

Middle Eastern North African (MENA) Committee
March 16, 2022
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:	MEMBERS PRESENT:
<p>America Navejas, Inland Caregivers Dakota Brown, Cultural Community Liaison Disabilities Community Dwayne Wright, PEARLS Coach Eman Hassan, MENA Co-Chair Ernst Fenelon Jr., MENA Co-Chair Glenis Ulloa, Senior Parent Partner, Cultural Competency, RUHS-BH Kevin Phalavisay, Cultural Liaison, LGBTQ+ Community Maimoona Naveed, UCR Student, MENA Co-Chair Malek Bendelhoun, Co-Founder, Associate Director of Shura Council of North America Rachel Postovoit, Cultural Liaison Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community</p>	<p>Ranya Obeid, UCR Student, MENA Co-Chair Rev. Benita Ramsey Cultural Liaison, Spirituality Community Riba Eshanzada, Cultural Liaison, MENA Community Selene Conteras, Office Assistant III, Cultural Competency, RUHS-BH Shirley Guzman, Cultural Liaison, Latinx Community Sonia Baya, MENA Co-Chair Sylvia Bishop, Secretary I, Cultural Competency, RUHS-BH Tabari Zahir, MENA Co-Chair Tala Sooukieh, UCR Student, Co-Chair Tondra Hill, Social Services Planner, Cultural Competency, RUHS-BH</p>

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
I. CALL TO ORDER/ WELCOME	Riba called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm	
II. MEETING MINUTES	MENA Committee's first meeting of 2022 no minutes to review.	
III. INTRODUCTIONS	Members introduced themselves	
IV. RAMADAN	Tabari presented the importance of Ramadan. Ramadan is the month of fasting in Islam. It is in the 9 th month of the Islamic lunar year, and it is either 29 or 30 days. During Ramadan Muslims practice fasting. Fasting is from right before sun up until sundown. Fasting is one of the 5 pillars of Islam. Fasting has been found to have many spiritual, physical, moral, and social benefits.	
V. EID	<p>One of the Ramadan events MENA will be collaborating on will be an event held by the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at UCR on April 16th from 10 am – 9 pm called “Saberside College Day 2022.” The goal is to show incoming students that as Muslims, they need to step up and be involved in the communities.</p> <p>During the month of Ramadan, Sahaba Initiative hosts a series of different food giveaways. Depending on the week there are different focus groups that they work with. Bordwell Park on April; 9th trying to work with the Riverside free clinic to provide free services at the event. On the 25th of April Sahaba is working with another organization called Humanitarian Day. They will be making food bags for the homeless and senior homes. Sahaba Initiative is always taking volunteers. Malek extended an invite to Sahaba Initiative's Ramada Iftar, the breaking of the fast, on April 10th at the Fox Event Center in Redlands. He extended the invite to MENA members if you'd like to attend contact Riba or Malek to RSVP.</p>	As soon as the flyer is approved Malek will send out the flyer for the event on April 25 th

	<p>An Eid event will be collaborating with the Islamic Society of Corona/Norco-May 7th Riba invited everyone to attend so everyone gets to see how Eid is celebrated. More information on this event will follow.</p>	
<p>VI. WOMEN IN ISLAM</p>	<p>Maimoona presented on Women in Islam. A few topics were misconceptions, Hadiths/Quran verses, and the women in Islam.</p> <p><u>Common Misconceptions of Women’s Rights in Islam</u> In the western view, there is the misconception, of Muslim women as being submissive or having no rights in Islam. Also, Muslim women are often perceived as having to follow everything their spouse says without having a voice of their own and the hijab is seen as a form of oppression. Men are viewed as more powerful or better than women in Islam.</p> <p>Maimoona went over debunking those misconceptions such as Muslim women are very independent and speak their minds openly. Islam women can get an education, have their careers, and make their own money. The hijab is a representation of respecting a woman’s beauty. In Islam, a woman’s beauty is so special that the only people deserving of seeing it are her family and spouse. Women are viewed as equals in Islam.</p> <p>Riba highlighted women in Islam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khadija bin al-Khwaylid: wife of the Prophet, very successful and powerful businesswoman, she was brave, bold, and a very respectful figure in Islam. Had a way of holding herself with respect while being successful. • Nusaybah Bin Ka’Ab was a member of the Banu Najjar tribe of Madinah and was known for her bravery on the battlefield. She fought alongside the Prophet of Islam and his companions. • Sayyida al-Hurra (1484-1452) Pirate Queen • Fatima al-Fihir (800-880) founded the world’s first university in 859 in Fez, Morocco, the University of al-Qarawiyyin. • Wan Azizah Wan Ismail Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, politician, the first female leader of the Opposition, and the highest ever female political office holder in the history of Malaysia • Samia Suluhu Hassan, president of Tanzania <p>Shirley shared she had a misconception about women of Islam and others may have them as well. She added that hearing the presentation and seeing how women have their rights gives a different perception. She highlighted that these types of presentations are needed in terms of changing the perceptions about women in Islam.</p> <p>Very important to highlight why there are misconceptions and why we see these things to be true. Sometimes the media distorts what is the norm versus what it is. It’s also important to acknowledge and</p>	

	<p>express women of Islam can own property, can be business owners, and do other different things. As we deal with people who come into RUHS that we are all aware.</p> <p>Malek added that something that is misunderstood about the Muslim community is that there is a misconception that they are all Arabs when in fact Muslims are very diverse. For example, the largest population of Muslims is Indonesian. It is important to understand “Muslims aren’t a monolith and there is a plethora of diversity and difference within the Muslim community.”</p>	
VII.PAST EVENTS	<p>MSA UCR Islam Awareness Week was geared towards awareness, for people who were interested in Islam and for UCR’s MSA members. The event had several activities such as giving out sunflowers with sayings or “hadiths”, there was a modesty day where hijabs were tried on and given out, a Masjid tour of the Riverside Mosque, and lastly, there was a unity picnic and an “afterlife sermon.”</p> <p>Tabari Zahir presented on the Tayba Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to serving individuals and families impacted by incarceration. Has helped over 10,000 students and members. The SoCal office is in San Bernardino but serves the Inland Empire. The main services they provide are food pantry, Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Services, and Case Management.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tayba Foundation 1887 Business Center Dr., Suite #3 San Bernardino, CA 92408 (909) 543-6173 www.taybafoundation.org</p> <p>Case management ranges from needs assessments, housing, medical insurance, and job skills to free legal aid. For mental health services, Tayba Foundation uses registered Associate Clinical Social Workers (ACSW) to deliver trauma therapy and other therapy tools. Substance abuse services offered are treatment plans, distress tolerance, crisis management, one-on-one sessions, therapeutic group sessions, in-patient referrals, AA/NA meetings, and assessments using ASAM criteria. Life Skills Tayba Foundation provides are soft skills, technology literacy, employment skills, family unification, and financial literacy.</p>	
VIII. MENA NAME CHANGE	<p>After conducting the needs assessment Riba found that there is a disconnect between the community and reaching out to mental health services. She also found that people identified themselves as being of different nationalities. In the Muslim community, about 75% of nationalities are represented—not just the MENA community. Because the Muslim community is very diverse there will be a name change to be more inclusive. For RUHS it will still be called, MENA. When engaging with the community the name will change so no one is left out. Riba highlighted that there’s a need to be inclusive since Muslims have a broad spectrum of nationalities.</p>	
IX. OTHER ITEMS	<p>Upcoming Ramadan events:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 26 Pre-Ramadan Afghan New Year Event – MSA Students are going to be coordinating a picnic for the whole family• April 10 Sahaba Initiative Banquet• April 16 College Day	
X. NEXT MEETING	The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2022	
XI. ADJOURNMENT	With no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm	