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Council on American-Islamic Relations PHILADELPHIA

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Civil Rights Director

Marwa El-Turky

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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends, As Salaamu Alaikum:

On behalf of CAIR-Philadelphia, I would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year!

The last quarter of 2008 was an exciting time for CAIR-Philadelphia. We initiated several programs that will help boost our chapter to greater levels of activity and involvement in the Muslim community. To summarize, CAIR-Philadelphia began an internship program for college students, held our first *Media Breakfast* and offered an *Immigration Information Session* in conjunction with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. In the last days of the year, we began mobilizing the community to address the Gaza tragedy through letter writing and education campaigns. We pray for the victims and for an immediate resolution to this crisis.

Looking ahead, CAIR-Philadelphia has developed a comprehensive plan that will guide our efforts over the course of the next year. With a strategic vision set, we are well positioned to more effectively achieve our mission of enhancing understanding of Islam, encouraging dialogue, protecting civil liberties, empowering American Muslims and building coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

Please read on to find more detailed information on our latest accomplishments and goals.

Sincerely,



Justin L. Peyton

SAVE THE DATE

SPEAKERS

DR. MUNEEB FAREED
IMAM SIRAJ WAHHAJ



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AHMED SOLIMAN
COMEDIAN
DEAN OBEIDALLAH

Location: Springfield Country Club
Address: 400 W. Sproul Road, Springfield, PA
Time: 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm (Reception)
6:30 pm - 10:30 pm (Dinner and Program)

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!!!

This year CAIR-Philadelphia will have exclusive use of the **Springfield Country Club** conveniently located just 40 minutes from Philadelphia, Villanova and Bensalem. With its breathtaking ambience, magnificent ballrooms and beautifully decorated banquet halls, the club will provide an exquisite setting for this special evening.

To **Reserve** your seat, **Purchase** exhibit space or an **Advertisement** in our banquet booklet, please visit our website: <http://pa.cair.com>

To advertise in our next news letter, contact our office at 215-592-0509

PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES

IMMIGRATION DELAY RESOLVED

"I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know how much I appreciate your assistance. The way you followed up on my case and showed interest and enthusiasm is truly commendable. May Allah (swt) reward you with the best."

These are the words of a South Asian Muslim who attained his work permit in October of 2008, after months of delay. CAIR-Philadelphia used its network of immigration resources to find the representation he needed to solve his problem.

ADVOCATING FOR ISLAMIC PROTOCOLS IN STATE PRISON

CAIR-Philadelphia responded to a state prison inmate complaint of a Corrections Officer improperly disposing of his confiscated Qur'an.

Our advocacy resulted in a letter from the Director of Religious support services stating that the Islamic guidelines of disposal will be implemented.

QUARTERLY CASE FLOW:

Open Cases: 61
New Cases: 23
Closed Cases: 5

2008 TOTALS:

Cases Handled: 107
New Cases: 38
Closed Cases: 31

ADVOCATING AGAINST WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

CAIR-Philadelphia advocated on behalf of a Muslim Resident Physician who was terminated from her position in retaliation for filing a discrimination complaint.

Recently, she was reinstated and compensated for her lost wages.



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UPDATE ON PHILADELPHIA POLICE CASE

In September 2008, the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the case of a Muslim police officer whose requests to wear a headscarf in uniform were denied by the Philadelphia Police Department.

CAIR-Philadelphia aided this officer in her struggle for religious accommodation by securing representation and coordinating an amicus brief in support of her appeal. We are currently awaiting a ruling from the Court of Appeals. If it is not in her favor, CAIR-Philadelphia may call on the Muslim community to support this courageous sister.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION SESSION

In November, CAIR-Philadelphia and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) held our first Immigration Information Session at the Foundation for Islamic Education.

Members of the Muslim community came forward with questions and comments regarding specific immigration issues. Insha'Allah we are planning to hold more sessions throughout the year on a quarterly basis.

To address religious discrimination, call CAIR-PA at 215-592-0509

EMPOWERING AMERICAN MUSLIMS

CAIR-PHILADELPHIA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

We at CAIR, are convinced that the best way to secure a better future is to empower young Americans with the skills they need to make a difference. For that reason, in the Fall of 2008, CAIR-Philadelphia launched an internship program. Our interns work with the staff on substantive projects that lay the foundation for a more active and vibrant Muslim community. In addition, interns develop professional skills and gain insight into the societal impact of public service.

Uzma Ahmed (Rosemont College) and Afshan Ali (Temple University) worked diligently on a semester-long project to develop a guidebook and presentation to train interns on how to advocate on behalf of individuals who have experienced religious discrimination. The culmination of their work is currently being used by our civil rights interns. Because of the efforts of Uzma and Afshan, CAIR-Philadelphia now has an increased capacity to handle discrimination complaints.

CAIR-Philadelphia offers tremendous opportunities for students to exercise significant responsibility which demonstrates their value to future employers.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

Civil Rights Intern
Communications Intern
Community Outreach Intern
Government Relations Intern



Uzma Ahmed



Afshan Ali



Visit our "Internship Center" at <http://pa.cair.com>

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

MEDIA BREAKFAST

In December of 2008, CAIR-Philadelphia hosted its *Inaugural Media Breakfast* for a small group of media professionals. The theme of this year's breakfast was Hajj: Islam's Annual Pilgrimage. The event gave chapter staff an opportunity to provide information about CAIR and to give local journalists a presentation explaining the rituals of Hajj.

The outreach efforts initiated during this event represent the first in a series of small steps towards building relationships necessary to facilitate an accurate portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media.

COURSES & PRESENTATIONS

In October and November of 2008, CAIR-Philadelphia also completed our first offering of "Understanding Political Islam" at a church in Delaware County. This eight part course covered the development of political institutions and expressions in Muslim history.

This past fall CAIR-PA representatives also gave a three part introductory presentation on Islam to Middle School students in Bucks County and a church group in Chester County.

DIALOGUE

During the fall of 2008, CAIR-Philadelphia representatives led a group discussion with Villanova University students on Muslims in America, and participated in a four-part seminar entitled "Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Modern World" at a synagogue in Montgomery County.

Courses Offered

- Introduction to Islam
- Understanding Islam in a Modern World: A Comparative Perspective
- Understanding Islam & Muslims Through History and Jurisprudence
- Understanding Political Islam
- Jesus in the Islamic Tradition
- The Path to Forgiveness

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QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES:

Course Taught: 1
Presentations: 2
Discussions: 2

2008 TOTALS:

Course Taught: 5
Presentations: 9
Discussions: 7

To schedule presentations, call CAIR-PA at 215-592-0509

BUILDING COALITIONS

HUMANITARIAN DELEGATION

In November, CAIR-Philadelphia President, Dr. Mazhar Rishi, participated in the North American Medical Delegation follow-up visit to Syria. The purpose of the last visit in May of 2008 was to assess the Iraqi refugee situation.

Some of the 1.5 million Iraqi's that have migrated to Syria explained heart-breaking stories of how the violence has affected their families. The delegation assisted in the distribution of infant formula to refugee mothers who could not breast-feed their children due to malnutrition.

USCIS Community Meetings

CAIR-Philadelphia's Civil Rights Director, Marwa El-Turky, attends quarterly community organization meetings with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). During these meetings, she receives updates on new legislation regarding the U.S. immigration process and she is also able to put forth comments and community concerns to the USCIS.

PHRC Community Meeting

Marwa also participates in monthly meetings of the PA Inter-Agency Task Force on Civil Tension hosted by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC).

We receive summaries of bias-related incidents occurring in Pennsylvania as well as presentations on their organization's objectives, and how they confront hate-crimes and discrimination.

CAIR-Philadelphia continues to share incidents of religious discrimination against Muslims. In a recent meeting, we have brought about issues regarding the response towards Muslims after the release of the *Obsession* film.

MOS/AMLEOA Annual Dinner

CAIR-Philadelphia's Executive Director, Justin Peyton, travelled to Brooklyn, New York to attend the Muslim Officer's Society (MOS) & American Muslim Law Enforcement Officers Association's (AMLEOA) annual family dinner.

Supporting these two organizations was in furtherance of a relationship that began approximately one year ago when AMLEOA agreed to support CAIR-Philadelphia's most high-profile case to date, that of a Muslim police officer struggling to wear a hijab in uniform (see page 2).



To partner with CAIR-PA, call 215-592-0509

VISION & PRIORITIES

CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

STRATEGIC VISION

CAIR-Philadelphia has prioritized the "pillars" of our mission statement to establish a strategic direction for the development of our programs and services over the next couple of years.

Our main effort will be *empowering American Muslims*. An empowered community can integrate into the fabric of American society without losing its Islamic identity and make positive contributions for the benefit of all Americans.

Our first supporting effort will be *protecting civil liberties*. Acts of discrimination and defamation disenfranchise individuals, marginalize communities and prevent full participation in society, thereby reducing the diversity which makes our nation great.

Our second supporting effort will be *enhancing understanding of Islam and encouraging dialogue*. Proactive educational efforts at public and private institutions are the best way to eliminate negative stereotypes and ignorance which lead to acts of discrimination and defamation.

Our third and final supporting effort will be *building coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding* because we realize the Muslim American experience is not unique. We must seek out and work with other groups who face similar challenges as well as fair-minded people who are not swayed by bigotry and hatred.

2009 PRIORITIES

Priority 1 – Establish a *Muslim Youth Leadership Program* that prepares young Muslims to proactively address critical issues facing the Muslim community through enhancing understanding of Islam, community activism, civic engagement and public service.

Priority 2 – Expand delivery of our immigration information sessions, civil rights seminars and workshops in order to educate Muslims on their rights and assist them in resolving problems.

Priority 3 – Open new lines of communication in order to galvanize local Muslims around issues facing our community and enhance positive coverage of Islam in the local news media.

CHAPTER SUPPORT

ABOUT CAIR

CAIR-Philadelphia is a non-profit (c)(3), grassroots civil rights and advocacy group. CAIR is America's largest Islamic civil liberties group, with regional offices nationwide and in Canada. The national headquarters is located on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.

WHY SUPPORT CAIR-PHILADELPHIA?

Since our establishment in 2004, CAIR-Philadelphia has worked to empower the American Muslim community at the local level and encourage our participation in political and social activism. CAIR-Philadelphia also seeks to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims in America through media relations, advocacy and education.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT CAIR-PHILADELPHIA?

Your financial support is invaluable in helping CAIR-Philadelphia continue our operations in service of the Muslim community. You can donate through PayPal on our website, send a donation via check for any amount or send us a voided check so that we can deduct the funds directly from your bank account on a monthly basis. We ask Allah (SWT) to accept your charity and multiply your rewards.

DONATION METHODS

1. PayPal
2. Check
3. Automatic Deduction

BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING CAIR-PHILADELPHIA

Contributions to CAIR-Philadelphia are tax-deductible and Zakat-eligible. Our Tax ID number is 542174614. In addition, numerous Muslim scholars have confirmed that Zakat is payable to organizations that exist to serve the Muslim community by protecting their rights. This is because the work done by CAIR (and other such organizations) can be classified as *fi-sabilillah*, which is one of the eight categories of Zakat recipients detailed in the Qur'an (Chapter 9, Verse 60). For more information go to :

<http://www.cair.com/Zakat.aspx>

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