

Winter 2020 Expressions



UPLIFTING LIVES AS A MODEL MUSLIM AMERICAN COMMUNITY

8092 Plantation Dr. West Chester Ohio 45069 | (513) 755-3280 | info@icgc.us | www.icgc.us

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Editor

Maftuna Abduganieva

Contributors

Areej Arif

Fatimah Idrees

Jihad Khan

Saad Khan

Uruz Bidiwala

Zaynab Idrees

Advisors

Samina Sohail

Nazim Fazlani

Layout & Graphic Design

Nadia Hidayatullah

In this issue

As we look back at the moments which define this year, this issue reflects some of the many emotions we've encountered through this global pandemic....

The innovation with which we continued many of our programs virtually, the joy we found in some of our covid "comfort" meals, the goofiness of becoming "zoomed out," and newfound appreciation for the blessings we have in life.

Thank you for sharing this journey.
We hope you have a safe and blessed year ahead.



Our Work During COVID-19

ICGC in Action

Here is a bird's eye view of all the work ICGC carried out through the pandemic to uphold its vision of **Uplifting Lives as a Model Muslim American Community**



ICGC has been

UPLIFTING LIVES
Through a Pandemic

What's new this year with Islamic Weekend School?



By Maftuna Abduganieva

Well, this year, they moved everything Online in order to keep students, parents, teachers, & administrators alike safe. This shift into virtual school was not easy, with a chief concern being keeping students engaged. To address this, teachers worked over the summer to build a new curriculum that focuses on the “principles and pillars” of Islam, with emphasis on teaching these concepts. While a book is used in instruction, the focus of the lesson isn’t just finishing the chapter, it is on the values discussed in the chapter; additionally, while it is a tool in the class, others tools like, “videos, stories, and activities,” are also used.

One tool that the weekend school is using this year is Google Classroom. At the beginning of the year, all students and teachers were given a school email in order to create a classroom, where the teacher can share resources with the students. Parents also have access to a folder full of resources so they can stay involved and informed about their child’s education. Additionally, all teachers were trained in using Zoom.

Many programs had to make adjustments this year in order to remain active, engaging, while still keeping participants safe. This ICGC weekend school in particular worked hard to meet these standards and accommodate as many students as possible. To quote Sr. Amany, “We are blessed with a beautiful growing Muslim community,” so the program has made several adjustments in the past few years in order to provide everyone with a “quality education.” So what has the weekend school done in order to meet these demands?



Other changes to the weekend school this year include the class times and organization. Classes were cut from 70 minutes to 45 minute, with a 30 minutes “Quran Memorization” period. There are now 7 levels instead of 12, with former levels being condensed into age-based categories. This was done based on students’ natural learning curve and with the hope that having slightly older students in the same classroom would help younger ones, which would “cut repetition and enrich the learning experience.” Every year, the weekend school grows and changes in order to better adapt to the needs of its students and teachers. That is why they will be sending out a survey, order to decide whether to continue school in the spring semester remotely, or whether to revert back to in-person learning. Sr. Amany says, “it depends on how our county is doing and how comfortable the parents will be to send their kids back to school.”

Until then, I hope everyone continues learning safely and remembers to thank the teachers and administrators that are working hard for the weekend school.

Zoomed Out



By Zaynab Idrees

I wake up and turn off my alarm. I should do my work, shouldn't I? But I was up so late last night and joining zoom classes is overrated. I look at my test grade and blink. Guess joining that zoom class may have been a good idea, but how should I know that, I didn't attend. My mom tells me to focus more on work but that's too hard, watching YouTube and texting my friends is easier.

My sister tells me to try writing something for the newspaper, and I try, but everyday I lose more and more brain cells due to the lack of oxygen in this house-hold. I decide not to entertain the community and try to do math instead, without looking at the instructions. As you can guess, the grade is hardly valid. Guess I'll have to try again. And then I didn't. It seemed like doing robotics work

Illustrated by Fatimah Idrees



My mom tells me to focus more on work but that's too hard, watching YouTube and texting my friends is easier.

was a better idea. Spoiler alert- it was not. Complain, complain, complain, all these people in my house do is complain. Oh wait- that's just me.

But what else can I do- quietly read about plate tectonics? I've never heard a worse idea, and somebody once suggested to exercise if I'm so bored.

It's Friday, finally, sitting around for two hours each day, listening to music and eating snacks while doing the least amount of work humanly possible has tired me out. I flop onto my bed, watching a video on my phone. One of my parents came into my room to lecture me on doing more work, the usual words of affirmation, "Yes I did all my work," and the fabrications of, "Yeah, the test wasn't too hard," come out like a routine.

The rest of the day-and the weekend as well- fly by, far too eager for my complaints to roll in at the start of the new, same as always, week.

Did you know there were laws in place in the US from 1917 and 1924 that banned people from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East from immigrating to this country to “preserve the idea of American homogeneity.”

Did you know that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's not only abolished Jim Crow and segregation, it also challenged the notion that America was a white nation.

Did you know it was the efforts of the Civil Rights movement that led to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished the race-based immigration quota system and forbade discrimination on the basis of race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence.

Do you realize that if you or your parents are immigrants to this country from Asia or the Middle East, then you owe a huge debt to the blood, sweat and tears of the Civil Rights activists. If it weren't for their work, you would not just be sitting in the back of the bus; you wouldn't even be in this country.

So why does all this matter?

It matters because if we internalize this, then we realize that we own the Black Lives Matter narrative. Clarity on how we got here and the debts we owe, set the framework for the important work that lies ahead.

So how do we do this?

ICGC has embarked upon a racial justice initiative this past year, to educate and engage our own community. Social justice is not just at the core of our religion, its very existence is the reason so many of us enjoy the opportunities of this country. Join the conversations on ICGC's YouTube Channel.



By Samina Sohail

Important Conversations on Upholding Social Justice

Here's what you may hear:

What systemic racism is from the voice of our own executive director **Henry Hane**. Board Chair Emeritus **Shakila Ahmad** shares the history of Islam in this country and its connection to civil rights. Community member **Dr. Tony Abdullah's** personal experience of being an African American Muslim in our spaces. The importance of Black Lives Matter from CAIR national chair, **Roulla Allouch**. Hear a local attorney, **Nathaniel Lampley JD** reflect upon the inspirational story behind the movie "Just Mercy." It reveals how powerfully evil and wicked racism can target innocent black men. How our own youth **Ayesha Chaudhry** and **Yousuf Munir** organized local Black Lives Protests. The story of forgiveness and healing from a local activist Sister **Rukiye Abdul-Mutakallim** who transformed her loss into a flower pot project which beautifies our city.

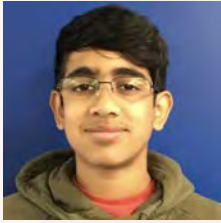
Hear from Ohio Justice and Policy Center's ED **David Singleton JD** share a real life example of our Muslim brother Angelo Robinson's powerful story of redemption and healing.

Every conversation has been enlightening and full of lessons, and opportunities to engage in improving the society we live in. We hope to continue these conversations with ongoing dialogue, and invite you to become engaged.

Now we know better, so we do better. How?

As author Brian Stevenson advises, this is how we make a difference and stand up for social justice: Get close to affected people. Change the narrative & persuade people there is a problem. Remain hopeful- Never give up
Be prepared to be uncomfortable and inconvenienced





The Ultimate Comfort Food

By Saad Khan

This five ingredient baked mac and cheese recipe is an easy pasta recipe that will warm you up in the fall season. The sauce is also very adaptable and you can utilize any cheese that you have on hand. You can experiment and come up with new combinations of sauces to improve your baked mac and cheese!

Instructions:

Sauce:

- Heat butter in a pot. As it is slightly browning, sprinkle in flour, and whisk while mixing until smooth.
- Pour in the warm milk while whisking until smooth.
- Add in the chopped cheese and keep whisking on low heat, do not allow to burn. If the cheese begins to boil or brown at the edges of the pot, that means that you need to turn down the heat.
- Add in salt, pepper, and ground nutmeg to taste. If the sauce is not smooth you can add some more milk and mix.

Pasta:

Boil pasta al dente as instructed on pasta box. Drain and then drizzle with a little olive oil to keep pasta from sticking.

Important:

Don't mix in the cheese until you're ready to eat; otherwise the sauce will dry out.

Add cheese to pasta in a baking dish lined with cooking spray. Broil in oven 3-5 minutes until golden brown. Avoid burning the cheese, but a little browning is okay.

Let cool for 1-2 min and serve right away.

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp flour
- 3 Tbsp butter
- 2 cups milk, warmed
- 2 8 oz blocks of cheese, roughly chopped into cubes. Any two of cheddar, red wax Gouda, or fontina.
- Pasta of choice (I like cavatappi but you can use elbow or penne as well)
- Salt, pepper, and nutmeg as seasoning (approx 1/4 tsp each)





ICGC Youth Group is a group mostly composed of teenagers that have activities planned for the community to come, enjoy, and meet new people. Most of the meetings are religiously related—learning more about Islam while having fun. ICGC Youth Group has

How

ICGC Kept the Youth Engaged

By Uruz Bidiwala



The turnout was great and youth were engaged; since they were quarantining, for many this was one of the only activities they had going on. At the beginning, sessions were virtual but they gradually started doing in-person sessions. During the summer, they organized Summer camps that followed safety protocols. Later on, they had a Drive-In Movie and NBA Finals event where you could watch from your car. They also had gardening, art, archery camps, and fundraisers as well.

I've heard very positive feedback from the youth of ICGC.

done an amazing job during the pandemic this year with keeping the youth engaged, while also keeping them safe and letting them have fun.

They started off with Zoom meetings when we first went on lock down. They would have breakout rooms for further small group interactions as well. One topic they discussed thoroughly was Black Lives Matter, during the height of the protests that occurred earlier in the year. They also had discussions regarding how Allah (SWT) tests & challenges us while also blessing us with his mercy, grace, & endless rewards. They had guest speakers & overall, everything was very well organized.



Recognize Health Care workers

By Areej Arif



Thank you to our health care workers!

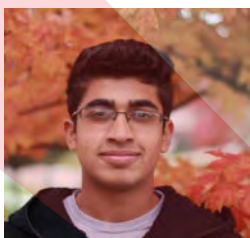
We are so blessed to have so many health care workers in our community. We are very thankful to our friends and family who are helping to save lives everyday.

Thank you to all the doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, respiratory technicians, medical assistants, therapists, and more who have been working through this pandemic. During this time, we have come to see and value our health care workers in a new light, and we deeply appreciate how much you all do to keep us safe and healthy.

Cincinnati Magazine's October 2020 magazine has recognized the region's top doctors, and several of our community physicians across multiple specialties have made the list. Your acceptance of this award brings much pride and joy to the Islamic community, which you continue to represent in a great way. On behalf of the Islamic community, I congratulate you.



“This banner was donated by ICGC to UC/West Chester Hospital as a symbol of our support and gratitude”



A Positive in Quarantine?

By Jihad Khan

For one, Our impact on the environment was lessened this year due to the reduced travel and industrial output.

Personally, the time in lock down has given me the opportunity to reconnect with old friends, work on some of my personal goals, and spend more time with my family.

Before this year, each member of my family had their respective schedules and appointments. We would hang out on the weekends, but during the week, we barely crossed paths. This all changed during the first stay-at-home order, in March. The rest of the spring semester, everyone was working/learning from home, and we were surprised how much we were running into each other. As the spring turned into summer, we individually and collectively started to take advantage of our increased free time.

We all got way too invested in our respective hobbies and interests, which made for great show-and-tells throughout the day. We also did stuff together almost every day. Family walks, movies, and card games were a regular occurrence.

The weather was incredible, and as a result, we were most often outside for hours on end, enjoying the sunshine.

We can all agree that the pandemic is terrible, but there are some good things to come out of this past year.

Having and maintaining good relations with family is an important part of our deen, so I was also happy that I was able to fulfill that sunnah during this time. As we transition into the holiday season, we should all make an effort to reach out to family and friends, both for our benefit and theirs.



Membership Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Spouse: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Number of Children: _____ Ages: _____

I would like to donate a lump sum: ☐ \$200 ☐ \$400 ☐ \$600 ☐ Other amount _____

I would like to help ICGC achieve financial independence through monthly donations.

☐ \$50/month

☐ \$500/month

☐ \$100/month

☐ \$1,000/month

☐ \$250/month

☐ Other amounts: _____ /month

I would like to become an ICGC Member Yes ☐ No ☐

(at least \$200 lump sum or \$25 per month makes you eligible to become an IEC member)

Status ☐ US Citizen ☐ Permanent Resident ☐ Other (specify type of visa): _____

Community Reference _____

Applicant's Signature _____ Chairman/President, ICGC _____

AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION

I/We hereby authorize Islamic Educational Council, hereinafter referred to as ORGANIZATION, to initiate debit entries to my account indicated below and at the financial institution named below, hereinafter referred to as DEPOSITORY, to debit the same to such account.

Bank Name: _____

Routing Number: _____ Account Number: _____
(first 9 digits on the bottom of your checks or attach a voided check)

Full Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION



Name on Credit Card _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Credit Card #: _____ Expiry Date: _____



May Allah Bless You, Protect You & Your Families



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8092 PLANTATION DRIVE
WEST CHESTER OHIO 45069
(513) 755-3280 | INFO@ICGC.US
WWW.ICGC.US