirty-eight grandchildren and twenty-six great-grandchildren. The Abas family remains to be the oldest surviving Muslim family in Manitoba.

Being myself a refugee and an immigrant, the story of Ali Abas and Jemillia fascinated me from the outset and I wanted to trace their footsteps and visit the place that became their home. When I embarked on my book project: *Manitoba Muslims, a history of Growth and resilience*, I wanted to survey the area, but due to COVID 19, I couldn't. With the ease of COVID restrictions, I took the first opportunity to make the visit. On a sunny Saturday of August 2022, I departed from Winnipeg towards Hodgson in the company of my son, Bassam. Wayne Emir Omer, a



Subhi Omer the author

Winnipegger who was born and raised in Hodgson, graciously agreed to be our guide. The drive to the North was smooth; there were barely any car driving other than ours. The areas around the highway were agricultural and pastoral lands. We saw large flocks of scattered livestock and unusual numbers of green coloured beehives. We stopped at Fisher Branch and Wayne took us through the town that seemed to be stagnant. He showed us the school he went to. He said that the bus used to pick him from the farm in Hodgson and all the students in the area to bring them to the school in Fisher Branch (16km from Hodgson). We continued our drive until we arrived at our destination. I was expecting to arrive in the town of Hodgson where all the Abas' and relatives live side by side. To my surprise I found them spread out, each with a large area of farmland and a house.

We first went to visit Wayne's father, Subhi, who came to Hodgson in 1951 to join his father Abdulrahman. He was 1 day short of his 100th birthday. The yard around the house was setup for the birthday anniversary to be held the next day, where a large number of people were expected. Wayne's father is confined to a wheelchair and could hardly communicate. We met Wayne's sister who came from Alberta for her father's birthday. We also met Subhi's caregiver, a



Old farm equipment



Ernest and Anne with the author

very friendly white woman. Wayne took us around the farm and showed us the old farm equipment they used in farming, all displayed in the field for viewing.

Next we drove to the farm of Ernest Abas. We were welcomed by Ernest, his wife Anne El Tasee, his daughter Lilian and granddaughter, Sabihah who both came for a visit from Winnipeg. Ernest was the last surviving of Abas's 8 children. He was 96 years old. For his age, he is very active. He is very jovial, humorous, enjoyable to talk to and has a sharp

memory. We asked him many questions about his life on the farm, about life today and in the past. He said life was difficult in the past, but people were nice and neighbours supported one another. Today, people have lost that sense of care and outreach. We asked him how they celebrated Eid and how they knew the time. He said we used to receive a letter from Washington DC with a newspaper. They showed us copy of a newsletter from 1952 and a letter dated 1988. The letter was a notification of the days of both Eids and Ramadan. I asked Ernest how he connected with this group in Washington? He responded that it might have started with his dad when he was in Minnesota. Anne served us a delicious lunch. She kindly gifted me a handcrafted wooden cane. Wayne walked us around and he showed us the first shack that Ali Abas built when he arrived first. He told us, when Ali arrived the now open farmland was full of trees and that he manually cut all the trees to clear the land. He received great help from neighbours in the area without which they wouldn't have survived. He also showed us another house close by where Rushdiee (the wife of late Omer Abas) and her son live.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 لَانَّ الْاِسْلَامَ دِيْنُ الْاِنْسَانِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ ﷺ
 مَدِيْنَةُ طَرَبُوسِ الْعَرَبِ

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 241 LEROY PLACE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008 Telephone: (202) 232-0737, Cable: ISLAM
 INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: MIAMI, FLORIDA

Feb. 26, 1988

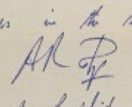
Mr. Ernest R. Abas,
 Box 204,
 Hodgson, Manitoba,
 Canada, R0C 1W0

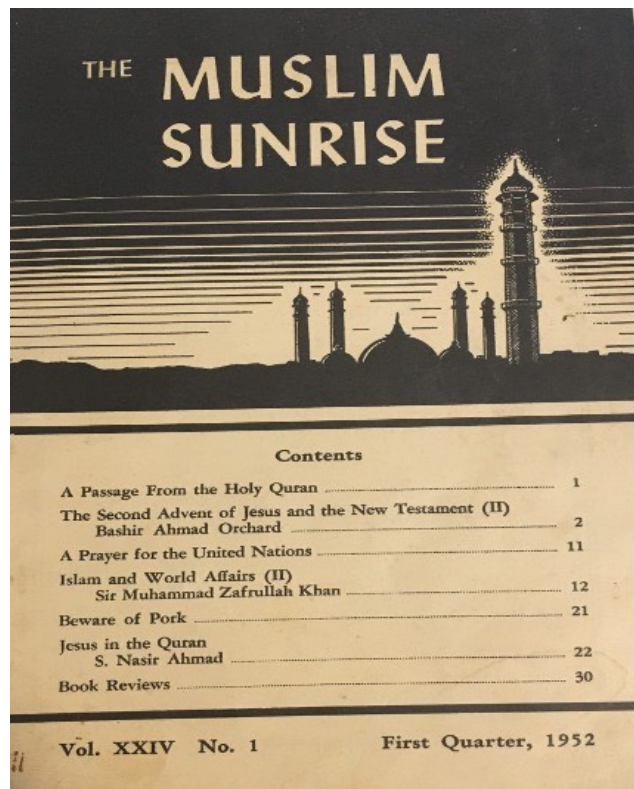
Dear Sir,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Thank you for your letter dated ____ The
 month of Ramadhan would begin on April 17,
 1988 and we will be celebrating Eidul Fite
 on May 16, 1988.

Eidul Adha will fall on July 24, 1988.

yours in the service of Islam

 M. A. Rashid Yahya
 missionary



Our next stop was another drive to the farm of Wayne's nephew, Joey, a young man with a small family. He had a horse barn in which we ventured around; he wanted to show us his livestock, but they had already left to the fields for grazing. We then drove to the farm of Boyd (the son of late Joseph Abas). He, his wife Holly and their son Jamal received us. His house was in front of a river that goes all the way to Peguis, the largest indigenous reserve that was close by. We had some nice conversations with Boyd. Being a hunter, he had some question for me on the Islamic rulings on hunting.

We then drove to the farm of Wayne's old brother, Youseff. It was close to the highway and had an active operation, including a large garage with farm machinery. I was surprised by the number of cats I saw in his farm. He told us that you can't survive on a farm without them. Cats keep rats away and dogs frighten wild animals. He kindly gifted us a box of frozen fresh meat



From right Boyd, the author and Jamal

that served us in Winnipeg for more than a month. Two other siblings of Wayne, Abdulrahman, and Saidi, also live in Hodgson with their families, but we didn't have a chance to meet them.

Accompanied by the two brothers, we went to the graveyard where about 10 Muslims are buried. I asked about the graves of Ali Abas and Jemillia and they told me they were buried in Winnipeg. Next, at my request, we drove to Hodgson, the town, which they said is in a state of decline. The town has only a few buildings, including one of the last Federal hospitals in operation and a few businesses.



From right: Wayne, the author, Youssef and his son Joye



Graves of some members of Omer family

In this short one-day journey, we learned not only something about history, but also about farming and animals. The reception we received from all the people we met was heart warming. Wayne's kindness and knowledge was greatly valuable. As I was returning I wondered why I didn't make this journey much earlier. The area is in a race with time; the young are moving to Winnipeg and the area's future prospects are limited. Before it is too late, a documentary about the place, the Abas, the Omer and other Muslims who lived in this area is imperative in preserving an important chapter of the Muslim history in Manitoba.

**Ismael Mukhtar is the author of Manitoba Muslim, a history of growth and resilience.*

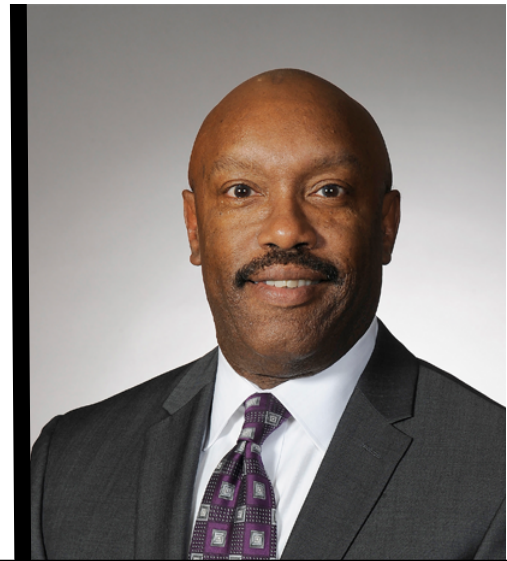
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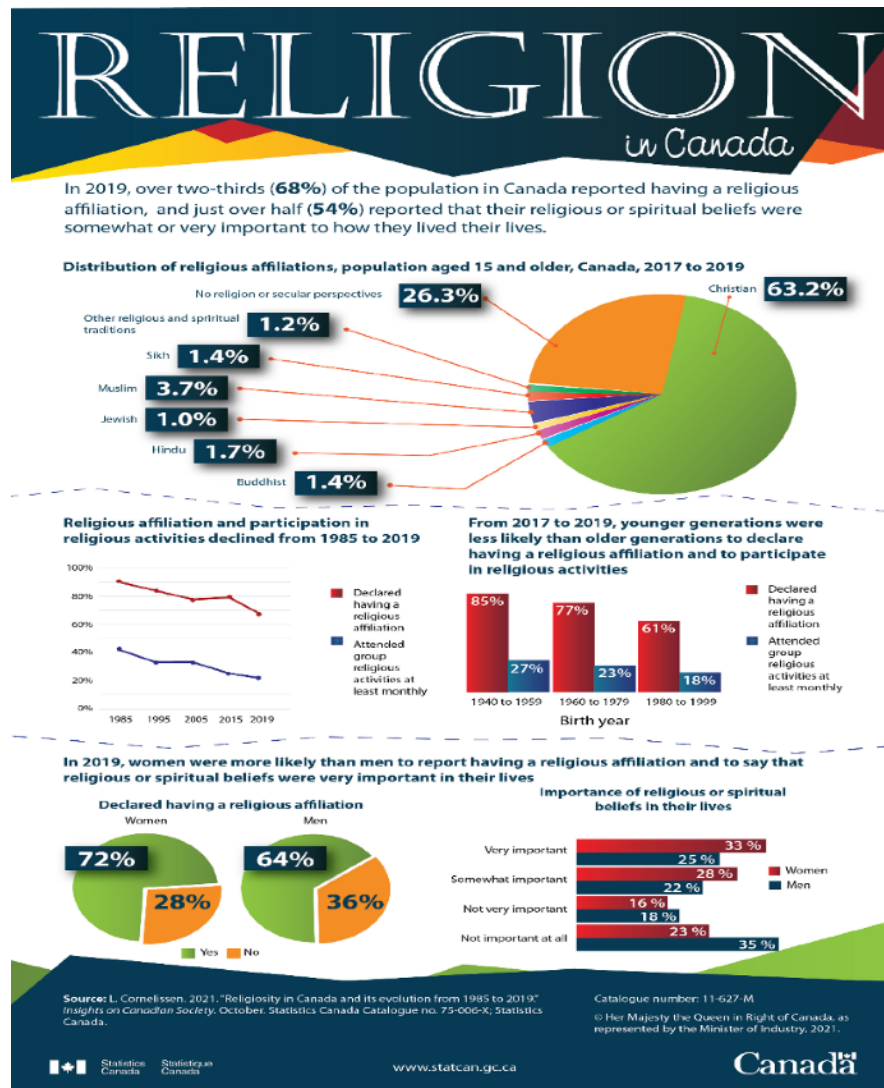
ARTICLE

A PORTRAIT OF RELIGION AND MUSLIMS IN NORTH AMERICA – NEXT STEPS

TASNEEM VALI*

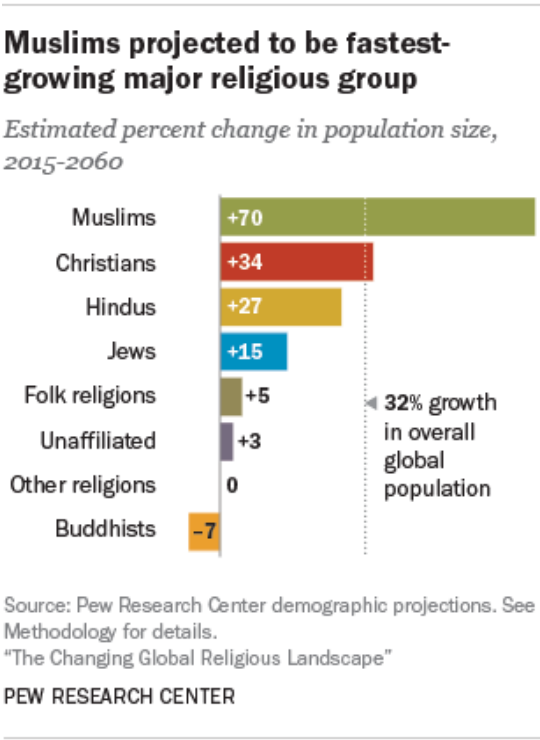
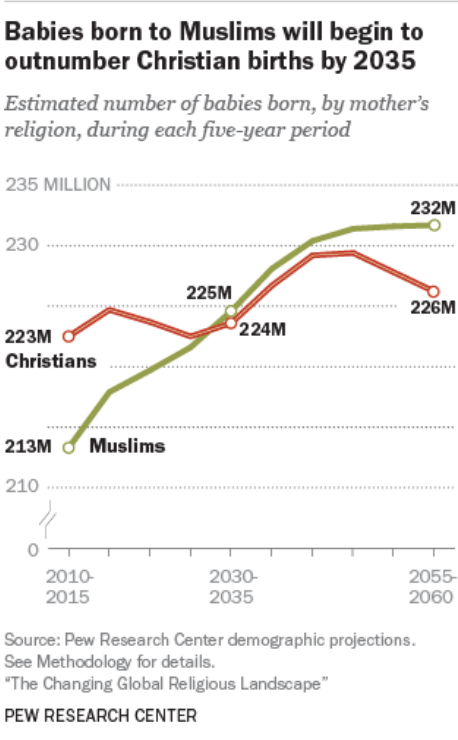
As Canadians we value our freedom and the autonomy to practice our faith. The 2022 Stats Canada report has several things that are highlighted as to what the future holds for us and our children as practicing Muslims in the West. Everyone plays a very important role in our identity as religious/spiritual beings; our grandparents, parents, friends and environment. We will explore all these aspects.

The infographic below highlights some very interesting facts:



This data that reflects the diversity of religious affiliation is important as it is used by the religious organizations and researchers to plan programs and determine where to build the mosques and community centers. Data is also used to understand diversity in Canada and the different experiences of religious groups including funding for programs to combat Islamophobia available to not-for-profit organizations. For example, the recent appointment of Amira Elghawaby as Canada's first Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia in January 2023.

After Christianity, Islam is the second most commonly reported religion in Canada in 2021, with nearly 1.8 million, or 1 in 20, people being Muslim. In 20 years, the share of the Muslim population in Canada has more than doubled—up from 2.0% in 2001 to 4.9% in 2021. This may be largely due to immigration (63%) but also the fact that Muslims are now second and third generation families. Records show the first Muslims have been in Canada since the early 1900s. In the next decade Muslims are projected to be the largest growing religious group in the world.



In addition to this the Muslim population in the West and the world is young – median age of 24 yrs. Between 2015 and 2060, the world's population is expected to increase by 32%, to 9.6 billion. Over that same period, the number of Muslims – the major religious group with the youngest population and the highest fertility – is projected to increase by 70%. (<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/>)

As our children grow and start their own families, we need to reorient our understanding of how we will pass on Islam – its understanding and practices to the next generation. Many children talk about an identity crisis or an identity tug of war as the youth attempts to be respectful of the

religion and culture they were raised with. However, as Canadians, they face pressure to fit into their Canadian identity with different values and expectations. The tensions between these two identities can create issues and a feeling of disconnection for many Muslim youth in Canada. The question we should ask is – what does it mean to be a Muslim Canadian youth? What services do the youth need that will help them cement this identity and not have a crisis or be forced to choose one over the other.

Youth in Canada are fundamentally different from their parents because they ask 'why'. Islam allows us to question why we do something, believe in something and practice something a certain way. Parents just followed and did as they were told. This dichotomy leads to the identity paradox and clash of generations. As Muslim organizations develop and serve the needs of Muslims in Canada, we must take into account how the programs and services offered caters to the answering of the 'why' question adequately. We need to help the youth to carve out their own unique identities. Muslim youth identity focuses on 5 key themes: religiosity, racism and discrimination, parental influence, citizenship, and gender. These identities intersect in multiple ways to the construction of a complex Muslim youth identity.

The Yaqeen Institute article, "Exploring the Faith and Identity Crisis of American Muslim Youth" (<https://yaqeeninstitute.ca/read/paper/exploring-the-faith-and-identity-crisis-of-american-muslim-youth>) mentions – "If young people are not confident in their faith and identity, their sense of contribution is either abolished, or motivated through other frameworks. The feeling is that the pursuit of greatness comes through breaking the shackles of Islam and the Muslim identity rather than embracing it.

When asked if they felt hindered by their religion and religious identity in pursuing their dreams, 16 of the youth answered yes. "It's no secret that we have to compromise our principles to get up there."... Notably, those who were involved in charity efforts and volunteerism through Islamic organizations felt empowered by their religion and identity to do good... when asked if they felt hindered by their religion and religious identity they answered in the negative." Muslim youth living as minorities have to deal with a confusing dichotomy – "they often feel as though they betray the "Islamic" part of themselves by engaging in things they know are displeasing to God. At home, they feel as though they betray the "American (Canadian)" part of themselves by doing things their classmates would laugh about. The more they act in opposition to their values, the deeper the struggle becomes. Constructing a strong identity based on deep conviction and confidence can lead to a healthier young Muslim individual who feels valued and responsible for contributing to society as a whole".

This is where family and the local masjid come into focus. Community spaces and programs that are youth-focused serve as natural reinforcements to developing a wholistic identity. We as the parents must understand that our children need a different kind of guidance and engagement through sports/lectures/service projects/accessibility to reliable information and most importantly an open discussion model with trusted adults in the shape of youth directors, Imams and Sheiks.

Our youth are the future of Islam and Muslims in the West. It is important to understand their experiences, ideas, and interpretation of Islam They are changing the Islamophobia epidemic by reconciling what it means to be Muslim, Canadian and respecting other cultures and religious practices.

**Tasneem Vali is ex-second VP of Manitoba Islamic Association.*

Terry Duguid

Member of Parliament
Winnipeg South



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ARTICLE

FIGHTING ISLAMOPHOBIA TOGETHER

TERRY DUGUID*

Every Canadian deserves the right to safely walk down the street, to work, to worship, and to live their lives without fear of harm because of their faith, ethnicity, or race. Sadly, over the last few years, we have seen an alarming rise in the incidence of discrimination and hate aimed towards Muslims, here in Manitoba, and throughout Canada. When it comes to combatting Islamophobia in Canada, we have a lot of work ahead of us.



In January of 2017, we saw the horrific consequences of growing Islamophobia when a gunman open fire in a mosque in Quebec City, killing six worshippers and injuring 19 others. These six men were fathers, uncles, husbands, friends, and beloved members of their community. The attack was rightly described as an act of terrorism by both the Prime Minister and the Premier of Quebec. In June of 2021 we saw four members of a Muslim family in London, Ontario killed after a driver intentionally ran them down, simply because of their faith.

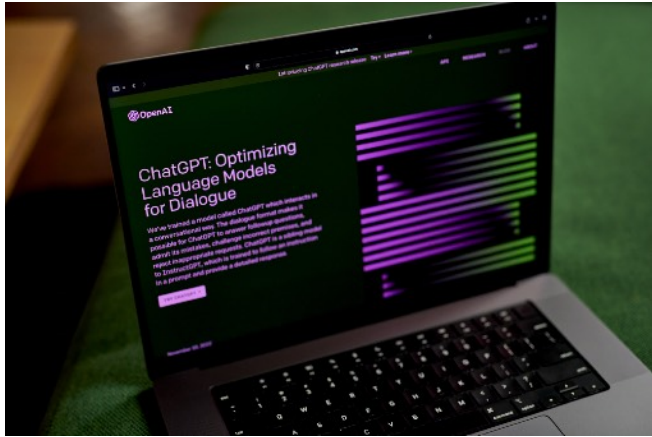
Expressions of Islamophobia often go beyond physical terrorist attacks like these recent tragic events. Islamophobia also manifests itself in other ways – hateful comments, employment discrimination and other acts of unacceptable prejudice. As a society, we must stand up against Islamophobia. Individuals, businesses, governments, and community organizations all have a role to play in fighting Islamophobia in all its forms.

The current Liberal Government of Canada began taking action on Islamophobia shortly after taking office. In March of 2016, Liberal Member of Parliament Iqra Khalid led the charge by introducing a motion in the House of Commons to condemn Islamophobia and all forms systemic racism and religious discrimination. Motion 103 passed with a vote of 201-91 in favour, with Liberal MPs voting almost unanimously to pass the motion, while almost all Conservative MPs voted against it. The Government of Canada took another important step forward in 2021 by designating January 29th of every year as the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Shooting and Action Against Islamophobia. More recently, the House of Commons passed another motion in support of Muslims, this one aimed at resettling 10,000 Uygher Muslims and other Muslims of Turkic origin into Canada. Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi, chair of the Liberal Muslim Parliamentary Caucus, brought this bill forward, which was passed with unanimous support from all parties. Just last month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the appointment of Amira Elghawaby as Canada's first ever Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia. In her new role, Amira will serve as a champion and advisor to support and enhance the federal government's efforts in the fight against Islamophobia, systemic racism, racial discrimination, and religious intolerance.

These are all important steps in fighting Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination, but more needs to be done. We all need to work together by speaking up, educating our friends and family members, and calling out intolerance whenever we see it.

Together, we can pave the way to a society free of discrimination and create a more inclusive world for this and future generations.

**Terry Duguid is Member of Parliament representing Winnipeg South since 2015.*



CHATGPT'S VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING CHARITY

TASNEEM VALI

Even artificial intelligence (AI) believes in giving charity as shown by ChatGPT. Charity is an act of kindness that is deeply rooted in many cultures and religions. In Islam, for example, giving charity is considered one of the Five Pillars of Islam, and is an essential part of a Muslim's spiritual and social responsibilities. Similarly, in Christianity, giving to the poor and needy is emphasized in many teachings of Jesus Christ. However, the importance of giving charity is not limited to religious beliefs. There are several reasons why giving charity is important, and these are discussed below.

Helping those in need

The primary reason why giving charity is important is that it helps those who are in need. There are many people in the world who are suffering from poverty, hunger, homelessness, and other hardships. By giving charity, we can help alleviate their suffering and provide them with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter. This not only improves their quality of life but also gives them hope and encouragement to overcome their difficulties.

Fulfilling our social responsibility

As members of society, we have a social responsibility to help those who are less fortunate than us. Giving charity is an important way to fulfill this responsibility and contribute to the well-being of our communities. By giving to charities and non-profit organizations, we can support initiatives that help improve the lives of people in our local and global communities.

Building empathy and compassion

Giving charity can also help us develop empathy and compassion towards others. When we give to those in need, we are putting ourselves in their shoes and recognizing their struggles and challenges. This can help us appreciate our own blessings and become more grateful for what we have. It also helps us develop a sense of empathy and compassion towards others, which can have a positive impact on our relationships and interactions with others.

Spiritual growth

For many people, giving charity is also an important part of their spiritual growth and development. In many religions, giving to others is seen as a way to show gratitude to God and to seek His blessings. It is also seen as a way to purify oneself from greed and selfishness and to develop qualities such as generosity, kindness, and humility.

Making a positive impact

Finally, giving charity is important because it can make a positive impact on the world around us. By supporting charitable organizations and initiatives, we can contribute to efforts to improve health, education, poverty, and other social issues. This can have a ripple effect on our communities and can inspire others to also give back and make a difference.

In conclusion, giving charity is an important act of kindness that has many benefits.



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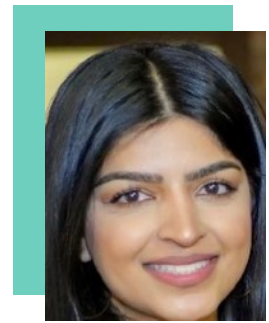
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ARTICLE

LIVE HEALTHY EVER AFTER

MAARIA RANA*



When one part of our being (mind, body, and soul) is not exercised, its other parts cannot excel. I am no mental health expert nor registered fitness coach, but I hope to provide Muslim women with insight and inspiration to invest in themselves, and to reach their full potential through fitness and healthy habit-building.

With Ramadan just around the corner, I want to challenge my fellow sisters to practice the values of our beloved faith - dedication, consistency, and patience, into building the right habits for a balanced lifestyle. Of course, it's not as simple as it seems. It requires stepping out of your comfort zone and self-reflecting to understand what you hope to gain out of your day, week, or long-term. So sisters, let's take charge of our mental and physical health, and go beyond the social and cultural norms of what it means to be healthy.



Physical activity

Being physically active is a part of my daily routine. A personal goal of wanting to lose weight soon turned into "what can I accomplish next?" after discovering my strengths, both physically and mentally from weight lifting. Suddenly, being 'healthy' meant prioritizing my overall wellbeing, that weight loss was no longer a priority, but rather, a bonus. Once you find what physical activity makes you feel good and works for you, you will reap its benefits in all areas of life, Insha'Allah.

Tip: Aim to get in at a minimum, 25 minutes of cardio exercise at least 5 days a week.

Mental health

Exercise itself is a form of mental health care, and alongside spiritual and religious practices, there are other things you can incorporate into your routine, to better understand yourself. Being mindful of your self-talk and how you speak to others can also improve your wellbeing.

“Half of your beauty comes from the way you speak” - Imam Ali a.s.

Tip: Keep a Dua journal, to show gratitude for the things you are grateful for, hope to achieve, or any personal thoughts you find difficult to say out loud.

A balanced diet

Muslims come from many beautiful cultures where its traditional foods are what brings people together. In Islam, we have guidelines on how to stay fit and healthy and we are advised not to overeat, and encouraged to eat food of substance. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that “It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. But if he must (fill it), then one third of food, one third for drink and one third for air” (*Sunan Ibn Majah 3349, Book 29, Hadith 99*). Like everything else, it's about balance and you don't always have to give up the foods you love.

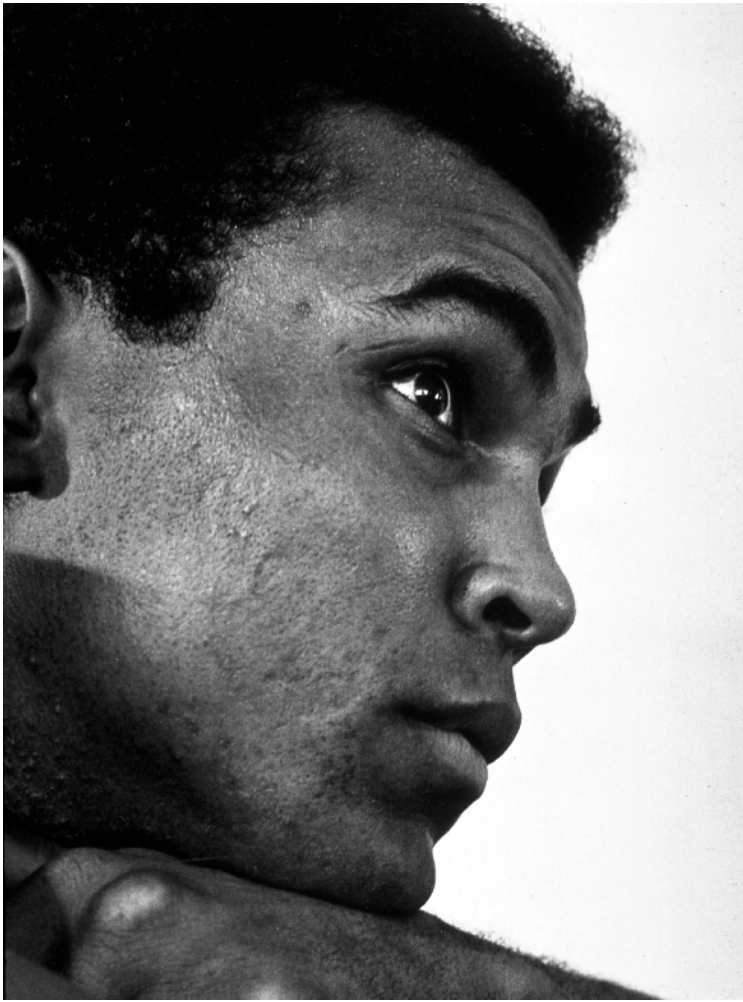
Tip: Spend one or two days of the week to plan out your meals and snacks. It's also helpful to keep a refillable water bottle with you throughout the day as a reminder to stay hydrated.

Whatever your reason may be for wanting to take charge of your lifestyle, I hope that it brings you blessings all around, Insha'Allah. It's not always easy doing it alone, and having good support or a mentor can help you get to the next level.

Though not one of us will have the same experiences, we can work together to find what works best for your lifestyle. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at maariarana127@gmail.com if you have any questions or want to learn more about how you can take charge of your wellbeing, in a judgment-free and safe space. Just remember, you are your best investment.

**Maaria Rana is a Communications Advisor with the Federal government at Justice Canada. She is also a member of the department's Diversity and Inclusion Communications Working Group, providing insight and advice to management on issues like Islamophobia that impact racialized and minority groups in Canada.*





MOLDED FROM CLAY

ABRAR LATIF*



Muslim converts, also known as reverts, are individuals who have chosen to embrace Islam as their way of life. They come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and religions, and their reasons for converting to Islam vary. Those who follow Islam's teachings can serve as positive role models for others and can demonstrate how Islam promotes compassion, humility, and respect for others.

Muhammad Ali was born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. on January 17, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky. He began boxing at the age of 12 and quickly showed promise, winning numerous amateur bouts and eventually becoming a gold medalist at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. After turning professional, he quickly rose through the ranks and won the heavyweight championship in 1964 by defeating Sonny Liston.

Around this time, Ali became acquainted with Malcolm X, a prominent figure in the Nation of Islam, a black nationalist and religious movement founded in Detroit in the 1930s. Malcolm X, who had recently broken away from the Nation's leader, Elijah Muhammad, was impressed by Ali's charisma and talent and saw him as a potential ally in spreading the Nation's message.

In 1964, Ali announced that he had joined the Nation of Islam and changed his name to Muhammad Ali. The decision shocked many, including his fans, the media, and the boxing establishment. The Nation of Islam, which espoused black separatism, self-reliance, and a rejection

of white society, was considered radical and controversial. Ali's conversion was seen by some as a betrayal of his country and his race.

Despite the backlash, Ali remained steadfast in his beliefs and became a vocal advocate for the Nation of Islam's teachings. He spoke out against the Vietnam War, which he saw as a racist and imperialist conflict, and refused to be drafted into the military, citing his religious beliefs. The decision led to his suspension from boxing and a legal battle that lasted several years.

Ali's conversion also had personal implications. He faced criticism and rejection from some members of his family and community, who saw the Nation of Islam as a fringe group. He also had to navigate the tension between his identity as a black man and his identity as a Muslim. As he later wrote in his autobiography, "I had to find myself, and this was the only way I could do it."

In the years that followed, Ali's relationship with the Nation of Islam changed. He eventually broke with the group and embraced mainstream Sunni Islam, which he practiced for the rest of his life. However, the impact of his conversion continued to resonate. It paved the way for other black athletes and public figures to embrace Islam and become advocates for social justice. It also challenged conventional notions of race, religion, and identity and inspired a generation of activists and thinkers.

In conclusion, Muhammad Ali's conversion to Islam was a defining moment in his life and legacy. It represented a bold assertion of his beliefs and a rejection of the status quo. It also forced people to confront the complexities of race, religion, and identity in American society. Ali's example continues to inspire and challenge us today, reminding us that we have the power to shape our own destinies and to fight for what we believe in.



ARTICLE

Identity Crisis: a Negotiation

SARAH RAGOUB*

I would like to begin with a statement of positionality: I position myself as a Muslim woman living on traditional Indigenous lands in Canada and a Muslim community member in Winnipeg for about a decade now. I am a daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend, and teacher. I am also currently pursuing graduate studies in Science Education. Positioning myself is inevitable as I explore a topic as sensitive and controversial as identity, more specifically, in relation to the Muslim identity in the West.

We often hear statements referring to Muslim youth, describing them as going through an identity crisis. This terminology used to depict Muslim youth questioning where and how they belong in Canadian society can be dismissive and belittling when referred to as a 'crisis'. I believe not only the youth, but we, various age groups in the Muslim community, strive to co-create an authentic identity that does not jeopardize our integrity as both Muslims and members of Canadian society. The descriptors we use in referring to such an important part of our community are crucial; they can espouse a sense of belonging or alienation. With the intent of granting our community members the respect and care they deserve, we can better address this questioning as a constant negotiation of their identity as Muslims, whether born in Canada or not.

The want and need to fit in different spaces and roles are daunting and are often illustrated by questioning, feeling ostracized and confused. The religion is not what is being questioned but the negotiation of how to be Muslim in all these distinct spaces. Microaggressions, overt aggressions, and Islamophobia are omnipresent and weigh heavily on many Muslims. I write this to remind myself and others that Muslims are on a constant journey of identity negotiation. The youth are doing their best to live a life interwoven with faith -*at home, in the mosque, at school, at post-*

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2 naan breads and garlic sauce

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2 chicken shawarma, served
with fries and garlic sauce

\$ **13**⁹⁹



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secondary institutions, at work, and amongst friends- all while creating an identity based on their preferences and interests. In choosing terminology that exhibits support and understanding, we can attempt to address some gaps in the community and strengthen the relations between different age groups. It is essential to recognize the agency and intelligence it takes for Muslim youth to negotiate their identities in a society that is not necessarily supportive or designed for their inquiries. We continue to build community by instilling compassion and care into our collective journey to co-create a brave space that allows all community members to safely construct their identities.

**Sarah a teacher and currently a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, specializing in Science Education. She has volunteered with various organizations in the Muslim community, including the Muslim Student Association (UMMSA). She is on a mission to explore and deconstruct the understanding of identity and belonging through a multicultural lens in Canada.*



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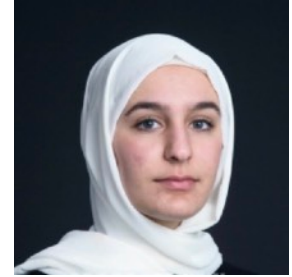
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COMMUNITY PROFILE

YASMIN ALI: CANADIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (CMWI) PRESIDENT



PROFILED BY: DUJAHN KASAS*

Sr. Yasmin Ali is a familiar face in our community and she is known for her decades of volunteer work in and out of the Muslim community. She is the president of the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute and recently was recognized for her volunteer work by the Manitoba government as a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth 11 Platinum Jubilee Medal and has had a street in Bison Run named in her honour.

Q: Tell me a bit about where you were born and raised.

A: I was born and raised in Trinidad, a small tropical island in the Caribbean of only 1,850 square miles as compared to Manitoba's size of 250,000 square miles. The island is a mix of flat plains, hills and mountains. Trinidad has two seasons, the wet and dry seasons, with daytime temperatures in the early-thirties Celsius all year. Trinidad has a diverse ethnic population and its economy is primarily industrial with an emphasis on petroleum and petrochemicals. It is predominantly a Christian country with Islam and Hinduism in the minority. Every religion is given a public holiday for celebrations. I lived there all my life until I came to Winnipeg to further my education, after which I returned to Trinidad and taught high school science for 12 years, got married and had four children before coming back to Canada to live.

Q: What are some of your earliest memories of the Muslim community in Winnipeg?

A: I came to Winnipeg in 1974 to attend the University of Manitoba where I completed my BSc in Zoology. My uncle in Trinidad was a high school friend of Dr. Jameel Ali (a Past President of MIA) who was living in Winnipeg at the time. I connected with him and he introduced me to other Muslim families with children of my age and with whom I would socialize on weekends. The community was much smaller and they looked after the university students creating a home away from home for them. I remember the community getting together at International Centre for Eid prayers and I was here when the Pioneer mosque was being built. My memory of the Muslim community at that time was that it was warm and welcoming to everyone.

Q: When did you start volunteering in the community?

A: I returned to Winnipeg in 1994 with my husband and four children to make it our home. When I first took my children to the Islamic weekend school that was being held in Churchill high school, my youngest daughter did not want to leave me so I stayed with her in the classroom for 6 weeks. There I met some of the other parents who were volunteering and they encouraged me to join them. I served nineteen years on the parents committee eventually becoming the principal. During that time I became very involved with activities at the Mosque. I volunteered

with MIA to organize Eid Ul Adha activities for many years, helped with organizing Eid hampers, social events and I have been editing articles for the Manitoba Muslim Magazine for over 15 years. I was one of the founding members of the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI) and became a board member in 2006. In July this year I will have been volunteering for 17 years with CMWI. For me it is also important to volunteer outside the Muslim community and give back to the city I now call home. I was on the Parents Council of my children's school, on the board of the Linden Woods Community Centre where I live and campaigned for Canadian Diabetes and the Arthritis Foundation. I also volunteer on City and Provincial committees being a member of the Manitoba Refugee Settlement Planning and Coordination Committee, Council member of the Immigration Advisory Council (IAC) and representing MIA and CMWI as a member of the General Child and Family Services (New Canadian Initiative) committee.



Yasmin Ali receiving Queen Elizabeth 11 Platinum Jubilee Medal

Q: What does it mean to be recognized through the award you received and the street named in your honour?

A: It was a surprise when I was informed that a street, Yasmin Ali Crescent, would be named in my honour. Someone told me that normally this is done after someone is deceased so you can imagine how special this is for me seeing that I am still here. In our community it is usually the men who are in the forefront so I think this recognition is something for our women to be proud of. I was very happy to see it is in a residential area, Bison Run, which is in an area adjacent to the Grand Mosque. I think it is a great achievement for the Muslim community that land developers and the City acknowledges the contribution of our community members to Winnipeg.

It was an honour when I was told that I would be a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth 11 Platinum Jubilee Medal. Queen Elizabeth 11 devoted her life to service of her country and this award is to commemorate Manitobans who have served in various capacities. These awards validate the volunteer work that all recipients have been doing. I never expected to receive awards for volunteering but I feel very blessed that my work has been recognized.

Q: As the President of CMWI can you give a brief overview of the organization and what it does?

A: CMWI is a Family Resource Centre where Muslim women work towards empowering women (newcomers or long time residents) and their families to become healthy and contributing members of Canadian society. Through our unique and culturally sensitive services and programs, CMWI helps to integrate families, break down barriers and foster a sense of belonging. Our services help families to navigate the various stages of settlement and offers programs for people who have recently relocated as well as those who been here for many, many years. Some of the immediate needs we look after are those of food, clothing and household items through our donation centre; skills training leading to employment; mental health and wellness supports; family programs for mothers and children; healthy relationship workshops; money management training and free tax clinics to name a few. For a full range of our services and programs please visit us at www.cmwi.ca

Q: What motivates and drives you to volunteer?

A: I believe it is part of my Islamic duty to help others where I can as a form of Sadaqa. As Muslims we are encouraged to improve the community we live in so that is my primary driving force for my volunteerism. I started off volunteering in my children's school but then expanded to the mosque where I can help organize activities for our Muslim community and ended up at CMWI where I devote most of my time to helping newcomers from refugee situations become successful in Winnipeg, their new home. I was once a newcomer to Canada so I am very passionate about helping newcomers navigate the systems to settle successfully over time. I don't only help them but they also help me in appreciating what I have and it gives me a great sense of satisfaction when I see them happy and thriving. I am also motivated to volunteer in the wider Winnipeg community to show that as Muslims we also have a lot to contribute to this city we call home and that we are valuable citizens.

Allah has blessed me throughout my life and what better way to thank him than by using my time and skills to make someone else's life better and help my community. This is my way of giving back. I also have to thank my husband who has encouraged and supported me throughout my volunteer work.

Q: What advice would you give to the youth or anyone wanting to get involved in volunteering in his or her community?

A: I would say pick the area you are interested in and start there. You may be interested as a youth working with kids or you may have expertise in a hobby or sport and would like to coach. Ask your family or friends or research where you can volunteer. You may be more comfortable volunteering one-on-one or in a group setting. If you have friends who are already volunteering ask about their experiences. Start off with a small time commitment and if you are really enjoying

what you are doing then you increase your commitment. Volunteering should be fun, give you a sense of satisfaction and the feeling that you are helping or making a difference.

Q: What kind of skills should someone looking to be a leader to benefit her/his community should have or should develop?

A: A person looking to be a leader should have a passion for the cause he/she is leading and be able to work with others for a common goal. A leader should have or should work towards developing good communication skills and problem solving strategies. A leader must be collaborative and be willing to listen to others. In my experience becoming a leader in the community is usually not an intentional decision. Usually there is a gap and someone decides to "help out" and before you know it she/he becomes the "go to" person for that project and hence the leader.

Q: What kind of changes or improvements would you like to see in our community in the near future?

A: I would like young people to start viewing social work and non-profit work as not just volunteering but as a career. As more Muslim organizations are growing in capacity there is a lack of professionals from our community for these positions. I would love to see fresh ideas and the creativity that our young people can bring to the table to continue the work. Also a lot of the leaders on these Boards in our community are getting older so we really need youth to take up these leadership roles.

**Dujahn is a first-year student at the university of Manitoba. In her free time she enjoys reading and spending time with her family.*



The new development at Bison Run is honouring women who have contributed as volunteers and made significant improvements in the lives of Winnipeggers and Manitobans.

We are pleased to congratulate Sr. Shahina Siddiqui (Islamic Social Services Assoc.) and Sr. Yasmin Ali (Canadian Muslim Women's Institute) to have been selected and have streets named after them.



REPORT

Manitoba Muslim Senior's Association

MIAN HAMEED*

Manitoba Muslim Senior's Association (MMSA) has been in contact with local Manitoba Muslim Seniors during COVID-19 and in 2022 and 2023 in addition to our regular Get-Togethers, and meetings. We have organized the following educational workshops, seminars and classes:

- Mental Health workshops by Dr. Natasha Ali with topics like Mental Health & Aging, Managing Physical Health Concerns, The Evolution of Family Relationship with Aging, Dealing with Loneliness & Isolation, Meaning & Purpose During Retirement & Aging, The Elephant in the Room, Anxiety about Aging.
- Healthy Aging workshops by Nutritionist Nida Ghazanfar with topics on Heart Health, Cholesterol, Triglycerides & Blood pressure, Digestive Health, All Disease Begins in the Gut, Blood Sugar Balance, Diabetes and Beyond, Brain Health Memory, Cognition and Alzheimers, Bone Health, Aches & Pains, Eat for Healthy Skin, Hair, Nail.
- Weekly Seniors Paint Nights classes by Ms. Midhat on learning How to Paint on Canvas.
- Weekly Computer Literacy Classes for seniors and newcomers by Jessi R.

All of these programs were made possible with grants from New Horizons for Seniors.



Seniors Paint Night at Grand Mosque Gym

Elder Abuse in Muslim Community

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It describes elder abuse as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action” in relationships where there is an expectation of trust, causing harm or distress. It is expected the number of abused older adults over age 60 may reach 320 million by 2050 and 1 billion people worldwide will be over 60 or older. Abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological problems for the elderly. Though it seems like not an important issue now it will increase if not addressed now. Many Quranic verses remind us to treat all elders with respect, especially parents. It says do not even say “Uff” to them. There are negative consequences mistreating them in this world and in the hereafter. It is much emphasized by Imams, and Khateeb.

There was a reported case that an elderly couple was left at the door in the middle of summer, with both the husband and wife wrapped in sheets. They were physically abused and kicked out of the family home by one of their children. There was another case an elderly Muslim woman who immigrated to the US over 30 years ago. She was kicked out of her house and treated so badly that she attempted suicide a few times. Also another case of an 80-year-old Muslim woman who could not speak English and who uses a walker was thrown out of her home. In our community, elder abuse means that parents, either a single mother or both parents, are being mistreated by their offsprings. There is a certain level of care that is needed and they are not being provided (that). In extreme cases they are being kicked out of their homes. There have been similar cases in our hometown reported and unreported. Just to mention there was one unreported case where property and money were taken away from the parents. There is a need for action to be taken to educate the youth of our community that such an un-Islamic practice should not take place. We will look into other kinds of abuse for our future programs. The above information has been taken from reliable means. Probably statistics are not available of the abuse in Muslim Community.

Eid Mubarak to All

**Mian Hameed is chair of Muslim Seniors Association. He holds B. Com Hons. Punjab University -1967- and Computer Analyst Herzing College -1977. He has volunteered before for: Manitoba Islamic Association. Association Of Pakistani Canadians and other National and Provincial organizations.*



Healthy Aging
with Nutritionist Nida Ghazanfar

Waverley Grand Mosque
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Jan 21 Heart Health: Cholesterol, Triglycerid
Feb 4 Digestive Health- All disease begins i
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Feb 25 Brain Health-Memory, cognition and
March 4 Bone Health-Aches & pains included
March 18 Eat for healthy skin, hair & nails

Register: miaonline.org/healthy-aging



Mental Health & Wellness for Seniors

Every Saturday, February 11 - March 18
Presented by Dr. Natasha Ali
10 am - 11 am at Waverley Grand Mosque



Seniors Paint

Every Sunday from
January 22 - February 18
Waverley Grand Mosque

Registration required:
miaonline.org/paint

Supplies will
be provided!



Computer Literacy for Seniors and Newcomers

Wednesdays, Feb 15 - March 15
6:00 - 7:30pm
Waverley Grand Mosque

For more info and registration, visit:
miaonline.org/computers

Tablets will be provided on site for practice but if you want to bring your own, please let us know. Light snacks will be provided. Funded by New Horizon Grant.

REPORT

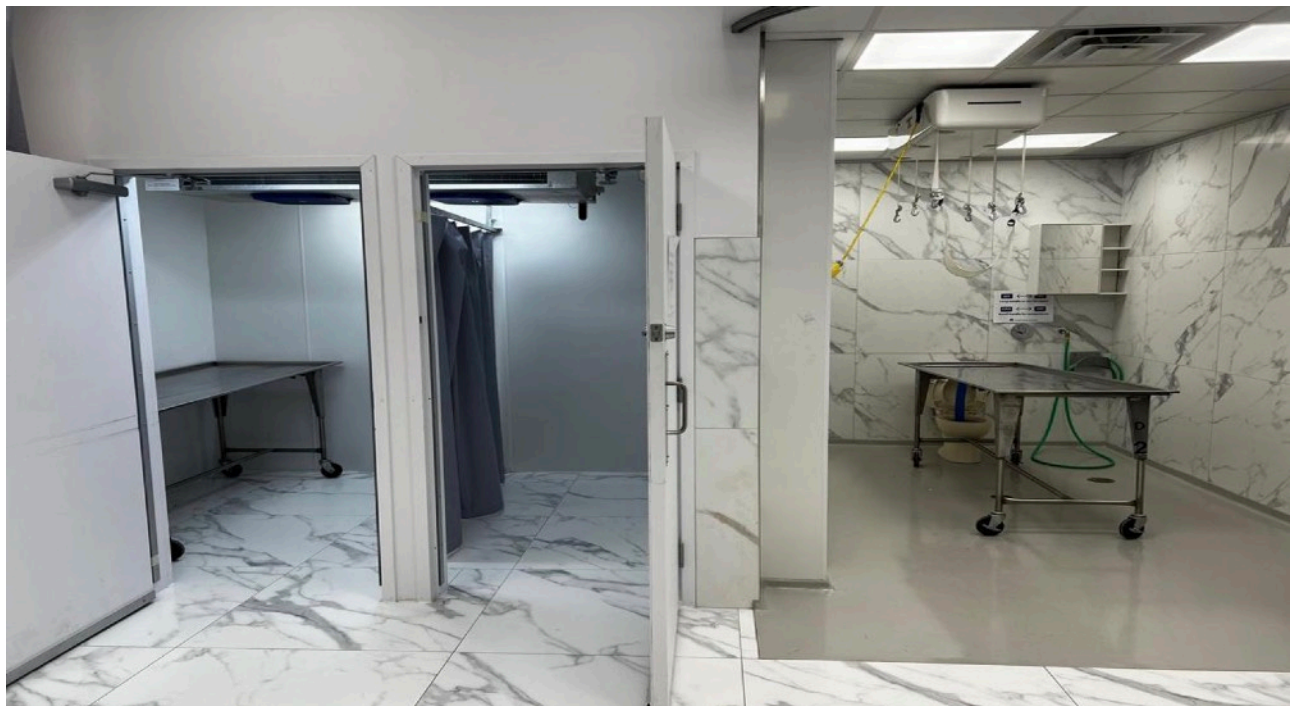
First Muslim Funeral Facility in Manitoba

SITI BIKRAN*



Losing a loved one is never easy. The Manitoba Islamic Association is committed to helping families dealing with the loss of a loved one by facilitating funeral arrangements. The MIA offers the Muslim community comforting and supportive funeral services.

On January 2021, Thanks be to God, Manitoba Islamic Association funeral facility was opened at the Grand Mosque at 2445 Waverley Street. It was and still is a huge success for the Muslim community in Manitoba who supported the idea materially and morally because without the community (Umah) none of this would happen. For the past two years, we had more than a hundred funerals. May Allah (SWT) shower them with mercy and forgiveness and grant them Paradise, Ameen. For 2022, we lost 55 of our beloved brothers and sisters. They were all buried in Winnipeg except for one sister who was sent overseas.



Interior of MIA's funeral facility

There are two cemeteries in Winnipeg that have Islamic sections. One of them is in Transcona at 5150 Dugald Road, owned by the City of Winnipeg, and the other one is a private cemetery, Glen Lawn at 455 Lagimodiere Blvd. While both of them have Islamic sections, the cost is more expensive at Glen Lawn as the price of the land is more expensive.

Passing of a loved one at the hospital: Call MIA Office

Passing of a loved one at home: Call 911/Police

1. Provide the hospital or 911 a consent
2. Provide Vital Statistics info.
3. Transportation to the Mosque
4. Body washing
5. Burial location
6. Funeral prayer (Time & Location)
7. Transportation to the cemetery
8. Payment
9. Declaration of death

Having a funeral facility inside the Grand Mosque allowed us to have a flexible schedule for the indoor services, such as washing, viewing, etc. It also brought down the cost of the funeral services by as much as \$1,000 when compared to any other funeral home in Winnipeg. As Muslims, the idea of having our loved ones being taken care of at the Mosque is comforting.

Contact Us:

Office: 204-256-1347

Mon- Fri, 9:00am- 5:00pm

Mobile/Text: 431-990-0474

Email: community.services@miaonline.org

"Spend (in charity) out of the sustenance that We have bestowed on you before that time when death will come to someone, and he shall say: "O my Lord! If only you would grant me reprieve for a little while, then I would give in charity, and be among the righteous."

The Holy Quran, 63:10



Leave a Legacy

FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

By including MIA Wakf Fund in your will, trust or retirement account, you can pass on your love for the house of Allah SWT to future generations. The funds generated will be invested, and the returns used towards critical community projects.



MIA WAKF FOUNDATION miawakf.com

MIA Wakf Foundation is a CRA registered charity.



Eid-ul-Fitr Mubarak



Remember to plan ahead for Eid-al-Adha. As you celebrate this joyous time with family, friends and neighbours, enjoy it even more knowing you're providing safe food for all.

How?

By getting your meat products from a permitted abattoir or permitted retailer. It's easy. Contact them in advance to place your order and arrange a pick up time. You can also make arrangements in advance if you wish to perform a ritual slaughter to fulfill religious obligations.

Why?

Meat at permitted abattoirs has been processed in a clean and sanitary environment. It has also been inspected to assess food safety and animal welfare standards.



For more information and a list of provincial abattoirs, go to www.manitoba.ca/EID-Food-Safety