



YOUR MONEY at WORK

ISNA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION
2015 YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

The *Your Money at Work* newsletter highlights some of ISNA's 2015 activities. Since the newsletter is just a summary, you can visit our website (isna.net) to read more details about our mission and further accomplishments.

JANUARY

4th Annual ISNA West Coast Education Forum "Teaching from the Heart"



The Forum in California drew over 350 educators and administrators of both full time and weekend Islamic schools from across the nation, with tracks that covered Arabic language, religious studies & character building, curriculum & instruction, and board administration.

ISNA's Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA) partnered with the Holy Land Ecumenical Christian Foundation (HCEF) for a conversation between Muslims and Arab Christian leaders on their new initiative to fight against the desecration of holy places in the Holy Land and the protection of minorities.

IOICA in partnership with Episcopal Church of America organized an interfaith delegation to Jerusalem, Galilee and Ramallah, to meet with high officials, religious, secular, charitable institutions and others, to emphasize the necessity of a peaceful resolution.

FEBRUARY

IOICA participated in the National Prayer Breakfast with President Obama.

IOICA took part in a reception with Secretary of State John Kerry.

"Divinity & Diversity: Building Our Beloved Community Together" conference took place in Dublin, OH, and was co-organized by Shoulder to Shoulder, Noor Islamic Cultural Center, ISNA, and the local interfaith group, Safe Alliance for Interfaith Leaders (SAIL), with over 100 participants. Speakers talked about the changing religious demographics in America, the need for collaborating with conservative and secular actors in

advancing interreligious cooperation in US cities, and deepening interreligious education and engagement.



ISNA Communications Director spoke to journalism students on "Covering Islam in the Media" at Ball State University located in Muncie, IN. The presentation consisted of the basic beliefs and practices of Islam as well as common negative frames that journalists typically use when covering stories about Islam and Muslims. He also provided alternative frames and stories that journalists can cover that reflect more accurately, the diversity of the American Muslim community.



ISNA President Azhar Azeez joined 13 other American Muslim leaders at the White House at the invitation of President Barack Obama for the first Muslim round table discussion that covered a range of domestic and foreign policy issues. Azeez joined other invitees in drawing Obama's attention to the rising Islamophobia in the US being fueled by some politicians and organizations, and asked him to use his influence to reset the national conversation on hate against Muslims and other religious minority communities. He also requested President Obama to visit a mosque in the US before his term ends.



MARCH

IOICA held an interagency meeting where representatives of DHS, DOJ, FBI and other agencies presented their reports and new initiatives to best help American Muslim communities. Community members were present and able to participate in the discussion.

ISNA joined the Catholic Conference of Bishops with representatives from other faiths for a discussion on how to strengthen the institution of marriage in America.

ISNA Conference in Houston, "A Manner of Being—Exploring the Character of Muslims"

More than 600 visitors from across Texas attended this event which provided a platform for personal and spiritual growth, unity, networking and more.



Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) organized three spring break camps in Texas, Illinois and Indiana, during March and April under the theme "You've Got a Friend in Me."

Youth learned how to find good friends, and the true meaning of friendship with all people. In the Education Forum track, youth ventured to downtown Chicago and directly interacted with people, held signs that read "Meet a Muslim" and handed out flowers. This engagement left youth feeling motivated and strengthened in their identities and place in society.



"It was a great learning experience, which I think I'll be cherishing for some months to come now."

—Education Forum Attendee

APRIL

16th Annual Education Forum "Educating the Global Citizen: Islamic Values, Standards and Technology"

The Forum in Illinois provided attendees a platform to engage in discussions, expand their skill sets, and share innovative solutions to commonly faced challenges. Sessions focused on innovative technology to enhance the educational experience, and creative methods of raising the standard of Islamic education. The event also featured networking programs and a program presenting the research of Dr. Amanda DeCuir on American Muslim women and their roles in Islamic schools.



IOICA took part and hosted a Hindu-Muslim dialogue.

ISNA sponsored a brunch for media professionals at HQ in Plainfield, IN, to provide an opportunity for local media to meet with ISNA representatives and build connections. ISNA's Communications Director gave a short presentation titled "Islam and the American Muslim Community: Beyond Headlines and Sound Bites," which gave an overview of the latest media coverage, which often reinforces negative stereotypes and caricatures. ISNA offered tips on how the media can play a role in providing more accurate and nuanced coverage of Islam and American Muslims.



May

IOICA sponsored and Dr. Sayyid Syeed was a keynote speaker at the celebration of 50 years of Nostra Aetate at the Catholic University of America, in promoting interreligious understanding.

ISNA held its 2nd Annual National Interfaith and Government Forum in Virginia. The focus revolved around how faith leaders and elected public officials can strengthen our mutual trust through interreligious partnerships and civic engagement.



ISNA Shariah Seminar in New Jersey "Understanding Shariah: Sacred Principles for Human Development"

Seminar topics included discussions on tolerance, self-transformation, moon sighting, family and faith.

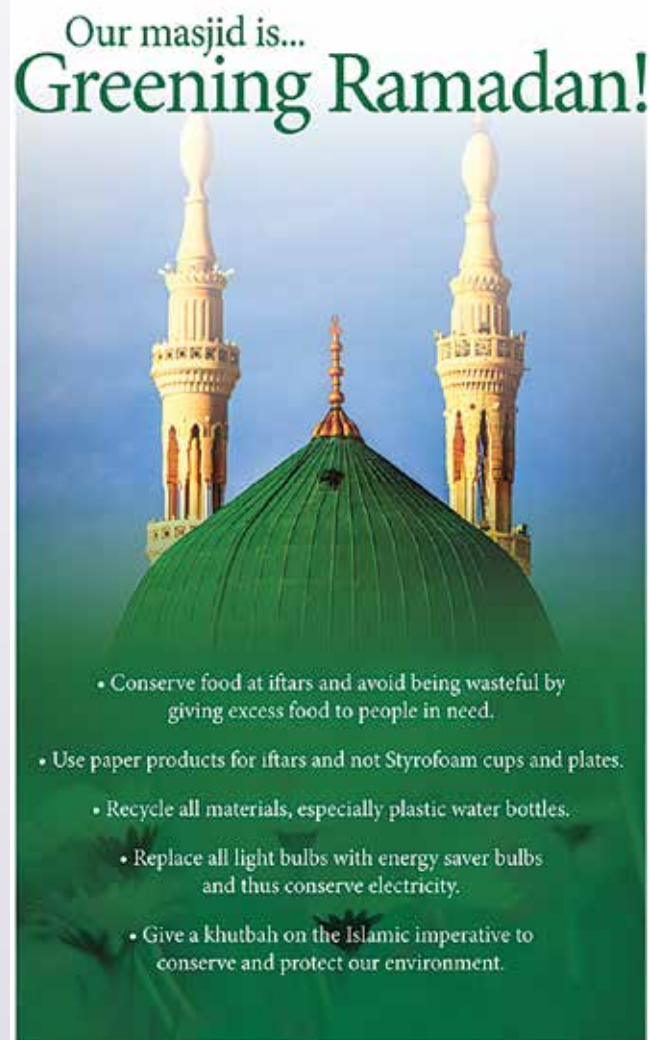


MYNA held its Summer Leadership Summit in Michigan. MYNA National Executive Committee and regional committee chairs, along with the Youth Programming & Services Department, and Majlis Youth Committee, planned out the year, created and reviewed MYNA protocols and discussed long-term planning.



JUNE

ISNA launched its "Greening Ramadan" campaign, which asked masajid and community members to adopt 'greener' practices and be more aware and conscientious about recycling and reducing waste.



ISNA leadership and staff undertook a nationwide community outreach program to visit various communities during the month of Ramadan. ISNA hosted events, gave spiritual talks, shared ISNA's goals and future, and discussed how ISNA can collaborate with local communities to achieve shared objectives.

ISNA took part in the SOJOURNERS conference with the Summit Institute, where Dr. Sayyid Syeed was a main speaker on the topic "Muslim Approaches to Islamic Fundamentalism."

JULY

ISNA took part in a roundtable discussion held by a Ranking Member of the Financial Services Committee, with the purpose to facilitate an interfaith dialogue of faith leaders and organizations, who have actively advocated against abusive payday lending practices.

Matrimonial Banquets

- ISNA held ten events throughout the year in different cities including Anaheim, Tampa, Houston, Chicago, Dallas, New York, and Cincinnati.
- ISNA saw its highest number of matrimonial participants during the annual convention, with three separate events over the weekend.

"ISNA provided the opportunity to take a chance and see if one can find a future spouse that can make you feel complete, and from my experience it worked." —Matrimonial Attendee

"I attended the matrimonial banquet in Chicago, where I met my wife. Mahshallah, we now have a beautiful two-year-old daughter and could not be happier. I also encouraged my brother to attend the matrimonial banquet, where he met his wife... Over the years, we have convinced many of our friends and family to attend this event, and we will continue to spread the word InshAllah."

—Event Attendee





MYNA held summer camps in California and Ohio during July and August, under the theme "Oppression Anywhere is... Oppression Everywhere." Speakers engaged with youth on a personal level, and the campers took on the deep task of understanding oppression in all its different forms, and came away with a positive sense to bring about justice and harmony wherever they can.



IOICA, Dr. Sayyid Syeed spoke at a meeting on the Nuclear Arms Deal with Iran and Weapons of Mass Destruction at the US State Department. He expressed the concern that the possession of nuclear weapons is a risk for all humanity, and that all nations, without exception, should eliminate these weapons completely in a verifiable manner.



AUGUST

ISNA sponsored and participated in the annual Indianapolis Festival of Faiths, hosted by the Center for Interfaith Cooperation. ISNA worked with local masajid and Muslim organizations to form a block to showcase the diversity within the Muslim community as well as to create an opportunity to strengthen interfaith partnerships.



ISNA representative attended a chaplains and endorsers meeting held by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Colorado. ISNA, as an endorser of Muslim chaplains, was invited to attend this weeklong training, experience some of the chaplaincy program and strengthen the collaboration between the program administrators, chaplains and endorsers.





ANNUAL CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER

52nd Annual ISNA Convention in Chicago, "Stories of Resilience: Strengthening the American Muslim Narrative." This year highlighted the different challenges facing American Muslims today and the critical need to reshape the Muslim community. All around the world, from trials and tribulations of oppressed minorities to the private inner struggles of everyday people, are the many stories of human resilience that attendees were able to reflect upon and learn from.





"ISNA Convention provides a great opportunity to discuss topics in Islam. I learned a lot and hope to share it with others."



- More than 200 renowned speakers, included over 80 female speakers
- Bazaar with more than 500 booths
- Community Service Recognition Banquet speakers were Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X, and Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient. Dr. M. Yaqub Mirza received the community service award for his over 40 years of leadership and strong passion for serving the community, from his early years with MSA, to his present involvement with ISNA, in addition to the numerous university and organizational boards and committees he serves on.
- 30th Anniversary MYNA track "Stairway to Heaven" provided youth with intimate speaker discussions, community discussions, various art-form workshops and partnerships with many national organizations, giving youth the chance to be heard and participate in meaningful activities.
- Over 300 attendees benefited from the free health screenings done in collaboration with IMANA, the Compassionate Care Network, and American Red Cross.
- Interfaith Unity Banquet, attended by over 300 guests
- Government Officials Banquet, joined by 75 leaders



*portunity to educate yourself on various
e to return next year Insha'Allah."*

—Convention Attendee

- Basketball Tournaments for men and women
- Congratulatory video message from President Obama to ISNA
- Launch of ISNA's Inclusive Mosque Initiative for women's inclusion
- More than 1000 singles participated in ISNA's Matrimonial Banquets
- Fashion Show for women
- Art Exhibit
- Film Festival
- Qira'at Competition
- Meet the Author program
- 103 distributed press passes
- Children's Education Program
- Carnival rides
- Entertainment Session
- Stop Hunger Now food packaging project
- Emerging Religious Leaders Seminar (ERLS), run by the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign, was held during the convention. It was an opportunity for 24 emerging leaders to learn about the roots and manifestations of anti-Muslim bigotry in the US, and develop networks and skills for engaging themselves and their faith communities in fostering positive interreligious learning, relationships, solidarity and activism.



OCTOBER

ISNA Secretary General Hazem Bata spoke at the United Methodist Church north of Indianapolis, as part of ISNA's ongoing interfaith outreach. He debunked several myths and stereotypes attributed to Muslims, and emphasized the need to move away from the "us and them" mindset and shift towards a shared understanding of one human family.

ISNA President Azhar Azeez spoke at a joint news conference that addressed the Russian airstrikes in Syria. He urged the Russian government to halt its military mobilization in Syria and renewed the call to establish a no-fly zone to prevent further deaths and injuries. He also highlighted the severity of the refugee crisis and called upon both the Russian and US governments to increase relief efforts.



ISNA HQ Guests

Throughout 2015, ISNA Headquarters in Plainfield, IN hosted over 170 interfaith visitors who came to learn more information about Islam and Muslims. The groups consisted of college students, church groups, civic groups, hospital and resident chaplains, senior citizens and community outreach groups. Each group was given a brief overview and presentation about Islam, followed by a Q & A. ISNA also hosted an open house for the local community to let our neighbors get to know us better and build connections.



IOICA attended an Islamophobia conference in Temple University hosted by the Evangelical church, to help bridge the two faiths and understand similarities.

ISNA hosted two sessions at the Parliament of World's Religions Conference in Salt Lake City, UT, which drew a crowd of 10,000 attendees from around the world. The first session, "Humanity at the Heart of Islam and in the Hearts of Muslims: Moving Beyond the Dialogue," focused on examples of social justice and activism from Prophetic times to the modern era. The second session "Clarifying Misconceptions about Islam and Muslims: One Step Towards Defeating ISIS," explored myths and misconceptions of Islam and Muslims with Quranic exploration and a problem solving study of violent extremism looking at our role in defeating ISIS.



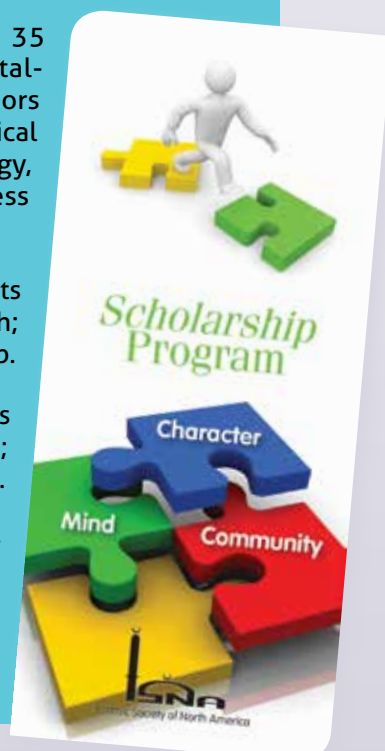
Scholarship Recipients

This year, ISNA awarded 35 students scholarships totaling \$110,000. Subject majors vary from journalism, political science, medical technology, computer science, business administration and more.

Aziz Jamaluddin – 10 students were awarded \$4,000 each; this is a recurring scholarship.

Dr. Abdus Saleem – 5 students were awarded \$10,000 each; this is a recurring scholarship.

Dr. Abdulmunim A. Shakir – 20 freshman students were awarded \$1,000 each; this is a one-time scholarship.





NOVEMBER

ISNA's 3rd Annual Masjid Forum in Maryland "Creating a Welcoming Masjid." This Forum of leaders, imams, board members, and community members focused on developing concrete recommendations for strengthening and growing masajid in North America by means of shared experiences, expert advice and open discussion.

ISNA's Conference in Cincinnati "Building Vibrant Communities and Families" created sessions to revolve around community and youth development, family matters and spiritual enrichment.

DECEMBER

West Zone Seerah Conference in California "What did Muhammad (SAW) do? Challenges of being a Minority" incorporated the Seerah to address modern challenges and encourage spiritual development.

MYNA winter camps "Seasons of the Heart" had a theme surrounding the purification of the heart, which were spiritually uplifting, and inner thought-provoking, and provided tangible takeaways to encourage continued growth and reflection.





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