

THE MESSAGE

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kazim Mohammed
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Assalamu Alaikum. I hope and pray that this message finds you in good health and strong Iman. I also hope that you and your families had a blessed Ramadan and a joyous Eid. Ramadan is always one of the most exciting times of the year at MCC, and this year was no different.

Every day, we saw 350-600 people come through our doors for Iftar and dinner at MCC Chicago, thousands of congregants praying Isha and Taraweeh at our three locations, packed prayer halls at Jumuah, six Eid Salaha to accommodate the crowds, a Ramadan toy drive and distribution for underprivileged children, two celebrations for those who fasted for the very first time, and grocery delivery to families in need – and the list goes on. MCC also received a record 1,300 Zakat applications during Ramadan, which was more than 250% of what we typically receive.

Ramadan showed us that we can restrain ourselves from our most basic needs, make time to connect with our Most Merciful Lord, and be generous with our resources. But when Ramadan ends, our goodness and generosity should not end with it. Our Generous Lord of Ramadan is still here, the masjid is still open, and the needy in our community are still struggling. MCC's programs will continue, so please make the effort to attend and benefit from them, volunteer in some capacity, and support our efforts financially.

Lastly, in your prayers, please remember MCC, our community, and our brothers and sisters struggling here in America and throughout the world. Jazakallahu Khairun.

MY FIRST FAST: A MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE



This year, MCC hosted its 5th Annual *My First Fast* celebration at the Morton Grove and Elston locations.

The MCC community came together to honor participants for their first Ramadan fast, uplifting and supporting them as they experienced this meaningful milestone. Families and friends filled the evening with warmth and encouragement, welcoming around 140 participants into this shared experience.



Each participant received a medal and certificate in recognition of their dedication to fasting, while reflections and guidance from the community inspired them to continue this worship. The event highlighted both the spiritual significance of fasting and the value of discipline, gratitude, and empathy for the less fortunate.

My First Fast continues to be a powerful reminder of how a small milestone, when celebrated together, can leave a lasting impact. We look forward to growing this tradition and supporting more individuals on their journey in fasting and faith in the years ahead.

By Saba Khan

ANNUAL INTERFAITH IFTAR

On March 1, the MCC Interfaith & Outreach Committee partnered with IFANCA to host our annual Ramadan Interfaith Iftar at the Sabeel Center in Des Plaines. Multifaith leaders from across Chicago attended for an evening centered on a timely topic, "Facing Oppression with Faith and Courage." From the moving speeches to meaningful conversations at each table, the evening was a reminder of what is possible when we come together with openness and intention.

During the event, we handed out "What can I do next?" cards, designed to help turn one evening of conversation into meaningful and lasting impact. We invited attendees to continue the work inspired by the evening's event into the real world by reflecting on:

- Which values or specific elements of the speeches truly resonated with you?
- What lessons from our gathering can you carry back into your daily life?
- How can these insights enrich your own faith community or others?

Whether you were able to attend the event or not, we encourage you to reflect on how these insights might influence your daily life, your faith community, or your service to others. If you feel inspired to pursue an idea or initiative, we would be honored to support and collaborate with you. Reach out to us at mccinterfaithteam@gmail.com, or follow us on Instagram @mccinterfaithteam.



By Bazigha Khan & Kinza Shekhani

DRIED CONCRETE: THE STAMP OF RAMADAN

Growing up in Chicago, many of us remember a common sight: handprints or shoe prints in dried concrete. Sometimes people would write their names in the wet concrete with their finger, even though it was risky because they could get caught. Anyway, whenever a concrete slab was being replaced, people would leave their impression in it while it was still wet. Why? Because they knew it would last for a very long time.

This past Ramadan, we spent a month growing closer to Allah (Exalted is He). Many of us began preparing weeks or months in advance, working to rid ourselves of poor habits and form good ones. Others of us began our journey during Ramadan itself. Regardless, we all noticed that things became easier throughout the month. We became malleable again, and Allah (Exalted is He) began to mold us into true believers. But when the adhan for the Maghrib prayer welcomed

Shawwal, Shaytan was released and is looking for revenge. What should we do? We don't want to fall back into the same cycle we worked all month breaking.

We should think of ourselves as wet concrete. During Ramadan, we were mixed, poured, and shaped into what Allah (Exalted is He) wanted for us. Now, we need to let ourselves dry on that same mold. To do this, our Prophet (upon him be the prayers and blessings of Allah) advised us to fast six days from Shawwal. However, these fasts should mirror our Ramadan fasts. They should not only include abstention from food, drink, and marital relations, but also similar acts of worship as in our Ramadan. If we do our Shawwal fasts this way, especially early in the month, we will set into the mold that Allah created for us in Ramadan. InshaAllah, that handprint will last until next Ramadan.

By Sa'ad Quadri

FROM RAMADAN TO EARTH MONTH

April is Earth Month, and our commitment to being caretakers of the Earth during Ramadan has prepared us for it!

Among the highlights, the MCC Green Team and Y.O.M. – Ummah United Youth Group collaborated in February on a Green Ramadan Workshop for middle schoolers. The activities demonstrated how living the Sunnah and being eco-conscious come from the same Islamic wisdom.

Sr. Amira coordinated several interactive youth stations, including calligraphy with artist Nida Fazal, Sunnah Spin, Khalifah Commitment Wall, Dua Drop Box, and Ramadan Reflection stations. Dr. Sam's Sunnah Foods table featured foods enjoyed by our Prophet Muhammad (SAS), prepared in both traditional and new ways. She



also spoke about how the timing of eating certain foods affects gut health. The youth planted barley seeds with Sr. Belinda to understand the concept of Sadaqa Jarriyah, while Sr. Sema led a meditation session at the Qalb & Dhikr station.

Sr. Sara oversaw the table where students competed to sort recyclables, and Sr. Anjum manned the Sharing Table, where families could take whatever they needed from items donated by the community. Sr. Lynda sold reusable Green Team water bottles to keep us hydrated throughout Ramadan.



The smiles and thoughtful expressions on our youth's faces demonstrated just how meaningful, engaging, and impactful the event was.

You can take action this Earth Month by joining Faith in Place's "Faith in Action Week" from April 18-23, 2026. For more information or to join the effort, contact holisticgreenteam@gmail.com.

By Amira Kashif Puthawala, Dr. Sam & Anjum Ali

YOUTH OF MEC'S RAMADAN EVENTS

The Youth of MEC organized several events throughout Ramadan

The Little Ummah Quran Competition gave boys and girls ages 3 to 10 a chance to build confidence by memorizing and reciting the Quran in front of their parents. It was inspiring to see the children step up and share the Surahs they learned during Ramadan. May Allah SWT reward all the children and their parents. A big thank you to Hafidh Faisal and Ustadha Rania for serving as our judges.

YOM hosted its first-ever Ramadan bake sales on Friday and Saturday evenings, selling chocolate chip cookies, cotton candy, matcha, and more. Thanks to the community's support, we raised \$6,000. The Big Brothers' Iftar, Big Sisters' Iftar, and YMS Quran Circle were all well attended, and Sip N' Seek brought together hundreds of youth. YM Brothers held three Qiyams at different masjids, each with its own talk and a strong attendance.

If you pledged a donation during Ramadhan and have yet to make the donation, please Zelle 'treasury@mccchicago.org' with the Memo "YOM Ramadhan Donation". If you are unable to Zelle, please visit the office and ask to donate to Youth or YOM. We are looking to raise \$75,000 by the end of the year, so please consider donating generously.

Follow us on Instagram @youthofmcc for event information, updates from the youth and more!

By Aujuddin Shaikh and Feryaal Tahir





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your thoughts.

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CITY OF CHICAGO'S FAITH LEADERS MEETING



Photo from Chicago's Faith Leaders Meeting. Representing were executive director of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), the Muslim Community Center's new Imam Abdul Ahad, and community leader Arjumand Hashmi Khan

By Arjumand Khan