

AVERTISSEMENT

[Point de Bascule](#) n'endosse pas le contenu de ce document. Il est archivé sur ce site uniquement à des fins de référence.

WARNING

[Point de Bascule](#) does not endorse the content of this document. It is archived on this website strictly for reference purposes.

History of the Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario (Part 1)

Original address: http://issuu.com/londonlink/docs/llink_v2i5_web/1?mode=a_p

Author: Naeema Farooqi

Source: London Link, Ramadan 2012 (July-August 2012), p. 3

Original title: The Story of the Islamic Centre

Excerpt:

The families (involved in the construction of the mosque) were: Dr. Kadri Mustafa and his wife Dr. Fatima; Hanny Shoushar and his wife Fadia; Hanny Hasan and his wife Najahat; Dr. Hanny Shafaie and his wife Neimat; Ghanie Mizraki and his wife Asma; Naeem Qureshi and his wife Brenda; Dr. Zafar Husain and his wife Inge; Hisham Slim and his wife Aisha. Dr. Munir El Kassem was appointed as the Imam of the Islamic Centre. After a breakthrough in land negotiations and construction 1994 saw the inauguration of the Islamic Centre officially incorporated as a charitable organization.

London Link

www.londonlinkmag.com



volume two, issue five // page 3

The Story of the Islamic Centre

Part One

// The London LINK team had the opportunity to sit with two members of the Board: Hisham Slim (Founding Chairman) and Mohammad Ozman Yassine (Chairman of the Board) at the Islamic Centre of South West Ontario recently to find out about the history, working and vision of the Centre, which we will talk about in this three part series.

In a quest to serve the underserved Muslim community members who did not speak Arabic at all back in the 1980's and who felt lost during lectures and sermons, the vision of the Islamic Centre was conceived. Many of the Muslim migrant families who had established their roots forty to fifty years ago at that time had also growing teenage and preteen children. These kids were growing up as first generation Canadians and naturally felt at ease in English and were not able to follow the sermons at the local Mosque, which were mostly conducted in Arabic language. But it was not only the language barrier that was creating some growing pains in the community during that time, it was also having a more inclusive vision for a place where even women who wished to come and pray for Eid and Friday prayers could be welcomed with both ease and appropriateness. This was in the late eighties and in those times the Muslim community was split over the opinion of a more conservative vs. a more inclusive approach to Islam. Hence, the initial idea of an Islamic Centre of South West Ontario was born as a thought and a need. The main aim and objective was to make sure the younger generation's religious needs must be catered for and nurtured otherwise they will be lost. Time was running out and these families wanted to do something soon. So from 1989 till 1992, the members of like-minded 8-10 families got together along with their children and met up for lectures /sermons at the rented premises at Fanshawe College conducted in English language by Dr. Munir El Kassem. Women who wished to attend along with their families were welcomed as well. The success of these weekly English lectures and sermons pointed towards the establishment of a place where this could be done without renting facilities each week.

A land was identified near the highway on Pond Mills Road and eventually acquired by 8 families putting in their own personal savings and risking their

“The Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario exists in order to bring members of the faith together, to bring, raise and keep children within the faith, to increase knowledge and practice of faith and to provide a place of worship, welcome and hospitality.”

personal savings and risking their own homes as collateral with the banks. The families were: Dr. Kadri Mustafa and his wife Dr. Fatima; Hanny Shoushar and his wife Fadia; Hanny Hasan and his wife Najahat; Dr. Hanny Shafaie and his wife Neimat; Ghanie Mizraki and his wife Asma; Naeem Qureshi and his wife Brenda; Dr. Zafar Husain and his wife Inga; Hisham Slim and his wife Aisha. Dr. Munir El Kassem was appointed as the Imam of the Islamic Centre. After a breakthrough in land negotiations and construction 1994 saw the inauguration of the Islamic Centre officially incorporated as a charitable organization and launched with a progressive and encompassing vision, mission and by-laws. The mission of the Islamic Centre states:

“The Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario exists in order to bring members of the faith together, to bring, raise and keep children within the faith, to increase knowledge and practice of faith and to provide a place of worship, welcome and hospitality.”

Seeing this mission translated into reality is a pleasure. I see it as a new-comer to London myself, whenever I go to the centre, I feel the welcoming aura and the genuine warmth of the people despite their humble building it stands proud and happy.

In the upcoming issue for this series, London LINK will find out about bigger achievements like the Muslim Cemetery and the Landmark project, etc; so stay tuned. // —Naeema Farooq



Mohammad Ozman Yassine and Hisham Slim

Background photo credit: Ahmed Javed