

INSIDE:

Protecting Civil Liberties	2
Empowering American Muslims	2
Enhance Understanding of Islam	3
Building Coalitions	3
Community Corner	4
Chapter Support	4

**Council on American-Islamic Relations
PHILADELPHIA**

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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends, As Salaamu Alaikum:

Alhamdulillah, CAIR-Philadelphia has gotten off to an excellent start in 2009. So far this year we have begun developing our Muslim Youth Leadership Program with the guidance of our sister chapters, resumed offering our "Know Your Rights" presentations, and initiated outreach efforts to various local Muslim organizations.

In April, we capped off these early accomplishments by successfully hosting our 3rd Annual Banquet at the Springfield Country Club. It was absolutely inspiring to see over 600 people attend our largest annual event and contribute \$73,000 in donations and pledges. These contributions put us firmly on track to reach our annual fundraising goal of \$100,000. I would like to thank those of you who came out to celebrate CAIR-Philadelphia's work and I hope that those of you who were unable to attend consider joining us next year.

With this new infusion of motivation and resources, CAIR-Philadelphia Staff and Executive Committee members will press our noses even closer to the grindstone in an effort to shape the issues and conditions which affect the Muslim community.

Sincerely,



Justin L. Peyton

SPECIAL FEATURE: POLICE vs. HIJAB

Since September 2007 CAIR-Philadelphia has been assisting a Philadelphia police officer in her struggle to obtain a religious accommodation to wear a headscarf while in uniform. In April we learned the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals denied her appeal, thus allowing the police department to continue prohibiting her from adhering to her faith. Undaunted by this setback to the integration of Muslims into all spheres of American society, the officer is considering an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the meantime however, CAIR-Philadelphia will not rely solely on the judicial system to protect our rights. Instead, we will be formulating an advocacy campaign to petition elected officials, if necessary, to have the police department incorporate religious accommodations into its uniform policy. But we need your help in persuading Philadelphia to recognize and respect the diversity of its citizens by allowing public safety officers to adhere to their faith.

Success will only come through collective action so we at CAIR-Philadelphia ask that in the coming months, each one of you take it upon yourself to respond to our calls to sign petition letters, send emails, and make phone calls to the mayor and city councilpersons of Philadelphia.

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

PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES

CITIZENSHIP DELAY RESOLVED

In January a South Asian female received her citizenship, two years after passing her interview. CAIR-PA facilitated this resolution by using our network of immigration resources and helping her contact her congressional representatives. This is what she had to say:

"I wanted to thank the CAIR organization for your help and support in my citizenship delay. I am so happy and relieved the fight is finally over. You have been a great help and I commend the CAIR organization for all the good work they do."

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION SESSION

In February, CAIR-PA held our second Immigration Information Session in partnership with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Philadelphia Arab American Community Development Corps at Al-Aqsa Islamic Society. Two immigration officers and a community outreach specialist were on site to present on the U.S. immigration process and meet one-on-one to answer questions from the 100+ attendees.



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COURSES OFFERED:

"Know Your Rights"

COMING SOON:

"Spotlight on Law Enforcement"

QUARTERLY CASE FLOW:

Open Cases: 58

New Cases: 18

Closed Cases: 19

ADVOCATING AGAINST WRONGFUL TERMINATIONS

In March a Hispanic female satisfactorily resolved a complaint against her former employer regarding allegations that she was wrongfully terminated after a series of incidents in which she was improperly disciplined for actions employees of other faiths were not disciplined.

CAIR-Philadelphia had been assisting this woman since March 2008, by sending her employer an advocacy letter and supporting her through the PA Human Relations Commission complaint process.

"KNOW YOUR RIGHTS" PRESENTATIONS

This year CAIR-PA resumed offering "Know Your Rights" presentations which provide information on individual's rights in common situations such as work, school or when contacted by law enforcement. Our first session was held in March at the Foundation for Islamic Education and our second in April at Masjid Al-Jamia. Both saw a large turn-out where attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and file complaints.

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

EMPOWERING AMERICAN MUSLIMS

GAZA CAMPAIGN

In January of 2009 CAIR-Philadelphia participated in a nationwide campaign to protest Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Locally, we collected 995 signed letters at mosques throughout the Delaware Valley for presentations to members of Congress by our National Legislative Director. CAIR-Philadelphia also co-sponsored the "Let Gaza Live" National March on Washington and helped organize 5 busloads of Philadelphians to make the trip to DC.

CAIR-PHILADELPHIA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In the first quarter of 2009, CAIR-Philadelphia continued to develop its internship program. Afshan Ali of Temple University returned for a second semester and served as a Civil Rights intern. Under the supervision of Civil Rights Director, Afshan directly handled complaints by interviewing those who experienced discrimination, analyzed case facts and drafted advocacy letters.

Also joining us this semester as a Civil Rights Intern is Kylie Smith of Cecil College in northeast Maryland. Kylie is very passionate about civil rights and is a huge advocate of grassroots organizations. Kylie is undertaking a research project entitled "Marginalized Minorities in 20th Century America," which seeks to draw lessons for contemporary Muslims from the historical treatment of other minority groups.

Our third intern is Tylar Kelly, a student at Rustin High School in West Chester. Tylar has a passion for interfaith activities and is interested in learning more about Islam. His main project is video recording our 10-part Understanding Islam through History and Jurisprudence in preparation for wider dissemination via the internet and other media.



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

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

INTERFAITH TRAINING

In January of 2009, a small entourage of CAIR-Philadelphia staff and volunteers travelled to Pittsburgh to conduct an intensive two-day instructor's Training for presenting the 10-part course "*Understanding Islam and Muslims through History and Jurisprudence*". About eight volunteers from our newly formed Pittsburgh office learned how to teach this course to groups in Western PA.



COURSES & PRESENTATIONS

From January through March, CAIR-Philadelphia taught its highly popular Course "*Understanding Islam and Muslims through History and Jurisprudence*" at two churches in West Chester, PA.

During March 2009, CAIR-Philadelphia Executive Committee members gave several presentations across the Greater Philadelphia area. Among them were "Women of the Muslim Faith" at a church in West Chester, "The View of the Other and the Reality of Violence" at Drew University in New Jersey, "Jesus in the Islamic Tradition" at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and "The View of the Other in Qur'anic Text" at Holy Family University in Philadelphia.

DIALOGUE

In February, Central PA public television station WITF aired Faith, Politics and Society: Muslims in America, featuring a panelist from the CAIR-Central PA office. In March, CAIR-Philadelphia participated in a group discussion with Villanova University faculty on teaching Islamic source text titled "Tools in the Islamic Jurisprudence Toolbox."

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

QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES:

Courses Taught: 2
Presentations: 4
Discussions: 1

To schedule presentations, call 215-592-0509

BUILDING COALITIONS

MOSQUE OUTREACH

In February and March our Executive Director met with the Imams of (3) inner-city Philadelphia mosques in order to offer our services to members of their respective communities, learn of any community issues that CAIR might be able to address and establish mutually beneficial working relationships. All were open to working in partnership with CAIR-Philadelphia and we look forward to collaborating with them on future projects.

MUSLIM STUDENT OUTREACH

In February our Executive Director attended the meeting of a local high school Muslim club where, he gave a half hour presentation on CAIR and the work we do for the community, fielded questions, and then participated in club activities. The Executive Director also attended an MSA dinner at the University of Pennsylvania in February, in which he had the opportunity to meet members of various local MSA's, speak about CAIR and what we do and begin establishing mutually beneficial working relationships.



USCIS COMMUNITY MEETINGS

CAIR-PA's Civil Rights Director attends quarterly Community Organization Meetings with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to discuss immigration issues and exchange ideas on how to better assist individuals through the immigration process. During the most recent meeting in February, CAIR-PA was able to announce and advertise our Immigration Information Session.

PHRC COMMUNITY MEETINGS

CAIR-PA's Civil Rights Director also participates in monthly meetings of the PA Inter-Agency Task Force on Civil Tension hosted by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, during which we receive monthly summaries of bias-related incidents in PA. CAIR-PA has the opportunity to share incidents of religious discrimination against Muslims and most recently shared a March incident in which two students in Pittsburgh were sent home from school for wearing the Palestinian Keffiyah (scarf).



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

IMAM’S ROUNDTABLE: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



What is Community? Community is being self sufficient and not having to go outside of the community for anything. What is Empowerment? Empowerment is education and economics. In order to have Community Empowerment, you must first establish four influences in the environment. The first of those influences is the supernatural influence, meaning to call the people back to G-d to get them praying, worshipping and asking G-d for what they need. The second influence is the educational influence, meaning teaching the people the basic knowledge of how to read and write so that they’re educated and can worship properly. The third influence is the economic influence, so that people have jobs, money, businesses, schools and good housing situations. And the fourth influence is the political influence, so that you elect people that can guard your interest so that you are able to pray, able to learn, able to have jobs, business, schools and good housing situations. Once you have these things people are going to try to take them from you unless you have someone who can guard your interest. And G-d says that once you establish these four influences that you have given life to the dead, in other words you have empowered the community.

Imam Suetwedien Muhammad
 Amir & Resident Imam
 Masjid Muhammad of Philadelphia.

YOUTH BEAT: COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

But when the children among you come of age, let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age): Thus does Allah make clear His Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. 24:59

The Qur’an gives children the opportunity to reach out and question the world because Allah (SWT) knows that children are the most influential at a young age. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and without encouraging the youth to be active in society, our beautiful religion will begin to fall apart.

There are many organizations that encourage the youth to take part in their community. Organizations like CAIR, MSA, ICNA, ISNA, YM, and MCNA hold events and projects that are dedicated to spreading knowledge of Islam and encouraging the youth to learn more about their Deen. If we do not support our children to engage in active roles in their communities, we will lack one of the most basic principles of Islam: unity. Studies show that encouraging children at an early age to be active in their communities, whether through sports or community service, helps them achieve better friendships and success in their future. Why would we not want the best for our children, whether it is in this life or the afterlife?

Afshan Ali, Temple Univ. Sophomore

ABOUT CAIR

CAIR-Philadelphia is a non-profit 501(c)(3), grassroots civil rights and advocacy group. CAIR is America's largest Muslim 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 send us a one-time donation via check/money order, donate via credit card on our website, or establish monthly automatic deductions from your bank account by sending us a voided check. We ask Allah (SWT) to accept your charity and multiply your rewards.

DONATION METHODS

1. Check/Money Order
2. Credit Card
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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