

AWARDS CEREMONY

Reaching out

Counselor, physician honored for their work with victims

By **SUSAN SCHROCK**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

With the release of white doves, the universal symbol of peace, members of an interfaith women's group gave thanks Wednesday to those who work to bring hope and relief to victims of violent crime.

The Daughters of Abraham recognized a Dallas County victim services counselor who has helped victims of bias-related crime and a Tarrant County physician known for his outreach to the Muslim community. The ceremony at the Al-Hedayah Academy in Fort Worth was part of the group's efforts to raise awareness about National Crime Victims' Rights Week, which runs through Saturday.

"This is a group who cares a great deal about peace and nonviolence within the home, the community and the world," said Janice Harris Lord, a member of the Daughters of Abraham. "It seemed fitting to honor those who serve victims of violence day in and day out."

Sumer Wassef, a victim services counselor for the Texas Department of Public Safety in Garland, received the group's first Victim Services Award.

■ An awards ceremony recognizes the efforts of a Tarrant County physician and a Dallas County counselor to help victims of violent crime.

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Wassef provided counseling numerous times for a Dallas County woman whose husband was shot to death after 9-11 because his assailant mistakenly believed he was Middle Eastern or Muslim, Lord said. The woman struggled to keep her husband's business running and couldn't take time off to seek counseling. So Wassef came to her.

"I'm going to help someone no matter what race or religion they are. A lot of times, victims just need someone to be there, to listen to them, to offer them hope," Wassef said.

Dr. Basheer Ahmed, founder of the Muslim Community Center for Human Services in Arlington, received the Daughters of Abraham's first Community Services Award. Ahmed was recognized for numerous outreach efforts, including advocacy for Muslim victims of domestic crime, providing free health and psychiatric care for indigent Muslims, and helping fight misconceptions about the faith in the community.

Ahmed also hopes one day to see a domestic violence shelter for Muslim women in Tarrant County and a full-time



STAR-TELEGRAM/PAUL MOSELEY

Dr. Basheer Ahmed, winner of the Community Services Award from the Daughters of Abraham, speaks during the awards ceremony Wednesday in Arlington.

IN THE KNOW

Daughters of Abraham

- The Daughters of Abraham, an interfaith group of Jewish, Christian and Muslim women in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, meet monthly to discuss topics such as prayer styles, faith traditions, and myths surrounding their faiths, holidays and rituals.
- Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. April 27 at St. Mary the Virgin Catholic Church, 1408 N. Davis Dr. in Arlington.
- For more information, go to www.daughtersofabraham.org or call (817) 492-9208. A list of Tarrant County agencies that provide services to crime victims is available on the group's Web site under the link Schedule.

social worker within mosques teaching Muslims that domestic violence is a family issue, not a women's issue.

"It is unfortunate to see in spite of so many advances of civilization, women are still victims of crime... at the hands of their loved ones," Ahmed said. "It is beyond human

understanding why this happens."

The Daughters of Abraham also recognized the *Star-Telegram* for its partnership in raising awareness of crime victims' rights.

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STAR-TELEGRAM/PAUL MOSELEY

Ruqiyah Abu-Anbar, left, of Martin High School and Rachel Canciani of Summit High School listen during the awards program. They are part of diversity groups at their schools.

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AHMED



WASSEF

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Crime Victim Programs Honored

We honor these individuals who have provided exemplary services to victims of bias-related crimes and who have actively addressed consciousness-raising about the suffering of those who are killed or injured simply for who they are, not what they have done.

Community Services Award



Dr. Basheer Ahmed
Muslim Community Center for
Human Services

Victim Services Award



Sumer Wassef
Texas Department
of Public Safety

Presented by
The Daughters of Abraham
who work for peaceful and
non-violent solutions to
problems



The Daughters of Abraham is proud to honor the following
community programs who help victims of crime:

Arlington Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-459-5339	Muslim Community Center Human Services	817-589-9165
Arlington Women's Shelter	817-548-0583	Mothers Against Drunk Driving	817-810-9300
Bedford Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-952-2439	Parents of Murdered Children	817-429-4928
Colleyville Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-503-1266	Tarrant Cnty District Attorney's Victim Assist.	817-884-2740
Disabled Crime Victims Assistance Inc	817-338-0220	Tarrant Cnty Family Violence Unit	817-884-3535
Eulesse Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-685-1537	Tarrant Cnty Juvenile Services Victim Assist.	817-838-4600
FBI Victim Assistance	817-989-3337	Tarrant Cnty Protective Orders Unit	817-884-1623
Forest Hill Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-531-5264	Tarrant Cnty Sheriff's Victim Assistance	817-884-3697
Fort Worth Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-392-4390	The Women's Center of Tarrant County	817-927-4039
Haltom Police Dept Victim Assistance	817-222-7026	US Attorney Victim Assistance	817-252-5204
Hurst Police Department Victim Assistance	817-788-7197	Women's Haven	817-535-6462

Daughters of Abraham is a group formed by women of three faiths – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – to enhance understanding of the spiritual and cultural similarities and differences between the groups. Ideas and values to promote peaceful relationships and good welfare among the faiths are shared at monthly meetings with the goal of building bridges and deepening human relationships.

For information on:
Forming a Daughters of Abraham group, visit: www.daughtersofabraham.org
National Crime Victims' Rights Awareness, visit www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc

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