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Muslim Soup Kitchen Project Volunteers Visit with Residents at Daughters of Sarah

April 19, 2017 (Albany, NY) ...Volunteers from the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project visited with residents at Daughters of Sarah Nursing Center today, and together they worked on a flower project for Spring. "All of our activities focus on maintaining and strengthening one's skills and abilities, including fine motor skills, planning and decision making, cognitive skills, eye-hand coordination, socialization, and so on," stated Mary Roy, Director of Recreation at Daughters of Sarah Nursing Center.

"Having the women from the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project visit our residents is quite special and especially meaningful," commented Mark Koblenz, CEO for Daughters of Sarah Senior Community. "As a senior care community rooted in Jewish tradition, we too, feel a responsibility for "tikkun olam" -- fixing what is wrong with the world. In the uncertain time in which we live, it is encouraging to know that there are people like the Muslim Soup Kitchen volunteers that extend their hands with compassion and friendship, and it is our pleasure to welcome them with open arms, a smile, and our sincere appreciation," Koblenz concluded.

This is the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project's second visit to Daughters of Sarah. The volunteers first visited to help make Sukkot decorations (Sukkot is one of Judaism's three central harvest festivals, along with Passover and Shavuot) with the residents. "That was a day I will never forget; Muslims and Jews working together in preparation for a Jewish holiday; it was wonderful," stated Marcia Pasternack.

Reflecting on the Women's first visit, Marcia shared:

From time to time, we have volunteers from the community visit us, and often they will join us in an activity. On this day, women from the Muslim Soup Kitchen visited us to help make decorations for the Sukkah. We never heard of the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project until now. We learned so much that morning.

At first, we were a bit unsure of what to expect, or even what to say. But those feelings quickly disappeared as we discovered that they were just like us (as Jews). The women were so kind and helpful. We asked a lot of questions of each other – about our cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs and practices. We talked about the High Holy Days and Sukkot. A few of us were inquisitive about the women's clothing, and why they cover their hair with a hijab. The reasons are quite similar, yet different as to why Orthodox Jewish women cover their hair.

You could feel the respect for one another growing, as did the daisy chain we were making for the Sukkah. It was a day that, for those of us who were there, we'll always remember – Muslims,

Christians and Jews harmoniously conversing and working together. It can happen. It did happen, and we can't wait to have the Muslim women visit Daughters of Sarah again.

The Muslim Soup Kitchen Project was established in 2003 by a group of students at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who wanted to help feed the hungry in Troy. This effort has spread throughout the Capital Region. The philosophy of the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project is "creating unity through serving humanity," stated Uzma Popal, the Director of the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project.

"We were thrilled to welcome the volunteers from the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project back to Daughters of Sarah; they are always welcomed here. Judaism teaches us to treat each other with kindness, respect, and welcome. You will always find that at Daughters of Sarah," commented Ruth Schulman, Director of Philanthropy and Community Engagement.

The mission of Daughters of Sarah Senior Community is to enhance the quality of life, assure the safety and dignity, and foster the independence of those we serve through residential, personal care, health, and other services consistent with Jewish values and traditions. Daughters of Sarah Senior Community provides 56 gracious assisted living apartments; and short-term physical, occupational and speech therapy, long-term residential care, dementia care, adult day health care, respite care, and palliative care at the Nursing Center. The Nursing Center offers 210 private rooms for all residents in our care.