

## American Muslim Women's Association

### AMWA Honored by MLK

By Doris Dalton

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In 1962, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa and spoke at their chapel gathering. In his inspiring speech, he said, "I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they don't communicate with each other, and they don't communicate with each other because they are separated from each other."

The process of breaking down barriers through the power of nonviolent transformation is one of the primary values of the Westchester Martin Luther King, Jr. Institute for Nonviolence--as it is for AMWA. Since MLK Institute's founding in 1988, we have worked to build strong communities that are safe for everyone to become their whole selves and reach their full potential. Some of our successes include creating dialogues for police and young people to engage in understanding, an annual youth conference to teach youth about using alternatives to violence, and building a library and educational resources dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement, nonviolence and peacemaking. We believe strong communities also need celebration, so we host an annual dinner to recognize local individuals and organizations who are community Champions in are-

as of nonviolence, peacemaking and civil rights. May 11, 2017, we honored the **American Muslim Women's Association** as **Champions of Building Interfaith Bridges**. After the national tragedy on September 11, 2001, many people responded by targeting Muslims. We are thankful that local Muslim women came together to combat fear and hate with open love. AMWA's persistent and welcoming work building interfaith bridges has made an incredible difference to the MLK Institute, to Westchester County and beyond. We believe AMWA deserved this recognition as a Champion for their persistent work in building interfaith bridges through education, trainings, relationship-building and advocacy for community needs. We have seen AMWA show up for important community rallies and marches, lead us in inspiring interfaith dialogues and extend invitations to join them in important religious celebrations. AMWA's important work has changed the course of our community conversation. The MLK Institute for Nonviolence looks forward to discovering more ways we can partner with AMWA in building future interfaith bridges. We hope that more AMWA members will get to know us, because together we can transform our communities to become safe places for all of our neighbors.



## 2017 AMWA Programs

March 26, 2017  
**Ladies Brunch**  
Neha Palace  
1-4 pm

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April 30, 2017  
**Ladies Self-Defense 2nd Session**  
UWMS  
2-5 pm

.....  
June 7, 2017  
**Iftar/Dinner; Ramadan Experiences at Masjid**  
WMC  
7:30-9 pm

.....  
June 15, 2017  
**Serving dinner at Women Shelter**  
White Plains

.....  
June 28, 2017  
**Annual Summer Inter-faith Luncheon**  
"Love thy neighbor... Which neighbor must I love: Teaching from scripture"  
MUMC  
11:30-1:30 pm

.....  
October 4, 2017  
**Women's Education Program**  
YWCA  
11:3-1:30

.....  
November 12, 2017  
**AMWA's Anniversary Dinner/Play**  
Nawab Restaurant  
5-7pm

.....  
December 12, 2017  
**Daisy Khan Book Launch**  
**Wise-up**  
Grinton I. Will Branch,  
Yonkers Library  
6-9 pm

## AMWA's Summer Luncheon

By Tabassum Ilahi

AMWA's annual interfaith lunch took place on June 28, 2017 at Memorial United Methodist Church in White Plains, NY which was a new venue for this event. Interestingly enough AMWA's genesis took place at this church 16 years ago. The venue was spacious, airy and full of light. Upon entering the premises the guests were treated to the aroma of the delicious lunch, beautiful and vibrant colors of handicrafts and ethnic clothes/accessories for sale and last but not least warm greetings from the ladies of AMWA. The festivities started with an introduction from Fozia Khan, President of AMWA, who welcomed the crowd. She gave a brief history of AMWA for the benefit of the new guests and went through the agenda for the afternoon. Traditionally the AMWA interfaith lunch takes place on the first Wednesday of June. However, due to Ramadan the date was changed to the last Wednesday of June. The new practice will continue for the next two years after which it will revert to the first Wednesday in June. The three speakers were Rabbi Fredda Cohen, Chaplain, White Plains Hospital, Reverend Carole Johanssen, Chaplain at Phelps Memorial Hospital and Dr. Mahjabeen Hassan, Chairperson of AMWA. The topic for discussion was "Love thy neighbor.....Which neighbor must I love....."

Rabbi Cohen started by giving the Jewish perspective of the topic for discussion. According to the Torah to take care of one's neighbors is the crux of the faith and theologically central. "Which neighbor must I love" means all people as Judaism considers all humans are created by God and are to be treated well. Leviticus defines neighbor as the stranger, the vulnerable, the oppressed, etc. Furthermore, there is no difference between Jews and non Jews as all of mankind is included. Rabbi Cohen stated that according to later Jewish interpretation:

1. Neighbors should not be mistreated,
2. Neighbors should be loved,

3. One should rejoice at the success of neighbors,
4. Neighbors' emotional needs should be met (empathy),
5. One should pray for neighbors,
6. Sick and elderly neighbors should be visited
7. One should provide for neighbors' physical needs and also help them reach their potential.

Rev. Johanssen, giving the Christian perspective, started by stating that the Good Samaritan is the answer to the question who is my neighbor. She briefly narrated the story of the Good Samaritan. Therefore, any man or woman in need of mercy is a neighbor. Showing mercy to the needy is the heart of the teachings of Jesus. Neighbor does not have to be one of us. One should will good for another no matter whom. We may have our prejudices but have to overcome them. Rev. Johanssen



concluded with a prayer for the human family. Lastly, Dr. Hassan gave a power point presentation illustrating the topic of discussion from the Islamic point of view. She talked about the Quranic teachings regarding neighbors, Hadiths (apart from the Quran this is a source of guidance for Muslims as it refers to the sayings and practices of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)) on this topic and her childhood experiences. According to the Quran, Muslims are required to do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors near and neighbors who are strangers (not related) who must be protected and their rights respected. The Hadiths refer to the rights of neighbors. Examples include:

(Continue from page 3)



## WISE UP Yonkers Town Hall-Combating Terrorism through Knowledge and Peace

By: Maria Abdullah

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the American Muslim Women's Association hosted a town hall at the Yonkers Will Library, in partnership with Executive Director of the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality, Daisy Khan. Daisy introduced her new movement, WISE UP--Knowledge Ends Extremism, to the Westchester and Bronx community in this impactful event. WISE UP is a multi-faceted campaign to end extremism and terror through scholarly knowledge, mass collaboration, and educational teach-



ings of the truth about Islam. It also focuses on counteracting the acts of terrorist organizations such as ISIS and outlines the recruitment methods being used by them along with how to battle such hateful acts through human intelligence and research. The main initiative for WISE UP is to unite communities in spreading awareness through its 365-page tool kit that breaks down extremist ideology and combats its false pretenses through evidence based research. With collaboration of over 60 world-renowned contributors, WISE UP proves the facts and addresses criti-

(Continue from page 2)

1. If a neighbor is ill, pay him/her a visit,
2. If something bad happens to a neighbor, console him/her,
3. If a neighbor asks for help do so,
4. When purchasing food, send some as a gift for your neighbor and
5. If your neighbor can smell your cooking send some over.

According to the Hadiths, Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) stated that no person

cal issues in today's society with regards to ending extremism. The town hall evening was comprised of several speakers who spoke about the teachings of Islamic peace and stood up against the heinous acts of terror in our world today. A highlight of the evening included remarks from key notable public officials who recognized the importance of this work. County Executive George Latimer, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly member Shelley Mayer and Chair of the Board of the Westchester County Board of legislators, Michael Kaplowitz, graced the audience with their presence and support for the cause. The town hall speeches were concluded by an inspirational video depicting the contributions of Muslims in society and sending a memorable reminder that terrorism does not define an entire religion or community. As a closing touch to the evening, guests got a taste of charitable ice cream from the Adirondack Creamery, with owner Paul Nasrani who served his unique creation, the Syrian Date and Walnut flavored ice cream, which was delicious and heartfelt. A vast portion of the proceeds made from the ice cream sales in stores, are donated towards helping Syrian refugees. The ice cream cover and container basically sums up the message for the evening with "Peace" written in different languages and with its impressionably printed statement as a reminder to us all, "We are all immigrants".

is of faith unless he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself. He also said that one who sleeps know his neighbor is hungry does not believe in me. Finally, Dr. Hassan fondly recalled memories from her childhood when her neighbors would cook delicious meals and would send some to her family. These three presentations were followed by an animated question and answer session. It was a most enjoyable and informative afternoon.

## AMWA Supported events

January 8, 2017  
**MLK Annual Concert**  
Kol-Ami

.....  
January 11, 2017  
**Stories of Escape  
And Resettlement**  
Congregation Sons of Israel

.....  
January 22, 2017  
**Tastes of Freedom  
Luncheon, honoring  
legacy of MLK Jr**  
"Muslim living in America  
and what are some key ways  
Non-Muslims can help in  
realizing America's Promise  
of equality for all?"

.....  
January 22, 2017  
**Workshop Session for  
Community Organizations  
and Faith Groups**  
Hosted by the Dominican  
Sisters of Hope

.....  
February 1, 2017  
**Travel Unity**  
Dr. Hassan  
.....  
February 22, 2017  
**Purchase College**  
Dr. Hassan

.....  
May 1, 2017  
**Islam 101**  
Fozia K, Nasreen Hussain  
Ayesha Khan  
Connelly Center, NYC

.....  
May 8, 2017  
**Islam 101**  
Fozia Khan,  
Farzana Habib Levy,  
Yolanda Idrees  
Mead School, Ct

.....  
May 11, 2017  
**MLK Celebration of  
Champions Awards  
Dinner & Benefit**  
Community Unitarian  
Universalist Church

## AMWA Supported events

August 10, 2017  
**KICKOFF Breakfast**  
Westchester Marriott

.....  
September 5, 2017  
**Women of Faith**  
Dr. Hassan  
Presbyterian Church

.....  
September 24, 2017  
**Alzheimer Walk**  
SUNY Purchase

.....  
October 3, 2017  
**Story of Hagar**  
**Islamic Perspective**  
Shahida Qadir

.....  
October 7, 2017  
**National Women's**  
**Conference**  
Washington DC

.....  
October 15, 2017  
**ACS walk**  
Manhattanville College

.....  
October 23, 2017  
**White Plains Interfaith**  
**Women 's Council**  
Fall Luncheon

.....  
October 26, 2017  
**Scarsdale/Hartsdale Women**  
**Interfaith Council**  
Fall Luncheon

.....  
October 27, 2017  
**Teacher Workshop**  
LICSS  
Sakina Collins  
Nasreen Hussain,  
Ayesha khan, Fozia K,  
Barbara Petzen

.....  
November 9, 2017  
**Islam ,Women in Islam**  
Dr. Hassan

.....  
November 19-21, 2017  
**Project S.H.A.R.E**  
Food Preparation

## **The First American Muslim Women's Conference**

*By Karima Djennane*

On October 7th, 2017, ICNA Sisters' Wing organized the first ever American Muslim Women's Conference which was held at the Marriot Chantilly, Virginia. This unique event was meant to reflect on the different ways Muslim women may change the narrative of Muslim Women in the United States, and to highlight the contributions of an increasing number both at the national and the local level, among them the members of AMWA. One of the main purpose of the conference was to emphasize the importance to unite and work together in order to change the narrative and to stand as one. It gathered around 400 guests from all over the country, mainly activists, teachers, social workers, journalists, representatives of different Muslim organizations, but also a few non-Muslims.

The program started with the reading of the Holy Quran followed by the reading of the Preamble to the Constitution of Unites States of America. The morning session included prominent speakers, among them Dr Zainad Alwani, professor of Islamic Studies program at Howard University School of Divinity, the first female jurist to serve on the board of the Fiqh Council of North America, Aisha Al Adawiya chairperson of the well-known organization *Women in Islam* located in New York. The panel dealt with issues on the way Muslim women are defined in today's society, their journey in the US through the passage of time and concluded on an optimistic note with their Rise as leaders not only in the domestic sphere, but also in the public sphere unveiling an underestimated power. Following the lunch and prayer break, two parallel panel sessions were proposed to the audience. The first one entitled "Oppression: What, Where and When" gathered panelist such as Dr Alwani, or Zahra Billoo the Executive Direct of CAIR-California in Santa Clara. who dealt with the different ways Muslim



women were oppressed in the US. The second panel "Through the Filters: Myth Vs Reality" mainly dealt with the ways Muslim women were depicted in the media and how they can remedy to the prevailing negative image of women often portrayed as mute and submissive. At last but not least, Dr Mahja-been Hassan, AMWA Chairperson, was one of the four panelists of the last main hall session entitled "Land of the Free and the Home of The Brave". It focused on areas where American Muslim women have already been contributing. Dr Hassan's participation to the talk was meant to bring her expertise and knowledge in the field. AMWA with its formidable background and achievements at the local level since its creation has undoubtedly succeeded in building a counter-narrative through its multiple interfaith dialogues since 9/11. Dr Hassan mentioned the fact that AMWA tried its best to get as many people to come out as Muslims because the number of requests on Islam has dramatically increased since the attacks. During her speech, Dr. Hassan delivered a strong and authentic message : **"do not forget the power of one"**. One must not think that he/she is the only Muslim in his or her area or that he/she is not a specialist in Islamic studies that he/she cannot make a change.

*(Continue from page 5)*

## Ladies Educational Program

By Sakina Collins

AMWA in collaboration with the Westchester Office for Women and the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester presented a learn at lunch forum called "Straight Talk from the Heart" a conversation from a Middle Eastern, African and South Asian Perspective on October 4, 2017. The program began with an Avon representative, who in addition to having lovely products for sale, spoke about the various charitable causes that Avon collaborates with the community on. A simple, yet delicious lunch was provided. While enjoying lunch, speakers Amilia Powers and Kauser Coco Alvi, LCSW-R, offered words of inspiration

and empowerment. Ms. Alvi focused on the importance of developing self-confidence, self-esteem and reaching out to utilize community resources and support if needed. Ms. Powers shared her journey of self-empowerment and how it impacted dynamics within the family and community relations, and how she managed these changes. The information presented appeared to be very well received, by the women audience from diverse backgrounds. After the presentations there was a question and answer session which provided an opportunity for interaction with the presenters and attendees

Amilia Powers

*Negative thinking is like silence, you think things will change. Trusting yourself enough when you Break Your Silence and speak from your heart it is never a disappointment. This is what happens, your burdens are released, you have taken the first step to healing. Put your trust in you*

#valueyourself  
#speakout  
#nomoresilence  
#actandbeheard  
#reachoutforhelp  
#talktosomeonetoday

(Continue from page 4)

### AMWA Supported events

November 20, 2017  
**Thanksgiving Services,**  
Scarsdale  
Ayesha Khan

.....  
November 22, 2017  
**Project S.H.A.R.E**  
Serving Dinner

.....  
November 22, 2017  
**Thanksgiving Services,**  
Armonk  
Ayesha Khan

.....  
December 2, 2017  
**Margaret Eberle Fair Trade Festival and Crafts Sale**  
MUMC

.....  
December 8, 2017  
**Teacher Workshop**  
WLHCSS  
Shahida Qadir,  
Ayesha Khan,  
Fozia Khan

## Women's Self Defense Session

By Ayesha Khan

On April 30 2017, AMWA hosted a wonderful class for the ladies on self defense. The class was held from 2-5 pm at the Upper Westchester Muslim Society masjid in Thornwood. A second-degree black belt from Staten Island, Nisma Zakria teaches self-defense classes through the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE), a self-defense nonprofit for Muslim women. The instructor was an amazing teacher and really showed everyone important techniques. She first demonstrated on a volunteer and



showed us examples of different ways to get out of an attack situation. Then we partnered up one another and used these motions to disarm our attacker. The class was very insightful because it showed everyone what to do in a real life situation. In today's society, we do not know what is going to occur, from this class, I was able to learn and communicate on what I would have to do, just in case I am faced with difficulty. I recommend this class to all ages of woman. Being prepared is very important and knowing how to handle the situation is so valuable.

(Continue from page 4)

Undoubtedly, the conference succeeded in gathering hundreds of Muslim women from diverse backgrounds to reflect on their common destiny in the United State. This can be considered as a first step toward the visibility of Muslim women in the US landscape. Changing the narrative was indeed the main topic. But more than that, it showed the diverse ways American Muslim women have been contrib-

uting today to the betterment of the perceptions on Islam and women condition showing that they have become actresses of their destiny and no more alienated subjects. But also, it revealed how they have been striving to improve the overall society on a voluntary basis in disaster relief work, counseling efforts and civic engagement.

**\*Karima Djennane,**  
PHD Student France

**To advertise in the AMWA's Newsletter, please contact [mail@amwa.us](mailto:mail@amwa.us)**  
**All Articles and advisement flyers must be in last weekend of December**





## AMWA's Annual Dinner

by Shahida Qadir

On November 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, AMWA presented Kim Schultz, Susan Stone and Rohina Malik, a group comprising of three powerful Story Tellers, to their Annual Dinner. The event took place at the Grand Roosevelt Ball Room at Nawab Restaurant in Yonkers, New York.

AMWA's focus is to enlighten the positivity in people minds and attempt to erase or diminish the negativity that lingers about the three major faiths, Jewish, Christian and Islam, especially about Islam. AMWA tries to build bridges with the other major religions by enlightening the many similarities and commonalities between all of the faiths. This is being done by creating different talk forums where AMWA invites different scholars, who can explain and explore the facts about the subject at hand. AMWA also recognizes those individuals, group or organizations that are working towards peace and harmony locally between Interfaith Communities. Keeping that viewpoint, AMWA presented a play performed by three extraordinary talented women of the three Abrahamic Faiths: Kim Schultz of the Jewish Faith, Susan Stone of the Christian Faith and Rohina Malik representing the Islamic Faith. The play was a very captivating form of storytelling, performed in a very talented and charming way by those three women who at the very end received a standing ovation from the crowd. Those three exceptional storytellers Kim Schultz, Susan Stone and Rohina Malik, shared stories pertaining to their own person faiths. The stories were either based on true stories, or some that were created,

weaved intricate tales that these women go through as women of faith. The performances by the three professionals were excellent and truly involved the audience in it as if they were experiencing the situation themselves. The performances were heart warming, mentally soothing and emotionally inspiring that it brought tears to the eyes of the audiences. It truly touched the hearts and minds of the people. The evening started with a warm welcome and an outline by the Master of Ceremony, Ms. Sadia Huq, which was followed by a beautiful recitation of Holy Quran and its translation by Maha Alam. Dr. Hassan, the Chair Person of AMWA, introduced the three presenters in her opening remarks. First Susan Stone started with one of her personal stories, followed by Kim Schultz and Rohina Malik ended. Then the three performers did their song and a performance together. At the finally of the event, there was a Q&A session that held between the three presenters. This was a great opportunity for the audience to interact with the three performers and ask any questions that would help them relate. There was great source connectivity between the three presenters that portrayed the mutual commonalities and the connectivity. The other aspects of the evening was the great set up of the Grand Ball Room which was beautifully set up to represent the three religion by their respective colors: red, blue and green. A very peaceful White Stage backdrop and illuminating green light brought a mesmerizing uplifting mood of the evening that had charmed all the attendees. There was a lighted AMWA logo projected

*In these difficult and dark times, let the power of story telling illuminate our hearts. Three exceptional storytellers share stories from their own faith-Judaism, Christianity and Islam-to transcend differences through the shared belief in the power of love hope and compassion*





*Community members from Women of Faith, Maryknoll Sisters, AJC, Leadership Council, UWMS, and AMWA participants*

on the big wall of the ballroom that perfectly represented our organization. At the very end the of the event committee head Shahida Qadir thanked all the 165 attendees, for supporting and attending the inter-faith Dinner and Play and for supporting AMWA for so many years. She also thanked each and every one who participated in organizing the event. Also during the event, there was a silent auction that illustrated a combination of different cultural art

and embroidery items mostly made by women. It was a great source of attraction by the attendees, who stopped by and registered their bids on different items of their choice. Later in the evening the dinner opened up and people enjoyed the delicious food and desserts, followed by tea and coffee. All in all it was a very successful night where the Abrahamic religions were able to come together and enjoy a great piece of entertainment.



### **Join us for , AMWA's Ladies Social Gathering**

***Sunday, April 8, 2018 1:30pm -5 pm***  
***Scarsdale Congregational Church***

***Special Price Ticket \$25 till 3/25/18***  
***Then Ticket will be \$30 online or at the door***  
***Pay on line at [www.amwa.us](http://www.amwa.us)***

***For Information contact:***  
***Shahida Qadir (914) 747-6845***  
***Fozia Qureshi (914) 723-0897***  
***Vendors information contact:***  
***Sakina Collins (914)944-9259***  
***Email: [mail@amwa.us](mailto:mail@amwa.us)***



## Experience Iftar at local Masjid

*“O ye who believe!  
Fasting is prescribed  
to you as it was  
prescribed to those  
before you, that ye  
may (learn)  
self-restraint”  
(Quran 2 :183)*

*“Ramadan is the  
(month) in which the  
Quran was sent down, as  
a guide to mankind and  
a clear guidance and  
judgment (so that  
mankind will distinguish  
from right and wrong)”  
(Quran 2 :185)*

The Holy month of Ramadan has long been about sharing blessings with others. And yearly the American Muslim Women’s Association takes that sharing to other faiths. This year AMWA welcomed the Sisters of Salaam Shalom Westchester Chapter 2 to Iftar at the Westchester Muslim Center in Mt Vernon. Jewish chapter leader Roberta Roos and Muslim chapter leader Farida Rokadia reflect on the experience.

**Roberta Roos, Co-leader, SOSS Westchester 2 Chapter:**

I have long heard of Muslim hospitality, but it is one thing to know of something cognitively and quite another to experience it. The Jewish sisters in the Northern Westchester chapter 2 of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (SOSS) had this first-hand experience when we attended the AMWA Iftar at the Westchester Muslim Center in Mount Vernon. For most of the Jewish sisters, this was not only our first iftar, but it was our very first visit to a mosque and with it, an opportunity to participate in a Muslim worship service. Our SOSS group has in the past shared a sukkah meal in a local synagogue to celebrate the week-long Jewish festival of Sukkot. We also shared a Passover seder at a group members home, but we had never participated in a Muslim religious rite. That we were able to do so at this particular event was a double blessing in that we were able to be with our Muslim and Jewish sisters with whom we have grown so close. As well we got the opportunity to meet the women of AMWA and visit the mosque. Thank you AMWA (and

our sister Ambreen Nagani). We learned so much and look forward to sharing more experiences in the days ahead.

**Farida Rokadia, Co-leader, SOSS Westchester 2 Chapter:**

Muslims are well aware of all the practices associated with Ramadan and Iftar and our Jewish sisters have been so eager to learn our ways. So it was the perfect opportunity when we received a very kind invitation to join AMWA for Iftar at the Westchester Muslim Center in Mount Vernon. One of our SOSS sisters, Ambreen Nagani is a member of that congregation and had extended the invitation to us. We were welcomed by the board members of the mosque.

Afterwards we listened to a stimulating presentation by Dr. Hassan on the reasons and benefits of the holy month of Ramadan. Our group then toured the mosque. As soon as the sun set and the Adan was heard we filed outside to where Iftar tables had been set up break the fast with dates and snacks. It was such a pleasure to share with everyone at this special time. After breaking the fast with this light snack came the call to pray the Maghreb prayers. Men prayed upstairs, and ladies downstairs. We all bowed with thanks to our Creator. Afterwards we were ready to eat the main meal. We got a real feast and enjoyed everything. Our Jewish sisters were particularly appreciative of the warm hospitality they received. It was a mutual learning experience. Thank you AMWA so much for the invitation and we hope to do it again next year Insha’Allah.





## AMWA Severed dinner at Women's Shelter *by Sakina Collins*

*In the spirit of Ramadan* - the month when the Holy Quran was sent to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him, pbuh) - the American Muslim Women's Association (AMWA) has begun an annual tradition of having one or more food projects during this very holy month. During Ramadan, there is an emphasis on reading the Quran, fasting and charitable endeavors. That's why, at the heart of this initiative is a deep desire to serve the community and provide a nourishing meal for people in need. On June 5, 2017 AMWA provided dinner for the residents at Samaritan House, a homeless shelter for women located at Grace Church in White Plains. Several AMWA board members: Sakina Collins, Shahida Qadir, Fozia Qureshi, Fozia Khan, and participant, Nadeem Qureshi served dinner to 16 residents and two client care workers, Renee Thomas and Gerri Braxton. In addition to providing meals for the residents, Samaritan House Client care workers Renee & Gerri were also benefited as it gave them a respite from their normal routine and were very appreciative of this. When asked what the greatest benefit was aside from the food, they said it was the interaction between AMWA members and the women of Samaritan House that made a difference. The residents were pleased that someone - particularly people of another faith tradition and culture - cared enough to spend time with them and serve them personally. They were also surprised at the fact that most of the AMWA sisters were fasting while

serving food. It was amazing to residents that we would serve them and not partake but instead simply watch them enjoy their meals. Several were very touched by this. As well, Renee noted that the overall gesture "greatly uplifted their spirits" and the affect lasted several days. In addition to the meal, the women were also provided with gift bags of personal care items to make them feel special. They also appreciated that they were given information about Ramadan so they would have some understanding of it. As for the meal, it consisted of salad, rice and peas, rotisserie chicken, cabbage and rolls. In addition, one of the members made delicious vegetable fritters. Fresh fruit, cookies and strawberry cheesecake were served for dessert. When asked if there was any way AMWA could improve upon this for future events, Gerri said "what you ladies did was perfect". Renee added that we should "definitely bring the strawberry cheese cake again!"

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and is required of all Muslims. Muslims fast the entire month of Ramadan from food and liquids during the hours between sunrise to sunset. Community service is highly encouraged and often centers on providing food via donations to food banks and providing meals, is indeed believed to be a blessing to both the recipient and the benefactor. Although charity can be expressed any time of the year, during Ramadan there is more charitable activity because the blessings are multiplied.

### ***Damascus Dining***

*Discover Syrian cuisine*

*Fresh ingredients and made with love*  
Appetizers, Entrees, and Desserts

visit web-site: [damascusdining.com](http://damascusdining.com)  
Email: [damascusdining@gmail.com](mailto:damascusdining@gmail.com)  
Bahaa: 917-754-9549  
*All order need to be picked up from Pelham*

### **AMWA PARTICIPANT**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Send this coupon with a check of \$45*  
**American Muslim Women's Association**  
P.O. Box 2706  
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

*"O Mankind,  
We created you all from  
a single male and  
a female, and made  
you into nations and  
tribes so that you may  
know one another [and  
not despise one another].  
Verily the noblest of you  
in the sight of God is the  
most righteous of you.*

*Surely God is  
All-Knowing,  
All-Aware."  
Qur'an - 49:13*

*Getting to know  
your neighbors and  
your community  
Sign-up and Volunteer  
AMWA 2018 calendar  
at [www.amwa.us](http://www.amwa.us)*

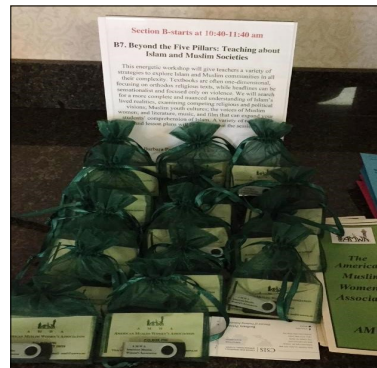




*AMWA members  
with family and friends  
at Alzheimer walk,  
Purchase College  
and at American Cancer  
Society Walk ,  
Manhattanville College*



*AMWA is bless to participate in  
Project S.H.A.R.E for more than ten  
years. AMWA's ladies take part in  
preparation and serving Thanksgiving  
dinner along side with hundreds of  
volunteers. AMWA also handed out  
package with hats, gloves and scarfs.  
To help support or to volunteer at  
Thanksgiving dinner –  
please contact Jeanne at  
[NteBrd@aol.com](mailto:NteBrd@aol.com)*



**Barbara Petzen, from Middle East Outreach  
Council .AMWA's speaker on "Beyond the Five  
Pillars: Teaching about Islam and Muslim Soci-  
eties" at Long Island Conference Social Studies  
(LICSS)  
In the exhibition hall, AMWA members handed  
out folder filled of material and  
resources for teacher to uses  
in their classroom**



# Community News

## Community Support for the Refugee

By Susan Davis

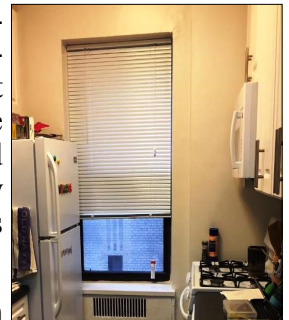
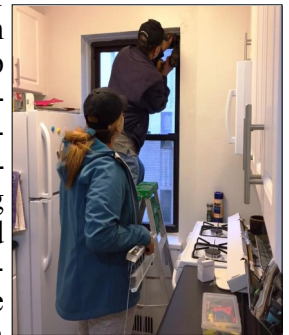
My husband, Paul and I, interested in working with Syrian refugees, began to attend meetings a year ago held in Westchester by refugee resettlement organizations. From these meetings, emerged our resettlement group made up of two synagogues – Congregation Kol Ami and Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont Emanu-el. We learned that in order to sponsor a refugee family, we would have to organize committees, raise funds and write a Letter of Intent to the resettlement agency we chose to work with – HIAS – Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. We would also attend training sessions taught by HIAS personnel. Once our Letter of Intent was accepted by HIAS, and we were told that a family would be assigned to us only a month before they actually arrived, each committee got to work. The housing committee began to look for an apartment in White Plains, the furniture committee began to round up and store furniture, and the basic necessities committee found dishes, bed items, cleaning supplies, etc. The family arrived on June 7, 2017, the apartment was fully stocked, including cupboards full of food. Every attempt was made to find halal food and the appropriate spices.

Our friends, from AMWA graciously donated and put up blinds in every window in the two bedroom apartment. After the family of five arrived, our education co-chair found a day camp for the two older children at Church Street School within walking distance from the family's apartment and for the younger child a camp on the Pace Law School campus. Meanwhile, the parents, Amina and Salam began attending ESL classes 4 days a week. Our community connections committee made a book with every group member's picture and with important information about the apartment and where to find things. We showed the family how to do laundry on American machines, where they could find the supermarket and other important services near them. Our education co-chair accompanied the Shatlo family to a weekly Sunday afternoon program at Sarah Lawrence College for refugees. She also helped enroll the children in Church Street School which they are currently attending. Our health committee co-chair has been

responsible for organizing all medical appointments for the family who has health benefits via Medicaid.

One of our most important tasks has been locating employment for the parents. Amina, the mom, is an experienced and extremely competent seamstress who wished to do alterations from her apartment. A fundraising effort brought in enough money and with the help of one of our employment co-chairs who had important connections, we were able to purchase the Commercial sewing machines. Our co-chair produced beautiful business cards and advertising flyers which we have distributed everywhere. Amina is now in business. Salam's employment has been more complicated, currently he is working at Macy's. He also has experience in the restaurant business and expects to begin a culinary course specifically for refugees in February.

We are now at the eighth month of the Shatlo's residency in White Plains. Much work has been done, but our regular involvement with the family continues. Many of our committee members take the family on outings, celebrate birthdays, and just keep in touch. Amina is about to begin a computer literacy program and we will provide her with a laptop computer. We will continue to support Salam in his efforts to attend the culinary course and ultimately find a higher paying job with benefits. We continue to work with HIAS and at the end of the month will meet with our case manager to plan for the final months of our resettlement responsibility.



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### **Mission Statement:**

*Our mission is to promote the values of Islam and increase community awareness regarding our faith by organizing various educational, social, and intellectual forums. Our commitment to our community is demonstrated in our proactive approach to mitigate domestic violence by organizing periodic awareness programs. We aspire to build bridges among our interfaith communities*

### **Special Thanks**

AMWA would like to thank the authors and photographers that submitted articles and pictures for this edition. In addition, we'd like to thank Alia Campbell and Ayesha Khan for editing and layout.

Visit our Web-site : [www.amwa.us](http://www.amwa.us)

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Or write to us at

**American Muslim Women's Association**

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**Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510**

*AMWA is a non-profit organization and has secured  
501 (c) (3) in August 2006*

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