

Muslim Community Center for Human Services

An example of Interfaith Human Services

History of Development of MCC, its projects and programs

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The purpose of the religion is to serve Humanity and to work for the common good is a form of worship.

In the summer of 1995 I received a call from the executive director of Catholic Charities regarding the newly arrived Muslim refugees from Bosnia who were looking for a place of worship and the availability of halal food. During the 1990s there were a few mosques in our area and those existing mosques were struggling to build places of worship and focusing on the teachings of the Quran and Islam. They were not equipped to provide social services. The Bosnian refugees were assisted by a Christian organization, World Vision, who was helping distressed refugees throughout the world, regardless of their religious affiliations.

I was aware that the Fort Worth-Dallas area did not have any Muslim social service organizations to assist with the issues confronting Muslims refugees and immigrants. I had met some of the refugees and realized that they did need help on multiple issues and were having difficulty in accessing any available services due to cultural and language barriers. I was also aware that other religious entities had established well-functioning social service organizations such as Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Services.

I convened a meeting of Muslim community leaders and approximately 35 individuals from religious establishments, healthcare institutions, corporate entities and nonprofit organizations attended. All affirmed the need to establish an organization to assist Muslim refugees and immigrants who have difficulty transitioning to a new culture. MCC for Human Services was established in 1995 as the first Muslim organization in the state of Texas which was incorporated and obtained a Tax exempt status to offer medical and social services to the indigent residents of the DFW area.

The mission of the Muslim Community Center for Human Services (MCCHS) is to build strong families and harmonious communities by providing no-cost or affordable healthcare, social services, and educational prevention and intervention services to underserved persons, regardless of religion, ethnicity, race or place of residence. MCCHS defines "underserved persons" as individuals or families who are uninsured or underinsured and who face barriers to accessing support due to language or cultural differences.

One of the objectives of MCCHS was to meet the medical and social service needs of more than 160,000 underserved immigrants from South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa that reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The organization began by providing health fairs, health and so-

cial services, informational seminars and a 24-hour helpline in response to issues faced by persons that were not American-born, such as first-generation immigrants and refugees.

In response to my call to the Muslim physicians to provide charitable medical services primarily to refugees and immigrants who have no insurance and cannot afford to pay for the medical services, 18 area physicians responded affirmatively and the first Muslim charitable clinic in Texas - Al-Shifa was started in 1998. MCC was also the first Muslim organization to introduce the health fair inviting the members of the community to have free blood pressure, blood tests and general consultation by physician.

Medical Services

MCCHS' Al-Shifa Clinic is a charity care medical clinic that provides non-emergency services. Individuals who present for emergency services are referred to acute care medical centers nearest to their home. A team of physician volunteers and a part-time physician provide medical services to patients at the Al-Shifa Clinic. Patients access services by word-of-mouth from family members or community residents; through formal partnerships and referral linkages with other Dallas and Tarrant County service providers; or as walk-ins (on a limited basis) resulting from MCCHS' extensive outreach and awareness activities. The clinic provides diagnostic laboratory services for indigent patients at a discounted rate and accesses thousands of dollars of donated medications to distribute as needed to patients free of charge. One hundred percent

(100%) of clinic patients were low income or had no insurance.

In 2003, MCC organized the first Interfaith Health Fair at United Methodist Church in Richland hills, Texas (near the clinic). The Richland Hill Christian Church and St. John Catholic Church co-sponsored the health fair. This was an enormously successful event and became a landmark for the introduction of MCC to the broader community. The cities of Richland hill and north Richland hill proclaimed September 27th, 2003 to be as MCC Health Fair Day. In addition to the mayors of the cities, county commissioner Mr. Whitley and Dr. Hathway Medical Director of the Tarrant County Public Health Department inaugurated the event. Of the individuals who attend the Interfaith Health Fair, 80% of the participants were non-Muslims and almost 90% of providers were Muslims. It became obvious that our mission needed to be providing services to all indigent residents irrespective of color, creed, religion, and country of origin. In 2004 the clinic opened its

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“They ask you, [O Muhammad], what they should spend. Say, ‘Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler. And whatever you do of good—indeed, Allah is Knowing of it” Quran (2:215)

doors to all residents of DFW irrespective of religion, race, ethnicity and country of origin and services are provided by individuals of different faiths.

Eye Clinic

An ophthalmology group of Fort Worth donated medical equipment, so MCC opened an eye clinic. An optometrist volunteered at the clinic to give free prescription for glasses to indigent patients and the patients would get the glasses at a discount price from Wal-Mart stores.

Dental Clinic

Upon retirement in 2010, Dr. Sam Roach donated the entire dental equipment from his clinic and our dental clinic was started. Dr. Roach served at the clinic as a volunteer dentist for the next 4 years. Unfortunately, he couldn't continue due to cancer. We have recruited some other volunteer dentists who continue to provide services for the needy patients.

Mental Health Program:

The clinic is staffed by a full-time licensed social worker and the volunteer services of a licensed psychiatrist and counselor. MCCCHS offers free treatment to a variety of patients with mental health problems. Incidents of mental health issues are high among immigrants and there are very few charitable clinics offering free mental health services. Most patients seen in our clinic are suffering from depression and stress-related anxiety. Patients with more serious mental disorders are referred to local public mental health clinics for more appropriate treatment therapies.

Domestic Violence, Child Abuse & Family Social Services

MCCCHS offers counseling, crisis intervention, appointments scheduling, information, and referrals for services. In addition to fielding calls to discuss information about available services, MCCCHS provides immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence and child abuse. MCCCHS offers a 24-hour domestic violence hotline. MCCCHS' case workers provide individual counseling for victims of domestic violence and family counseling to address individual issues, mental health issues and marital and family problems associated with immigrant families trying to cope with differing customs, cultures and laws.

Health Prevention and Screening

MCCCHS presents health educational seminars on a variety

of health related subjects including the effects of smoking on health status, and chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension and stroke prevention, recognition, and intervention. Special programs are organized for senior citizens to receive health screenings and education on memory disturbance, nutrition challenges, and prostate cancer.

Women's Wellness & Breast Cancer Awareness Program:

MCCCHS provides women's wellness and breast cancer awareness program throughout the year which includes cancer risk awareness education and prevention seminars made possible by a grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Pap smears are provided at our clinic. Through collaboration with the Texas Health Harris Methodist Mobile Unit, women are provided with free mammograms.

Psycho educational Groups:

MCCCHS offers free psycho educational groups on a variety of subjects including parenting intervention, depression, domestic violence, and women's support groups. MCCCHS also provides marital enrichment seminars to married or engaged persons.

Foster Care program

After 20 years of continued struggle, we finally developed the first Muslim foster care program. With the help of local agencies we are able to register and train the families to become certified foster parents.

Humanity is a relationship between one another with compassion, empathy, kindness and treating each other with dignity. All religions teach humanity, however we do not spend enough time in serving the needs of impoverished and needy. We are grateful for the interfaith partnerships that meet the needs of our community at MCC. All of our volunteers and staff feel the essence of responsibility for the care of others in need. Human services to the needy irrespective of their race, religion and country of origin is the real obedience and service to the creator.

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, (During Salat) but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous” Quran (2:177).