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Letter from the Editor Sarah Syed

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ!

Alhamdulillah, in the truest sense, that you and I are lucky enough to begin a new year at ACA! Personally, being a junior this year evokes nostalgia because 6 years ago in this same position - newsletter Editor - was another junior, Nisa Cortes. Masha'Allah, she has set the standard so high that I will always be trying hard to reach the same level! Just as Nisa and other Board

members once taught me, I would love to mentor high school students that are interested in learning more about organizing a newsletter. Let me know if you're interested! There is one important change this year: Submission of articles is possible without being part of the Editorial Board. A newsletter is a great place to give suggestions, be creative, and let other

people know what you're thinking about. Utilize it by sending in an article! Finally, I would like to thank the rest of the Editorial Board for their hard work; and a special thanks to previous ACA student Aaliyah Bancod for help with the layout. *All suggestions, requests, comments, & criticism are welcome at: [acaedboard@gmail.com!](mailto:acaedboard@gmail.com)*

Ramadaan Reflections by Tarteel Al-Imam & Mona Alhadheri

Allah's Apostle said, "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." [Bukhari]

On any regular day, we can say that the Shaytaan influenced our actions. During Ramadan however, that doesn't apply. In this holy month, we get to learn more about ourselves. Our actions speak for us, and it is in this month that we actually discover who we truly are. Ramadan is a special month for Muslims. We're not only refraining ourselves from

food and drink, but so much more. Gossiping, backbiting, and slander are some of those.



Personally, this is a time where I can get even closer to my Lord and ask for His forgiveness and mercy. The Prophet (SAW) said that in this month, the first 10 days are mercy, the next 10 days are forgiveness and

the last 10 days are emancipation of hell. If the beginning of Ramadan is Mercy, its middle forgiveness, and its ending is emancipation from hell, then its aftermath should be **thankfulness**. Knowing that Allah has opened the Gates of His Mercy for us during this blessed month, that He has chained the Satans, knowing that He has multiplied every good deed we do countless times, should we not express our thanks?

Contact the
Editorial Board
[acaedboard@gmail.com!](mailto:acaedboard@gmail.com)



Br. Anas Hlayhel gives an inspiring speech at the ACA fundraiser

"ACA reminds me of one big happy family, I really am going to miss it a lot!" - ACA Senior Hina Imran, 2010



Hina Imran (top), being creative during PE!

12th Annual Fundraising Iftar by Fitri Cortes

On August 28th, 2010 the 12th Annual Arizona Cultural Academy Fundraising Iftar took place. Considering the fact that it was held during Ramadan, the event began in the evening at 6:30 pm so everyone could break their fast together. Several volunteers, led by Ms. Iman, were expected to be at the school 2 hours earlier to help set up. Masha'Allah everything was put together very well considering the amount of things that needed to be done. In addition to the student volunteer work, the administration and board also worked extremely hard to plan the event. Discussions were held 2 months before the big night.

As stated earlier, the registration opened up at 6:30 pm. The



bles were set up for open seating. The baby sitting was held in the old Math Classroom, which is now currently serving as a MYCA room. At 7:00 pm, everyone went to pray Maghrib. The

welcoming announcements began right after the Salah at 7:15 pm. Sister Tara was the MC of the night. She spoke with



clarity as she introduced people on stage. We had Quran recitation by a senior at ACA, Yasin Uddin, at 7:20 pm; followed by nasheeds while the guests were served their food. The dinner was catered by 2 local Muslim restaurants, Princess Market and Copper Kettle. Feedback was taken regarding food serving that night and the committee will work to make it better next year insha'Allah.

ACA graduates represented by Bagdad Muslet, Omar Abdallah and Khalid Cortes were invited to the stage. They gave speeches about their experiences graduating from ACA. The graduates spoke about the personal gains from the school as well as the advantages that they no

longer have at ASU. At 7:45 pm Ms. Jane and Cindy, the Associate Director of South Mountain Community College, spoke about the academic updates; dual enrollment and concurrent classes. Dr. Tomeh came to the stage at 7:55 pm to inform all the guests of the financial situation that ACA is currently in. As Imam Anas spoke, volunteers walked around the room carrying baskets for donations. The volunteers gave out pens and envelope openers with "Arizona Cultural Academy" engraved on them. I have to admit it was funny how some adults gave their donations and personally asked for one of the gifts after we had run out. Dr. Tomeh mentioned that our goal for the night was \$200,000.00 to come from the audience for the sake of Allah.

Imam Anas Hlayhel was invited back to the stage after the Montessori choir... enlightened...the audience with their amazing vocal skills. Imam Anas Hlayhel inspired the audience to give generously with his amazing speech. By the end of the night, we collected around \$150,000.00 Alhamdulillah. I believe that it is safe to say that the night was a success, thanks to everyone's commitment, volunteer work, and generosity.

Senior Corner: Hina Imran by Filsan Yousuf

Are you excited to graduate? A: Yes! Very much! I've been going to school 13 years, and I am super excited to close one chapter of life and start another Insha'Allah.

What college do you plan to attend?

A: I'm planning on going and applying to ASU Insha'Allah



Is there a specific reason why you would want to go to ASU?

A: Well both my older siblings went/ go to ASU, and its close to home. Also it has a big MSA on campus, and ICC is right down the street. **MSA?** A: Yes, the Muslim Student Association. It's going to be a little weird going to such a large

school making Muslims the minority. I'm use to ACA were I see all Muslims, its sad but excited at the same time.

Are you going to miss ACA?

A: Oh my gosh yes! I've been coming here since sophomore year, and you know it kind of grew on me. ACA reminds me of one big happy family, I really am going to miss it a lot.

E'id ul Fitr 2010

Eid-ul-Fitr 2010 was on Friday September 10th. Hundreds of Muslims gathered at the Civic Center to pray the Eid Prayer, led by Imam Ahmad Moharram from ICEV. After the prayer, the Sheikh gave a short khutbah, and then...EID MUBARAK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Everyone greeted each other with smiles and cries of "Eid Mubarak!", "Happy Eid!",

"Eid'un'Saee'd!" Some extended their greeting with a beautiful dua'a or prayer meaning: "May Allah accept the good deeds from you and from me!" Eventually, the packed crowd left the civic center to continue their exciting Eid day.

It has become almost an Phoenician Muslim tradition to go to either Amazing Jakes or Castles & Coasters for amusement

and socialization on Eid. Everyone dresses up in their best clothes of the year and gathers at these two places to entertain themselves and socialize. People enjoy catching up with everyone they know and see people they rarely see the rest of the year round. Most families also visit other families by going to other peoples' houses. After Ramadaan, Eid is like a well earned party! In general, everyone enjoyed their Eid Day .

كل عام وانتم بخير

Eid Mubarak,
from ACA Editorial!



COMMUNITY COLLEGE: PERSPECTIVE by Lena Sarsour

During the summer, several ACA & Muslim students attended South Mountain Community College to take a couple extra classes so they could catch up on college credits. Alhamdulillah, I was lucky enough to be accepted into the ACE program which allows high school students to take college classes over the weekend and during the summer for free. My oh my what an experience it was! At first, I was a little nervous, because I never actually attended a "public school" before, since I've always been going to an Islamic school. When the first day finally arrived, it was completely different from what I expected. I was preparing myself to be the odd one out, since I wear hijab. But, when I walked on to the

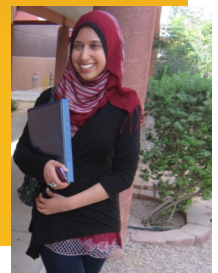
campus that early summer morning, I saw so many of my ACA friends and the biggest smile appeared on my face. Everyone greeted me with salams and hugs.

At 8:00 AM, class began and I felt nervous again because I didn't have any of my friends in my classes. As I entered the classroom, I was expecting glares and comments, but in fact I got the complete opposite! Everyone was so outgoing, nice, and funny! I decided to sit next to the friendliest looking girl in the class, and BAM we became instant friends! As class ended, I was walking with my newly-found friend to the cafeteria. I didn't really recognize anyone, but when I opened the cafeteria doors, it felt as if I just entered MYCA. I saw at least 20 kids that went to ACA occupying most of the tables. It was so comforting

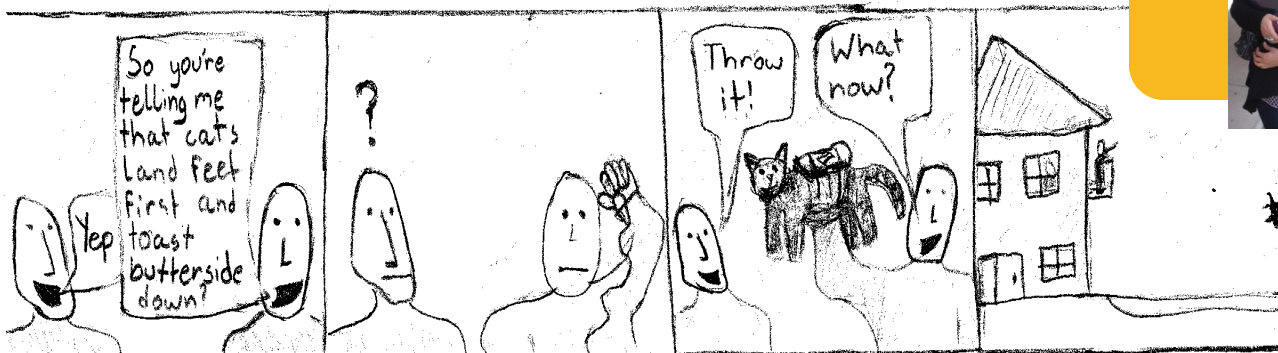
seeing my Muslim brothers and sisters there.

As the summer came to an end, I was sad to let it go. It was really fun meeting diverse teens from across the valley and making new friends. A lot of them were really fascinated in the hijab and I was so happy to tell them about it. It felt good that people were interested about Islam. Alhamdulillah, it was such a wonderful feeling representing this beautiful religion. Attending SMCC during the summer was honestly one of the best decisions I have ever made. It was great meeting new people, representing my beautiful faith, and getting a college education all in the same time! I advise all you incoming juniors to apply to ACE. It is truly an experience worth while.

"Alhamdulillah, it was such a wonderful feeling representing this beautiful religion!..."
-Lena Sarsour,
ACA Junior



COMIC!



The Boy and the Cookie by Zubair Khan



"...He cried often yet his internal happiness and contentment was enough to be envied by those who could understand it..."



"...Part of the mission of Park51 is to nurture peaceful relations between people of all faiths, races, and beliefs..."

He was 15, I was 36, yet he was old and I was young. His knowledge was less than mine, yet he was wise, and I was naive. He was a hafiz, and I was a hafiz, but his memorization was of the heart, while my memorization was of the tongue. He no longer competed with me in knowledge of Hadith, he competed with Abu Huraira RA. He was my student, yet he had surpassed me before we even met. Never would he, rather, never *could* he, recite or listen to the recitation of the Quran without trembling and crying, and sometimes even falling unconscious. He knew the Quran, and he knew it well. He cried often yet his internal happiness and contentment was enough to be envied by those who could understand it. But no one understood it. It was only there for those who worked for it. He would often wake up at night in secret to pray, waving his hands in front of his peers sleeping around him and calling their names to make sure they were actually asleep.

One night I watched him while pretending to sleep, just to see what he does when nobody is watching him. And SubhanAllah, he worked even harder. He began the

prayer and started reciting Surah Baqarah in a low voice. It was a very beautiful recitation, a recitation he had kept a secret. Up until that night, I only knew him to recite plainly. As I listened, I kept dozing off and waking up again through out the night. By Fajr time I realized he had recited five juz in his first rak'a, and five juz in his second rak'a, crying all the while. He finished his salah and quickly lied down in wait for the Fajr Athan. Before Fajr, my students asked me if I had been crying. It was apparent on my face that I had been; all night. I looked over to the causation of my tears who looked back at me with a clean face and a smile. He had become a master at concealing and revealing himself for the sake of Allah. How I wished to be like him!

One time we were attending Jumu'ah, and I noticed my student next to me start to shake. No one, not even the Imam was showing any emotion. But my student was trembling. The Imam recited verse 50 from Surah A'raf, "...and the companions of the Fire will call to the companions of Paradise. Pour upon us some water." Upon hearing this, my student fell on his back so suddenly and quickly, we all thought he died.

One night I was reviewing the Quran with him. He was reciting until he reached verse 106 in Surah Imran, "on that day some faces will be (lit up) white, and some faces will become black." He cried like never before; until my heart was torn apart. I embraced him and kissed him on his head. I asked him, "What makes you weep? Why do you weep?" I was thinking to myself *I want to cry like you! I want to feel the happiness you feel!* He said to me, "I have sinned a sin in my life." I said, "And what is this sin?" He says, "While I was in second grade, I went into a store, took a cookie secretly, and ate it. And there is nobody that is fed with what is forbidden, except that the Hellfire is more deserving!" This student died. A stray bullet that someone fired accidentally, hit his body. He was 20 years old. He died as righteous person and this is how, I assume him to be with Allah SWT insha'Allah.

He cried all of those years for one sin he committed as an incompetent child, and we don't even care about the sins we committed yesterday.



The Controversy of Ground Zero/Park 51/Cordoba House by Syed Umer

As you may have heard, the Muslim community tried to build a multi-story community center in New York City. What you may not have heard is that the name has been changed from the Cordoba House to Park51 for the sake of better PR. What you may also not understand is that

the masjid is NOT built on Ground Zero. In fact it is two New York City blocks away from Ground Zero. The reason I say New York City blocks is because New York City is only three hundred and five square miles, but it hold nearly 8.5 million people. Thus to contain the vastly increasing popula-

tion they don't spread out to the sides like we do in Arizona, but instead build up. Therefore even when you stand on the top of the Park51 building you cannot see the Ground Zero area. The other thing that I would like to clarify is that this is not an immense masjid. It is



The Controversy... continued

planned to have world-class facilities including the following: State of the art gym, basketball courts, swimming pools, recreational areas, fitness facilities, 500 seat auditorium, restaurant, culinary school, cultural amenities, library, reading room, art studios, childcare services, a masjid, and last but not least a September 11th memorial area. As you can see this is no regular masjid, but a truly spectacular Muslim community center.

Now that we have cleared some of the misguided information people had about the community center, we can discuss the reason we wish to build it there. As from the information I gathered there are

roughly 650,000 Muslims in New York City alone. With such a bloated population you would think they would be building ten of these not one right? However we are being criticized for building one of these for our extremely colossal population in New York City. One of the other main reasons we are building this facility is to foster peaceful relations. If we have a place for young Muslims to hang out in and stay at, they are much less likely to become either extreme or misled. If we have a place for Muslim youth to go where they are not being fed wrong information this will stabilize and unite all the Muslim people. Another big reason that they are constructing this behemoth is because of peaceful interfaith rela-

tions. As I mentioned there are 8.5 million people in New York City. If you think about it there must be many different faiths and beliefs in all those people. Part of the mission of Park51 is to nurture peaceful relations between people of all faiths, races, and beliefs. The last reason for doing this to educate the Muslim people, if you look above at the facilities in this community center you will see that they have facilities centered on education and general awareness. They have resources to educate people on the different things going on around them, and they have resources to educate students outside their regular secular education. Hope this article cleared a little bit of the mist around Park51!



New York has represented freedom to thousands of immigrants in America

"...nurture peaceful relations between people of all faiths, races, and beliefs..."

SMCC Contrast Reflection by Fatima Lasker

As a Muslim young lady being in an Islamic environment going to South Mountain Community College was different for me. But it was also a good experience. The environment was so open, and you felt like you had freedom, but I knew that was only the Satan talking. Being in a Muslim environment at ACA protects you from a lot of bad things in this world. No one ever realizes that until you go somewhere outside of ACA. I met a lot of different, unique people being in South Mountain, and the

Laveen Elementary campuses. People are actually more open with each other. You see, and hear people saying different things. Being in ACA has a more of a homey feeling. At South Mountain you have to watch what you say, because you have to remember not everyone is like you. Or will make up excuses for your action if there not so good, like the teachers and people do in ACA. Being in ACA you have a feeling that you are complete, the other part of your heart is complete, because you are around

your fellow Muslim brothers, and sisters. Many of us take ACA for granted but we never realize how comforting ACA really is. The teachers actually care about you. When I went to South Mountain and the Laveen campus of course the teachers cared about you, but not as much as the teachers at ACA. It feels great when someone cares, and gives a fellow student attention. However in general it was a nice way to expand my horizons and interact with people from different ethnicities and religions.



Fatima Lasker gives her point of view on how the culture differs at ACA & community college!

Carrying the Torch of Ramadan Forward

Ramadan has passed. Our Qur'ans have shut. Our *masajid* have emptied. And our hearts have once again filled with the love of life, the hatred of death, and the desires that consume us. The Shaytan that was once banned has again taken his place in our minds, our homes, at our front, and at our back. Once again he has kept his vow of assault: "[Satan] said, 'Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You].'" (Qur'an, 7:16-17)



And so while we find ourselves again vulnerable to the very same struggles that plagued us before Ramadan, let us not forget the very purpose of our efforts during that blessed month. Let us not allow the fruits of Ramadan to be lost. And let us not miss out on the very purpose of our fasting.

When commanding mankind to fast, Allah says: "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous." (Qur'an, 2:183)

It is that consciousness of Allah which is essential for the fulfillment of our purpose in this life. It is that fear of Allah which provides the muscle for our struggle to remain on the straight path. And if *taqwa* (God consciousness) is the muscle, Ramadan was our personal trainer.

If, during Ramadan, we were able to keep ourselves from an essential physical need (of eating and drinking) out of fear of Allah, are we not able to keep ourselves from *haram* (forbidden in Shari'a) after Ramadan, out of that same fear? None of us would dare sneak a glass of water while we are fasting. And yet, the very same Lord who could see us sneak in that drink during Ramadan can see us commit *haram* outside of Ramadan.

Community Event Announcements

Contributed by Mona Alhadheri

Team Muslim Women Race for the Cure!

When:
10 October · 06:00 - 11:00
REGISTER TODAY: <http://www.komenphoenix.kintera.org/raceforthecure2010/muslimwomen>

Don't forget to wear your
PINK HIJAB!

Costs by September 21st
(includes T-shirt):
Children 12 and under are
\$15
Adults \$30

During Ramadan, we could wake up before sunrise to feed our bodies. But after Ramadan we sleep through *fajr* and starve our souls. Let us not allow ourselves to be conquered. Yes, the shaytan can call us again. But all he can do is call. The power and choice is ours. Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

"And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, 'Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves. I cannot be called to your aid, nor can you be called to my aid. Indeed, I deny your association of me [with Allah] before. Indeed, for the wrongdoers is a painful punishment.'" (Qur'an, 14:22)

...continued

From www.suhaibwebb.com, Yasmin Mogahed

One Month, A Million Deeds

By Tarteel Al-Imam

Our Lord sent Ramadan as a mercy to mankind

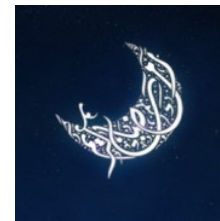
To purify our heart, our soul and our mind.

A blessed month, in which we're to refrain

From food and drink, even the smallest grain.

Not only that, but our desires as well.

To every single one of them, we must bid



farewell.

Ramadan is filled with blessings,

So let the good deeds keep on coming.

Read Quran, make Dua'a and pray pray pray.

For that's the first thing you'll be asked about on Judgment Day.

So take advantage of this month that comes once a year.

*To us it had been made clear
That fasting is a shield from the punishment of Hell.*

Saving us from an eternity of horror in which to dwell.

So tell me how you spent your Ramadan

Playing games, or strengthening your Iman.

*In the name of Allah, the most Merciful,
the most Kind,*

*Praise be to Allah, who sent Ramadan as
a gift to mankind.*