



Ramadan Greetings
to you and your family!

From the President

Assalam Alaikum,

On behalf of the entire CAIR Board and Staff, I wish to offer the best wishes to our community for arrival of the holy month of Ramadan. We hope and pray that all of our fasting, charity, and prayers are rewarded by Allah.



Our CAIR Chapter continues its advocacy at the State and National levels. In April CAIR was part of Muslim Capital Day in Harrisburg, PA. CAIR and other Muslim organizations, advocated for mainstream issues, most specifically the criminal justice system; where “justice” and “equity” are substantial challenges for minority communities. In early May, CAIR held the annual National Council Meeting (NCM) at the Diyanet Center in Maryland. This Turkish Cultural Center is impressive in its scope of a 16th century replica Osmania Masjid, Cultural Center, Recreational Center, and Residential facilities for visitors and scholars. It is a special “destination” that I would recommend to all visiting our nations’ capitol.

The NCM brings all 34 CAIR chapters together, for a weekend of networking, learning, sharing, and planning for our shared challenges. This was followed by a day of advocacy at Capitol Hill; where we joined US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO) for discussions on and awareness of issues important to Muslim, with US Representatives and Senators. This is an experience that all of us should participate in, and we encourage volunteers to join us at the next opportunity. Our community needs to be increasingly brave in the face of manufactured bigotry, and stand firm on our civilized principles, and take our rightful place alongside all other citizens.

Enabled by generous donations from our Community, we continue to handle requests for legal assistance this year, with a record number of cases. These cases range from workplace bullying and discrimination, excessive enforcement at schools, neighborhood and playground harassment, Police harassment, to speculative harassment by Investigation agencies. We believe in upholding the rights of marginalized people, and are encouraged by your support and participation in this effort.

By the grace of Allah, CAIR continues to advocate for the civil rights of Muslims, counter Islamophobia, promote dialogue and understanding between Muslims and other faiths, and improve the relations of our minority community with mainstream America. The support from our Pittsburgh Community is precious and held in high regard by all of us at the CAIR Pittsburgh Board. Wassalam

Safdar Khwaja
President, CAIR Pittsburgh Chapter

Executive Council

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Zohra Lasania

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file a civil rights complaint,
reach us at:
cair.pittsburgh@gmail.com
Phone: 412 606 3601**

Mail your donations to :

**CAIR PA Pittsburgh Chapter
801 Negley Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206**

**Your donations are
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Round-up



Assalam Alaikum

Greetings to you and your family. Ramadan Mubarak in advance.

As we welcome another blessed month of Ramadan, CAIR-Pittsburgh is continuing our relentless work to stay vigilant in defending community members when they go through civil rights violations. Just like the rest of the nation, our city of Pittsburgh too has seen a spike in hate incidents since 2017. Trump continues to threaten the civil and human rights of the American Muslim community. His three Muslim Ban executive Orders, not only threaten Muslims entering America, but also impact American Muslims. The ban has emboldened Islamophobes to openly engage in anti-Muslim speech, discrimination, and even crimes, whether on social media or in person, targeting anyone they perceive to be immigrants or Muslims.

One such incident recently shook our community into action, when a security firm dealing with North Allegheny School District posted anti-Muslim and racist remarks on social media. Concerned parents, both Muslims and our neighbors of other faiths, approached the school district which resulted in termination of the security firm's contract. Our board member Ishfaq Ahmad represented CAIR and the Muslim community's concerns during the meetings, and played a key role.

This incident and others have made very clear the reality we face today, where our religious freedoms, provided in the First Amendment, are under threat.

There have been in-person incidents where hate comments were hurled at innocent children playing on the playground. The children were shaken up by the incident. Imagine how intimidating it would be to have someone screaming at you, "Go back to your country." Our youth are facing many such challenges to their Muslim identity.

We have also received reports on police misconduct, targeting Muslims specifically with the aim to harass and make families uncomfortable in their neighborhoods. Most of you may not have faced such incidents, but there are many Muslims across our city, state, and country who are facing such harassment, something that could happen to any of us.

Keeping this in mind, our board member, Ishfaq Ahmad, recently organized a fun Know Your Rights Jeopardy Game in major mosques in town: the MCCGP, MAP, Attawheed, and with the MSA Pitt group. In addition, we also organized a Media Training, which helped community members increase their ability to communicate effectively with media and with their neighbors.

Recently we screened "Out of Cordoba" a documentary film that depicts medieval Muslim Spain and Muslim-Christian-Jewish co-existence. This film was produced by Jacob Bender, the executive direc-

tor of CAIR-Philadelphia.

In the past one year, our chapter organized the following events for our community:

- Series of 5 Know Your Rights events at MCCGP, ICP, MAP, Attawheed and Inidana, PA
- Challenging Islamophobia workshop - 1 event
- Islamic cultural display at Obama International School - 2 events
- Panel talks with JVP co-sponsor - 3 locations
- Talks on Islamophobia and Islam at CCAC - 3 campuses
- Bystander Intervention training - 1
- Interfaith Iftar - 1
- Know Your Rights Jeopardy Game - 4 locations
- Media Training - 1
- Film Screening - Out of Cordoba - 1
- Media talks and newspaper articles.

CAIR National recently came out with the 2018 civil rights report



entitled, "Targeted." You can visit www.islamophobia.org to access the copy. This report is clear proof of a direct relation between the election of Donald Trump and the unprecedented spike in anti-Muslim and anti-minority hate incidents around the country.

Islam and Muslims have been part of America from the beginning and we are as American as anyone else in this country. We will never accept being treated as second class citizens or as outsiders. CAIR will not rest in defending the rights of American Muslims, until the day when Muslims feel safe in this country.

On page 4 you will find "Ramadan Know Your Rights". These materials are designed to help you and your family maintain your rights as American Muslims whether at work or in school.

Once again we wish everyone a blessed Ramadan. Please do not hesitate to call CAIR-Pittsburgh to report if you are the target of a hate incident, or if you witness a hate incident. Apart from defending your rights, our task is also to document incidents. This helps us determine where the greatest challenges are and where to target resources to serve you and your family better. We pray that Allah keeps you all safe and blesses you with a Ramadan that is peaceful and renews your strength. Jazakallahu Khairan

Sincerely, Zohra Lasania

Communications Coordinator

Events

Film Screening, "Out of Cordoba" at Carnegie Mellon University



On April 14, 2018 CAIR Pittsburgh organized a movie screening of "Out of Cordoba." Executive Director of CAIR Philadelphia and producer/director of the documentary, Jacob Bender, facilitated an interactive group discussion after the movie screening. More than 30 people attended the event, the movie depicted Jewish, Muslim, and Christian co-existence.

Media Training

March 10, 2018 @ ICP



Know Your Rights Jeopardy Game



Held at MAP mosque

With MSA



Community Advisory:

Religious Accommodation: at Work or School during Ramadan

In preparation for the upcoming holy month of Ramadan students and working people must understand their legal rights in the workplace and school.

Please WATCH: “Know Your Rights: Religious Accommodations at Work and in School”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ6zD2vdu2M>

Helpful tips to remember when asking for a Religious Accommodation from your Employer:

- * Familiarize yourself with your employer’s procedures for requesting religious accommodations;
- * Make it clear that you are requesting the accommodation because of your sincere religious belief or practice;
- * Make the formal request to your direct supervisor or to the person designated by company policy;
- * Follow up your formal request in writing; and
- * Parents are encouraged to contact their children’s schools and teachers in advance to request religious accommodations for their children during Ramadan. Continue the conversation with your employer.

Accommodation requests can include being excused from strenuous physical activity and a day off for upcoming Eid religious holiday.

For assistance requesting a religious accommodation, community members are encouraged to contact CAIR Pittsburgh by calling 412-606-3601.

CAIR National also launched an app to share critical “know your rights” information and to simplify the process to report hate crimes and bias incidents. CAIR is urging American Muslims and members of other minority groups to download the app and utilize this resource to stay informed and empowered.

You can download CAIR’s civil rights app here: <http://www.cair.com/app>

CAIR FAMILY



Recently National Council Meeting took place in Washington DC, which is an annual meeting of CAIR chapters nationwide. Safdar Khwaja and Ishfaq Ahmad from CAIR Pittsburgh participated in the National Council Meeting.



In April 2018, 30 representatives of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), attended the inauguration of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama during a civil rights tour.

March was Women's History Month, and March 27th was Muslim Women's Day. CAIR honors its women staff and board members on this occasion.

In Jan 2018, CAIR chapters attended a leadership training for staff at the beautiful Diyanet Center in Washington DC. Zohra Lasania from Pittsburgh Chapter attended the training.



A Lady with exemplary grit and determination

By: Zohra Lasania

March was Women's History Month. Throughout history, women have been progressive visionaries, including heads of state as well as scholars, business women, nurses, and others working hard building strong and healthy societies.

I also thought about millions of American Muslim women who are physicians, artists, published authors, athletes, community volunteers, scientists, astronauts, elected officials, students, and women who dedicate their time raising wonderful families across

America.

An entire book would not suffice to write the stories of their lives, contributions, challenges, triumphs, hopes and dreams.

But today I want to remember and honor one special lady from Pittsburgh who was unique and who deserves mention before anyone else, as her life was exceptional.

Kausar Waheed was 71 when she passed away nearly two years ago, in 2016. Her memory lives on in our city, as her last days were extraordinary.

I had known Kausar Waheed, since 2003. A U.S. citizen, registered voter, a proud American and practicing Muslim, she lived in Allison Park, Pittsburgh with her husband, a retired biochemist, and their two sons.

She owned and operated a travel agency. One unfortunate day in 2005, she went into the hospital for a surgery which led to complications, and she came out of the hospital in a wheel chair, her legs amputated from the knees down as were eight of her finger tips. We were shocked and devastated to see her in this state. It must have been even harder for her and her family.

Her life changed overnight. We prayed for her, lent her emotional and moral support, and her family



was by her side. We saw on her face, hope and courage to accept the reality with patience. When her wounds healed, she practiced walking with artificial legs and crutches.

The amputation became a challenge for her. She was eventually able to walk with slow steps in her prosthetics. At home she utilized her time, connecting to the outside world through her computer. We often met her at community gatherings where she came with her supportive husband by her side. It was encouraging to see normalcy return to her life. She often called

me, and I was always glad to hear her voice.

Somewhere deep within her was the burning thought that God must have kept her alive for a reason, and she was determined to find that reason. She knew the direction she must take.

Thankful for being alive, soon she founded an organization called, 'SKW Life for Limb Loss,' a non-profit International organization to serve amputees like her. The organization would pay for prosthetics for those who could not afford them. Thus began a short but meaningful journey in her life where she began reaching out to other amputees, to tend to their needs. She knew she had a calling.

She organized annual fundraising dinners with the help of friends and family and reached out to help the handicapped. She toured Pakistan, and Jordan with her husband and donated prosthetics for amputees there.

She met youth and children who were disabled. She personally went to meet those who were suffering, despite her own handicap. She was amazing in her grit and determination. I listened intently as she would often call me and relate to me of her vision to help others. It was amazing to see her so actively involved in the life of others who were less fortunate than her. She identified with them.

Contd next page

Her daughter-in-law Amina Waheed said, “She had the target of helping 200 patients with free prosthetics and she had reached that goal.” It was like she had a mission to accomplish.

Amina also said, “She organized medical camps in Pakistan and distributed Ramadan groceries to poor families. It was her ardent wish to build a school and rehab center for educating amputee children in Pakistan so that they could grow up to be self-sufficient. But she did not have enough time to implement it, so now the income from her productive agricultural property will be used towards fulfilling her wish.” She also added, that funds in Pittsburgh are presently being used for donating towards research work at Shriners Hospital for Children in Erie, PA.

Within that short span of time Kausar also penned her memoir, “Beyond my Imagination: Living Tragedy with Tolerance and Patience.” This book is a biographical account of her unfortunate encounter with medical negligence which changed her life completely. The book is dedicated to people who have suffered like herself and to medical institutions to make them aware and prevent similar tragedies.

I remember I was in India for 3 years to spend

time with my aged parents during 2013- ‘14 & ’15. Kausar called me during those years, enquiring about the plight of poor people in India. She donated for the orphanages in India and asked me to distribute Ramadan grocery in the slums on behalf of her organization. She asked me to organize a medical camp for which she said she would fund it. When I returned to the U.S. in 2016, she told me she was going to Pakistan for a short period and planned to meet me after her return. Upon her return she fell ill and suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. It happened all so sudden.

The shocking news left a regret in my heart that I did not get an opportunity to see her before she passed away. It was a sad day in my life to attend her funeral. She left a void in the community, but her calm and peaceful face told me she can now rest in peace and is ready to meet the Almighty Lord after serving humanity on Earth with total grit and determination.

This Muslim Women’s Day I salute this strong and courageous sister from our community. She was a woman like any other, yet she was a woman like no other.

Up-coming event

Save the Date: Sept 29, 2018
CAIR Pittsburgh Banquet at
Marriott City Center

Stay tuned for more info

ABOUT CAIR

CAIR is America’s largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

La misión de CAIR es proteger las libertades civiles, mejorar la comprensión del Islam, promover la justicia, y empoderar a los musulmanes en los Estados Unidos.

Community News

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