



Honourees

Rania Lawendy ✦ Inspiring Leadership



Born and raised in Waterloo, Rania established the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) at the University of Waterloo, and served as MSA president for Canada. Rania is a sought after speaker at Islamic conferences and have spoken on a myriad of topics in US, Canada, Germany, UK, Turkey, Egypt, Italy, France, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Holland. Rania established the weekend Al-Huda School in 2008, Al-Furqan Hifth School in 2013, and Maple Grove School in 2014 in KW.

Rania was a member of the core team that established the Kitchener Mosque, and helped to establish Masjid Aisha (Guelph) and Islamic Centre of Waterloo. Rania initiated the Eid Festival in KW and ran it for 10 years. Rania has also served on the national board of Muslim Association of Canada. Rania holds a Masters in Educational Leadership and owns an education consulting company that provides professional development to Islamic schools in North America.

Awatef Al Khadour ✦ Community Service



Awatef has a BSc in Geology from the University of Waterloo, and a diploma in IT from Conestoga College. She is currently studying Social Work at Conestoga College. Awatef co-founded Najda Now (now called Levant) in 2013 to bring the community together, to raise awareness about issues facing refugees, and to help newcomers in their process of integration. Awatef also founded Levant's Dabke Troupe in 2014 to help newcomers, particularly youth, to keep their cultural heritage alive here in Canada.

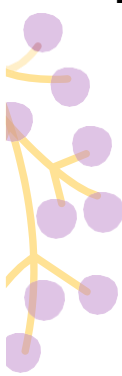
Awatef's work has helped fill gaps between cultures, and has helped the larger Canadian community to better understand newcomers. Awatef is always willing to help, she offers translation to any one that needs it, and works hard to make our region a welcoming place for newcomers. Awatef's tireless work with newcomers and refugees in KW, combined with her care for the community, has inspired so many newcomers to volunteer their time alongside her.

Zainab Hakeem Arkani ✦ Advocacy & Activism



Zainab Arkani grew up in Burma (Myanmar) and arrived in Canada via Thailand in 2007. Zainab was able to use the fact that she also spoke Burmese to gain an education in a country where Rohingya have been systematically persecuted. Once settled in the KW community, Zainab started helping to settle Rohingya people in our community. She co-founded a language school for Rohingya children, the first one in the world, teaching the first classes in a house basement, and then establishing the school further in a Saturday classroom of St. Louis Learning Centre for the past eight years.

Zainab has carried on public advocacy, translation of hate speech activities for the Genocide Prevention Program of McGill University, public speaking, and a continuous round of daily hands-on settlement work in collaboration with local community partners for Rohingya people of all ages, helping to make the KW region a thriving and healthy place of settlement for Rohingya refugees.



Nermin Özdemir ✦ Professional Excellence



Nermin came to Canada in 2004 and worked many jobs while pursuing English classes, moving from the lowest to the highest level possible. She then successfully applied to the Masters of Social Work Program at Wilfrid Laurier University, and with her intense dedication and numerous outstanding scholarships, graduated in 2014. Nermin has continued to pursue learning by attending trainings in Domestic Violence, Immigration, Addictions, Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism, Diversity, Family Issues, Faith, Refugees and more.

Nermin currently works as a Family Outreach Worker at House of Friendship where she is seen as a shining example of one who serves others and genuinely cares about others. Nermin has also volunteered for many organizations in KW including KW Multicultural Centre, United Way, Immigration Partnership, and Coalition of Muslim Women of KW. At work or volunteering, Nermin maintains a positive perspective and inspires everyone around her with her energy, creativity and desire to learn and grow and develop herself and others.

Hafsa Said ✦ Outstanding Youth



Hafsa is a grade 12 student at Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute where she is known for her volunteerism and activism around raising the awareness and capacity of educators about anti-black racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia and how these experiences are amplified when race, gender and faith intersect. Hafsa has appeared as an eloquent speaker at many panels. She participated in a research project in the spring of 2017 with other racialized students and co-created recommendations for her school and the school board to create more inclusive and welcoming places for students.

At Cameron Heights, Hafsa has been instrumental in initiating Black Student Association and organizing Black History month assembly. At the WRDSB's first Black Brilliance Conference, Hafsa lead the workshop on planning and organizing a Black History Month school assembly. Hafsa knows how important it is to give students a voice. She is using her own voice to raise the awareness level and capacity of our educators, courageously and passionately.

Jane Mitchell ✦ Friend of CMW



Jane was an elected Regional Councillor from 2000 to 2018. As a councillor and private citizen, she has supported the CMW by attending events and speaking out about the right of Muslim women to wear what they think is appropriate as well as by personally mentoring and supporting Muslim women. Jane attended CMW's first event "Let Us Talk" in April 2010 as a private citizen and spoke about women's right to choose what they want to wear. She was the only elected official of the time who was in attendance.

Since, Jane has been a regular attendee at all CMW events. Jane has personally mentored and supported several CMW members. While on council, Jane supported the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership and championed paying for proper interpreters. A Public School Trustee from 1990 to 2000, Jane supported inclusiveness in the schools and was part of the Race Relations committee.

Congrats to CMW's Five Year Service Award Recipients

Fauzia Baig



- **Lead: Emerging Muslim Women Leaders Training (2014)**
- **Board Member (2015 – present)**
- **Lead: Salaams Canada, Give 30 KW**
- **Annual Blood Donation Drive (2017 – present)**
- **Lead: Be the Change! Leadership Training (2018-2019)**

Nafiseh Moghimi



- **Participant: Emerging Muslim Women Leaders Training (2014)**
- **Volunteer: Tea and Tales with Muslim Women (2015)**
- **Board Member (2017 – present)**
- **Volunteer: Tastes of Ramadan (2018)**

Zohra Wali



- **Mentor Liaison: Leaders Training (2014)**
- **Coordinator: Illuminate Arts KW (2015 – 2016)**
- **Coordinator: CMW's annual event (2015 – 2017)**
- **Core Team: Awards Recognition Dinner (2017)**
- **Coordinator: Tea and Tales with Muslim Women (2017 – 2018)**
- **Core Team: Tastes of Ramadan (2018)**
- **Board Member (2019)**