

CANADIAN MUSLIM

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

SAHAR BADAWY is the president and founder of Flemington Park Parent Association, a community grassroots organization that is involved in projects such as accessible soccer league, baseball, cricket, a tutoring program and communication classes for parents. She has organized programs focused on fighting childhood obesity and concentrating on health. Sahar also organizes fitness class for moms, giving them an opportunity to come out and network. Her organization has partnered with the Toronto District School Board, Ministry of Education, Police among others.

FARIDA CHISHTI is the President of the P.E.I. Chapter of CCMW and of the P.E.I. Multicultural society. Through bake sales and auctions she raised \$50,000 for the earthquake victims in Pakistan. Farida also visited various government, business and community leaders and raised awareness regarding the scarcity of jobs for Muslim women. She has also produced a pamphlet called "What you always wanted to know about your neighbors, but didn't want to ask!" This pamphlet addresses questions which many non-Muslims may have about Muslims and Islam.

SABRA DESAI, is an educator, human rights activist and therapist. Along with other women she helped establish Peel's Interim Place, the first shelter for women and children escaping violence in 1981. Currently she is volunteering with the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians to develop culturally appropriate interventions to help address family violence. She continues to work with individuals infected and or affected by HIV and AIDS, specifically with women and children in Africa and in Canada. She is the co-founder of the Muslim AIDS Project.

FARZANA DOCTOR is a consultant and trainer specializing in organizational diversity and clinical issues relating to marginalized populations. She is also a psychotherapist and specializes in working with people from an anti-oppression perspective. She has been an instructor at the University of Toronto and Ryerson Faculties of Social Work. She co-produced a documentary video for South Asian LGBT families, and authored a novel, Stealing Nasreen (Inanna Publications, 2007). She received her Master in Social Work at Carlton University in 1993.

MONA SHAHWAN EL-TAHAN was born in Egypt and immigrated to Canada in 1975. She was the first woman in Canada to complete a Master's Degree in Ocean Engineering from Memorial University (1980). She is recognized as an ice environment and information technology specialist and her company, InCoreTec Inc., which she founded and heads, has developed software and systems that help ships stay on course, avoid icebergs and manoeuvre in tight waterways. She holds several patents and copyrights for these systems.

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AMBARO GULED was born, raised, and educated in Somalia. From 1973-1979 she was a veterinarian and, later in 1984, graduated with a degree in medicine and surgery from the Somali National University. In 1990, she received her Masters Degree in Obstetrics and Gynecology in Romania. She now works for the Regent Park Community Health Centre, and has extensive experience in settlement services, issues related to health and education. She speaks five different languages: Italian, Romanian, English, Spanish and Somali.

KAREN HAMDON has been an active member of Edmonton's Muslim Community for the past 25 years. Her work has concentrated mostly on women's and social issues. She is a founding president of Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Edmonton Chapter. She worked tirelessly to save and move the first mosque built in Canada. She is a founding member and director of Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities, a co-founder of Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition in Edmonton, and is very active in the Edmonton Interfaith dialogue.

TANYA KHAN is a mother, teacher and serves as the National Outreach Secretary for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association (AMWA), Canada. An advocate for diversity education and training, she talks to students on issues related to Islam and specifically stereotypes in today's society. Tanya accepted Islam, 10 years ago, and has since been an active member of the AMWA across a variety of initiatives, such as organizing interfaith conferences, facilitating community outreach projects, providing diversity training and teaching at the Bait-ul-Islam Sunday School Centre.

ASMAH ARSHAD MEHMOOD is a Toronto based artist, who was born in Pakistan and received her initial art education in Islamabad. She has exhibited her work in national art institutions, including AGO and ROM. Her work with the Canadian National Exhibition has led her to develop unique arts projects for artists and the community alike. She currently serves as the Chair of Canadian Community Arts Initiative and is festival director for the multi disciplinary arts festival of western GTA, MOSAIC in Mississauga. She has served on the Board of Directors for South Asian Visual Arts Collective.

MARYAM MIRZA is an articulate and confident 20-year old student studying political science at York University. She made history on 13 November 2004 as she became the first woman to deliver a khutba (sermon) in a mosque to a mixed gathering. In the course of her sermon she urged the congregation to "keep an open mind" about gender equality and to let more women be active within the sphere of religion. Her hope is that more women become religious leaders as opposed to followers.

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ZARQA NAWAZ is a freelance writer, broadcaster, and filmmaker who lives in Regina, Saskatchewan. She has worked with CBC Radio, CBC Newsworld, CBC Television's The National, and CTV's Canada AM, and was an associate producer of several CBC Radio programs. Many of Zarqa's films have won critical acclaim. In 2005, her documentary *Me and the Mosque*, was broadcast on CBC's Rough Cuts. She is also the creator of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

IDRISA PANDIT is an accomplished, innovative and collegial community leader. Though a relatively recent resident of Waterloo Region, she has quickly involved herself with interfaith dialogue, and helped to establish Muslim Social Services Kitchener Waterloo, under the auspices of her local Masjid. She is dedicated to community development, interfaith relations and social justice. Idrisa is articulate, insightful and gracious in her dealings with peers, neighbours and local colleagues of all faith traditions.

NELOFER PAZIRA is a journalist and filmmaker who emigrated to Canada in 1990. She starred in the movie "Kandahar" which was based on her true story, and co-produced, co-directed "Return to Kandahar". She is currently president of PEN Canada, works for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's nightly newscast, The National. Her charity "Dyana Afghan Women's Fund" provides education and skills training for women in Afghanistan.

YASMIN RATANSI was the first muslim woman elected to Canada's House of Commons. She was elected in the 2004 general election and re-elected as the Member of Parliament for Don Valley East in the January 2006 general election. Currently, Yasmin is the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Prior to her election to the House of Commons, Yasmin was a community activist in Don Valley East for twenty-five years. As a Certified General Accountant and Certified Management Consultant she has enjoyed successful careers in both the public and private sectors.

RAHEEL RAZA is an author, journalist and community activist. Through her work she addresses issues dealing with the status of women, arranged marriages, media stereotypes etc. She is also a much in demand public speaker and has spoken many groups including the armed forces college on issues of National identity. She is winner of the Canadian Ethnic Journalists and Writer's Club award for excellence. Currently she is Director, Interfaith Affairs for The Snowstar Institute of Religion.

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SAJIDA SULTANA SHARIFF is a medical doctor by training. She also volunteers with Doctors Without Borders and is one of the few people to have been on assignment for two consecutive terms. She has always worked towards raising awareness on different health issues, amongst the Muslim Community and the Canadian mainstream, by organizing blood drives, seminars and workshops on topics related to health, including mental health, and nutrition.

TIA TARIQ works with youth in Thorncliffe Park, where she has set up Da United Effort, which creates a safe space for youth between the masjid and the mall. Through Da United Effort, youth find hobbies and ways to interact with others. Tia writes poems, prose and is creating a musical to raise funds for youth and children. As a cancer survivor, she also stands as a role model for surviving cancer and giving hope to those in despair, especially young women. Tia has traveled to Indonesia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Kuwait and Malaysia to volunteer and work with youth

KHALIDA TANVIR SYED is currently enrolled in a PhD program in multicultural education at the University of Alberta. She has published widely on issues related to Muslims, multiculturalism and education. As the only Muslim volunteer at Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, she keeps everyone informed of the significant details often overlooked, criticized or undervalued by mainstream society. As a result of her involvement and commitment, her fellow volunteers have grown tremendously in their understanding of Muslim culture, particularly in a post 9/11 context.

ZOHRA ZOBERI is a writer and producer. She is the founder and President of a not for profit organization, Bridging the Gap, with its mission of 'Enlightenment through Entertainment. Through her organization she brings writers/professionals and youth from all cultures to work together on community issues. Through this she spreads the message of peace and attempts to clarify common misunderstandings about Islam. Zohra has held community events for over 15 years, raising funds for local hospitals, Red Cross, Kidney Foundation, Earthquake Victims.

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