Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Assalaam-o-Alaikum. I pray and hope that Insha’Allah you and your families are in good health and Eemaan.

As you already know that the City of Chicago has approved the permit to build the Mezzanine at MCC prayer hall. This is a long term landmark dream of the community that has been delayed many times in the past. Alhamdulillah we have identified and finalized a Contractor to build the mezzanine. Please donate generously, and help collect the funds, participate in this Sadqa Jaaria and get benefit in your tax deduction.

In our February Board meeting, in addition to welcoming new board members, the Board elected three Directors at Large, and approved MCC officers (Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary) as well as members of standing committees. Their details follow.

In addition to the above appointments, many other positions have been filled. Further positions will be filled very soon and year 2017 organizational brochure will be available towards the end of March.

In MCC organization, Department heads are responsible to oversee, coordinate and facilitate various committees and their tasks under their department. The Department Heads are to report to the President. I request all the committees and departments to adhere to the policies and coordinate with each other. Give progress reports on a continual basis. The Department Head appointments are for one year.

Department of Administration: Ateeq Ansari

MCC hosted Open Mosque Day on Sunday February 20th. The response was overwhelming as the prayer hall was packed by nearly a thousand who came to learn about the mosque, Islam, and Muslims and show solidarity. “There was so much love in that room,” said Wendy Widom, a Jewish supporter. “I truly felt that. You hear so much negativity these days, but the only things I felt were love and friendship. I just want to thank you again for having us.” These sentiments were repeated by guests throughout the event. The atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm and support.

Guests heard the panel consisting of MCC President, Mohammad Sarwar Nasir; Mufti Nazim Mangera; Dr. Sabeel Ahmed, Director of GainPeace; Sister Anjum Ali and Sister Diana Cruz; discuss various aspects of

“Strive Together”

MCC Academy and MUHSEN (Muslim’s Understanding and Helping Special Education Needs) have partnered up to create a program called Strive Together for children with special needs. This program takes place every Saturday from 10:30-12pm at MEC, Morton Grove. In this program, the teachers use adaptive strategies to help each student be successful in learning the Arabic alphabet, different surahs, and praying salah. The sessions are tailored to meet the needs of each individual scholar. Through this new program, our community is able to take their first step in being more inclusive for our diverse learners. If you would like more information on this program, or would like to be a volunteer, feel free to email us at mcestrive@gmail.com. Neha Iqbal

MCC TOWN HALL MEETING WITH MORTON GROVE VILLAGE POSITION CANDIDATES

Date: Sunday, March 26, 2017 2 PM
Location: MEC Banquet Hall

All Morton Grove Residents are invited to ask their questions from the candidates.

(Continued on page 2)
Guests included young and old, families, local politicians, and people from all walks of life. The Community Hall was overflowing with people enjoying a wide variety of delicious foods and drinks, cultural Islamic art, and tables that represented the Latino Muslim community, Muslim Girl Scout troop, face painting and henna which were wildly popular.

Michelle Taylor was effusive with feeling: “I am still learning about Islam, so it could have easily felt a bit intimidating, but everyone was so warm and welcoming. I am very grateful to have been able to attend a community event like this, and grateful that MCC opened its doors to all of us to help educate and connect with neighbors.” This event, which was also covered by various media outlets, could not have been such a great success if it were not for the grace of Allah (swt) and the tireless work and effort of the MCC Interfaith and Outreach Committee and an enormous team of dedicated hard-working volunteers.

"MCC I & O Committee would like to thank all of the volunteers who made this event smooth and pleasant for all of our guests. Also, we want to thank CVS at Pulaski & Montrose and Wintrust Bank at Elston & Pulaski for allowing our guests to use their parking lots. As I interacted with guests their overwhelming feeling was: "Thanks for doing this and allowing us to know about Islam and Muslim culture". Regarding the variety of food: "It is delicious!" Even the children happily expressed their sentiments. A couple asked me if they can volunteer for Project Rizq at MCC, and I’ve connected them with the Rehab Committee."
- Akhtar Sadiq.

On February 11th, MCC Imam, (Mufti) Nazim, hosted Assistant Professor Katherine Lemons who was visiting from Canada. The professor is currently doing research about the Islamic Judicial Marriage separation course at Imam Zamin Institute in Phulwari Sharif, Patna Bihar, where (Mufti) Nazim completed this very course. The course is offered in only one place in the world and our Imam is the only Muslim scholar in the USA who has completed the course. For her upcoming research project titled Traveling for Justice, Professor Lemons had a four-hour long discussion with our Imam at our Elston facility. She will be visiting the institute in India for two weeks in May to further her research on Islamic law adjudication in India.

Congratulations to MCC Academy Alumnus and Niles West Junior Suhaylah Syeda for her second place win (among 2,000 other competitors) in the Anti-Defamation League’s Annual Poetry Contest. One of her prizes is a $1,000 college scholarship. Her poignant poem titled "I Have a Freedom" is incredibly timely and meaningful to all Americans of an ethnic or religious minority. You can listen to Suhaylah reciting her poem at the ADL’s dinner honoring all of the award-winners by visiting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BX10CQcXrt8.

January 20, 2017 Donald J. Trump was inaugurated the 45th president of the United States of America. The following day legions of women and men attended the Women’s March on Washington and sister marches around the world. Several MCC members took part in the March on Washington and the March on Chicago.

Originally introduced on Facebook the day following the election, female leaders of diverse backgrounds including Linda Sarsour, a Muslim human rights activist, were invited to co-chair the March on Washington. As interest spread rapidly, local groups began organizing marches in solidarity. In Illinois, these marches, referred to as Sister Marches, took place in numerous places such as Rockford, Elgin, Urban-Champaign, Peoria, with the largest Illinois march held in Chicago. Marches also took place around the world on every continent including Antarctica.

According to the event website, “The Women’s March on Washington (WMW) is for any person, regardless of gender or gender identity, who believes women’s rights are human rights.” Several MCC members attended both marches. A Chicago marcher stated: “It was truly a beautiful feeling. All different types of people who make up our great city marching peacefully together to show that we stand united as human beings deserving of respect.”

Despite the hundreds of thousands of people attending both marches not a single arrest was made at either march. This historic demonstration of peacefully marching to show solidarity in opposition to discrimination serves as a great positive example of the power of collaboration in a pluralistic society.—Naushina Rehman.
Department of Community Services: Masood Bijapuri
Department of Finance: Tariq Malhance
Department of Building Operations: Mazhar Khan
Department of Religious Affairs: Mufti Nazim Mangera

Following new Committee Chairs have been appointed. Previous Committee Chairs either completed their terms, or asked to be relieved:

MEC building Committee: Hafia Ibrahim Ismael
Publication Committee: Shabnam Mahmood
IT/Website: Ateeq Ansari
Interfaith & Outreach Committee: Dilnaz Waraich
Membership Committee: Masood Bijapuri
Election Committee: Samina Hussain

MCC Youth Council: MCC Youth programs are conducted with the help of MCC Youth and Seniors Coordinator and under the supervision of President. Following are the Officers. Anas Gandhi (Chair), Saadath Ali (Co-Chair), Shabana Sadruddin (Secretary), Hager Berrada (Member) and Mohsin Ishaq (Coordinator).

This month last year, we decided to have a weekly MCC electronic newsletter (e.news) to the community by Wednesday the latest to Mufti Mangera (mccnazim@gmail.com). If members have still not signed up for this e.news, please do so. You don’t want to miss the important community information.

Finally, I encourage you all to attend MCCCA annual fund raising dinner on Saturday, March 11th at White Eagle banquet hall, Niles and support the School.

During the February 12, 2017 meeting of the MCC Board, following appointments were approved:

3 Directors at Large:
Asrar Ahmed
Zehra Rahman
Hashim Weyesso

Approval of Officers
Vice President- Mazhar Khan
Treasurer- Mohammad Basheeruddin
Secretary- Ali Quadri
Assistant Treasurer-Kashif Puthawala
Assistant Secretary- Zehra Rahman

Standing Committee members:

Nomination Committee:
Afsar Ali (Chairperson), Naseem Khan, Masood Bijapuri, Khaled Mujtaba, Rasheed Khan.

By-Laws Committee:
Saba Khan (Chairperson), Asrar Ahmed, Habib Abbasi, Usman Baki.

Committee of Directors of Education:
Omer Khan (Chairperson), Afsar Ali, Ali Quadri, Atiya Usman, Kulsum Sadiq.

May Allah (SWT) bless you! Aameen.

Regards, 
Mohammad Sarwar Nasir
President, MCC
847-927-0919, Msnasir53@gmail.com

Discussion: Muslims Pursuing the Arts

On February 12th, MCC’s Interfaith and Outreach Committee and Skokie’s Northlight Theater, co-hosted a panel discussion, Muslims on Stage and Screen, at MEC followed by a discussion about the pros and cons of Muslims engaging in the arts professionally, such as writing, acting, producing, and directing plays and films. Over 100 people, with a mix of Muslims and non-Muslims enjoyed presentations by three professionals. Selina Filinger, the young playwright who wrote Faceless, currently playing at Northlight Theater, spoke about how she researched the phenomenon of white, American, youth being persuaded to join a foreign terrorist organization. Omer Mozaffar, Loyola’s Muslim Chaplain and Islamic Studies lecturer, who is also a movie critic and Hollywood consultant, explained the history of how Muslims have been portrayed in western films and how this closely reflects the public attitude toward Muslims based on current events. Rohina Malik, actor and award winning playwright of Unveiled, Meena Tales and Yasmina’s Necklace, spoke about her journey to a career in theater and how anyone with focus, passion and trust in Allah (swt) can have a successful career with a livable income in this field. The panelists conveyed the importance of Muslims telling their own stories, the effect on Muslim self-esteem when their characters are only criminals and how the public needs to advocate for more multi-dimensional roles. Many non-Muslims in the audience shared how seeing Faceless has made them see Muslims more deeply and appreciate the complicated dance Muslims do to be seen as “normal” and despite wanting to dissociate Islam with terrorism, yet constantly having to address it.

As-salaamu-alaikum. It is my honor and privilege to chair the Publications Committee following the stellar example of Dr. Bhatty. I look forward to serving the community through this forum utilizing my experience in academia, media and publications. Insha’Allah we are looking forward to an exciting road ahead. Please keep us in your duas for a successful journey.

~ Shabnam Mahmood

MCC Publications Committee

Chair/Chief Editor
Shabnam Mahmood

Co-Chair
Syed Mahmood

Contributing Editor
Najah Bhatty

Editorial Advisor
Javed Bhatty

Advertising Manager
M. Sabih Uddin

Prayer Timetable
Hafiz Ikhlas Ansari

The Message is a monthly publication of the Muslim Community Center that informs members of administration, organization, and committee activities of MCC/MEC. Submit your questions and comments editor@mccpublications@gmail.com. The opinions expressed in The Message do not necessarily represent those of the Publication Committee. The editors reserve the right to edit all material.