



Muslim Community Center News

A Publication of the Muslim Community Center for Human Services

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MCCHS, 7600 Glenview Dr,
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Your support will be greatly appreciated.

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

MCCHS is dedicated to empowering underserved communities residing in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex, to face complex challenges created by duality of culture and lack of appropriate medical and social services. Our long-term vision is to develop a community of people who are thriving and striving to maintain a harmonious family structure by offering counseling and education to prevent marriage discord, domestic violence and child abuse. MCC plans to offer counseling services and shelter for the victims of domestic violence from Middle Eastern and South East Asian region for whom services are currently not available due to cultural and language barriers.

FOSTER FAMILIES URGENTLY NEEDED

Sister Ayesha is a victim of years of domestic violence by her husband. Her "Muslim" husband is an alcoholic, has a girlfriend, and is unemployed. Three of the times he beat her were in the stomach while she was pregnant, because "she was incapable of having boys," and caused miscarriages. There have been several cases of violence, but the last one was when he came after her with a knife, and the eldest daughter stopped him. This story got circulated in school among the kids, began a case with the Child Protective Services (CPS) of Dallas, and now the children have been taken away.

The 5 children (4 girls, and 1 boy, ages from 13 y/o to 6 months), have been distributed among three non-Muslim foster homes. These homes are extremely problematic, especially for Muslim children: The baby has been fed pork despite being told not to, the 6 year old daughter had an injury in her arm, has had it yanked making it worse, and the older girls are forced to live in a packed bedroom with teenage boys and have been attacked physically more than once. When the older girls tried to fast in Ramadan, nobody was there to give them suhoor, so drank water and ate a banana. At iftar time, no food was provided to them other than a couple dates. When they tried to pray, all the other kids surrounded them preventing them from praying, and hung crosses on all the walls.

Foster parents in America receive money from the state to take care of children, and that is often the primary motivator for them to register. They are usually negligent, and barely provide for the bare necessities of the children. There are some truly saintly-types that give proper care, and there are also some horror stories of some foster parents doing horrible things to the children.

As with most cases of domestic violence, the husband is surrounded by a set of enablers -- in this case it has been his sisters and parents. They have filed a set of false or grossly exaggerated complaints with the police and CPS, which have severely complicated her case. As far as I can tell, their motivations have been: Deep hatred formed through years of in-law fighting, a desire to keep their brother out of prison for the violence, and to save their brother from having to pay child support. In all fairness, there have been phases where they have been supportive of her, and other times when they have been against her. Appealing to them for support has become a lost cause due to the complexity of their relationship with her and their dishonesty.

The mother is going through legal processes, has an attorney, but these processes can take 3-12 months before she can only possibly get her children back. The father is currently unemployed and living with his girlfriend.

Given the laws and organizational structure of these government agencies, we are in desperate need of Muslim families in Dallas County to become their foster parents. The ideal would be Muslim families already registered for this, but the second best thing would be to simply register and go through some process (see: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption_and_Foster_Care/Get_Started/steps.asp).

For further information please contact:

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MUSLIM FOSTER PARENTS ARE NEEDED IN DALLAS/FT. WORTH AREA

Published: Fort Worth Star Telegram 29 December 2012 - SARAH MERVOSH

With few Muslim foster families in North Texas, Richland Hills clinic asks community to step up

A lack of Muslim foster parents in North Texas means local Muslim children are almost always placed with families of other faiths, putting them in an unfamiliar cultural and religious environment and making a difficult process even harder.

A Richland Hills clinic doesn't want foster children to face added stresses, like being served bacon when their religion forbids pork, or saying prayers in a bedroom with a cross on the wall. That's why the Muslim Community Center for Human Services is offering up a challenge to local Muslims: Step up. Become a foster parent.

"It's a service to humanity," said Dr. Basheer Ahmed, who founded the clinic. "There's definitely a bad need in the community."

About 6,000 North Texas children are in foster care each year, according to Child Protective Services. In recent years, local community leaders say, there have been a handful of times when a Muslim foster home was needed but not available, including twice in the past few months.

A local spokesperson for Child Protective Services confirmed there are far fewer Muslim foster families in North Texas than families of other religions, or of no religion. Experts say this mirrors a national problem.

Of 4,000 families approved to foster and adopt children in one national database, only five are identified as Muslim, according to AdoptUSKids, a federally funded project that raises awareness about adoption and helps recruit and connect families with children who need homes.

Kathy Ledesma is national project director for AdoptUSKids. She said many Americans are motivated by their Christian faith to become foster parents. That may be well and good for Christian children, but it limits her organization's ability to effectively place children of other religions.

"It's really a disservice to children ... to be in a home that has different traditions, with which the children are either uncomfortable or disagree," she said. To place a Muslim child in a non-Muslim home is "really violating their religious freedom or their beliefs," she added.

Ahmed hopes to address the problem through his Richland Hills community center. He wants to enlist at least a few Muslim families from North Texas to undergo training with CPS.

Ahmed said the high proportion of Muslims who are immigrants could partially explain the lack of foster parents. Many Muslims come to the United States from cultures where multiple generations — and, thus, plenty of caregivers — live under one roof.

"Back home, we had no concept of foster care," said Ahmed, who was born in India.

And this lack of understanding can lead to fear and reluctance within the community, he said.

Though Islam requires adults to be honest with children about their family lineage, the religion endorses fostering and adoption, said Imam Zia Sheikh of the Islamic Center of Irving.

"Looking after orphans and taking care of them is actually encouraged in Islam," he said.

Jamal Qadurra, a Muslim legal assistant, is trying to arrange a conference to encourage the Muslim community to support foster parenting.

He said Muslims in North Texas should act as one large, extended family, in which everyone has a responsibility to help care for the young.

"This is what our religion calls for," he said. "We have a duty all to help each other."

Foster information

For information about becoming a foster parent, contact:

[The Muslim Community Center for Human Services at 817-589-9165.](tel:817-589-9165)

WELCOME MR. KASSEM KHALEEL

Mr. Kassem Khaleel who has been a long time member of the board of the directors of MCC for Human Services moved to gulf state. After spending two years he returned to Dallas. Since he has returned he has been helping MCC in fundraising efforts. We welcome him back and sincerely appreciate his commitment an devotion to MCC.