



The Arab American  
Heritage Council

Annual Report  
**2019**

# MISSION

The Arab American Heritage Council (AAHC) strives to preserve and celebrate Arab heritage as well as support and unite all Arab Americans in the Greater Flint area. The AAHC works diligently to broaden understanding and appreciation of Arab culture as well as encourage Arab American involvement in civic, economic, and humanitarian efforts.

**BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY. TOGETHER FOR GOOD.**

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# Message from the Leadership

Dear Heritage Friends,

In 2019, we at the Arab American Heritage Council (AAHC) have remained steadfast in our mission to support and unite Arab Americans in the Flint community. As our country remains threatened by divisive politics and the resurgence of great social injustice; the AAHC has continued to play a vital role in combating these forces through a sincere investment in the improvement and unification of our community.

This past year, the AAHC has honored its tradition of serving the greater Flint community through expert immigration and citizenship counseling, advancing educational and cultural programming, and building strong partnerships with our diverse community leaders, businesses and organizations. In April, we hosted our annual Arab American Film Festival, and in June, we organized our 15th Arab American Service Day. In October, we organized our 23rd annual Ensure the Legacy banquet where we honored members of our community and the advancements they have made this past year.

As we enter into our 40th year, the AAHC will continue to serve as a central resource to the Arab community by preserving our history, celebrating Arab culture and identity, awarding scholarships to Arab American youth, providing immigration assistance, and encouraging civic participation. All of this is done to build a stronger and more unified Arab American community.

Our activities and our vision for the future are made possible by the continuous support from the community. Our volunteers are a wonderful asset to the organization as they continue to give generous amounts of their time, talent and energy. Additionally, we would like to thank our individual donors as well as all partners of the AAHC. It is your commitment and investment that allows our organization to grow and continue in its efforts to uplift our Arab community.



Alex Nassar  
PRESIDENT



Devin Bathish  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# CELEBRATING CULTURE

Education & Celebrating Culture are the foundation of the AAHC's mission to uplift the Arab American community. Working with members of our community, we facilitate growth by organizing workshops, championing the arts, and establishing partnerships with Arab and non-Arab organizations alike to build a stronger community. Ultimately, we believe an investment in our community's educational goals is an investment in our future.



## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The AAHC was honored to be a part of the annual Unity in Diversity event. This event seeks to build bridges of communication, support, & understanding among the diverse cultures, nationalities, races, genders, and religions that make up our community. AAHC staff taught the audience about the history of the Dabke and then had everyone participate in the Dabke together.

## NATIONAL ARAB ORCHESTRA

The AAHC, in partnership with the Flint Institute of Music, was honored to host the National Arab Orchestra. This was a wonderful community event that brought the beauty of Arab music to Flint. Over 300 people attended the event and many were treated to champagne and sweets after the event where attendees were able to meet the performers from the National Arab Orchestra.



# CULTURE



## BISHOP OF JERUSALEM

The AAHC and the Palestine Aid Society of America - Detroit Chapter hosted the Bishop of Jerusalem, His Grace Atallah Hanna, at St. George Orthodox Church! Over 150 people attended the event and heard the Bishop speak about the importance of Jerusalem and the need to unify as Arabs.

## ARAB FILM FESTIVAL

The Arab American Heritage Council, in collaboration with the Arab American National Museum and the Flint Institute of the Arts, hosted its annual Arab Film Festival! The event included two short films and a discussion followed by our feature film, "The Insult." Many Arab and non-Arab community members enjoyed the engaging dialogue and loved the feature.



## TASTE OF CULTURE

The AAHC participated in the "Taste of Culture" event organized by Communities First. The event was held at the Flint Masonic temple where 250 people attended. Executive Director, Devin Bathish, set up a table where he showcased his Palestinian heritage. He invited attendees to try on a Keffiyeh, as well as learn how to write their names in Arabic.



# ENSURE THE LEGACY AWARD WINNERS

The AAHC hosted our 23rd annual Ensure the Legacy Banquet on Wednesday, October 30, 2019 at the Riverfront Banquet Center in downtown Flint. Over 200 community members attended, including the Mayor of the City of Flint!



## PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD: Michigan Health Specialists Dr. Khalid Ahmed and Dr. Seif Saeed



Founded in 1999, Michigan Health Specialists has become Genesee County's largest primary care practice. The company has four offices throughout the region, employs nearly 80 people, including 23 providers ranging from physicians to physician assistants and nurse practitioners. Each year, 14,000 patients from throughout Mid-Michigan complete appointments at MHS, generating almost 55,000 visits. It also has hospitalists at Hurley Medical Center and McLaren Flint, as has been designated as a Patient Centered Medical Home where no patient is left behind. The founders, Khalid Ahmed, M.D., and Seif Saeed, M.D., and leaders of MHS have established a practice network that provides exceptional healthcare, efficient operations, structural integrity and a culture of collaboration that is second to none. MHS was built to serve with purpose, for a challenging patient population, for the economic conditions of healthcare, for the consolidation of providers, for healthcare system partnerships, and the advancement of access, quality, value and impact. The impact the healthcare operation has created extends far

beyond the lives of patients in the greater Flint area. Countless Arabic professionals locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, have called MHS the training ground that provided them with the experience they needed to achieve their dreams. Many, after experiencing the unique nature of life in Flint, have decided to make homes in surrounding cities. The ripple effects are magnified, when the emmigration of extended family is taken into account - MHS has become a magnet for building Arab heritage in Genesee County. The cycle of community support and development flows back into MHS, too, in the form of patients seeking care. As MHS has attracted and retained Arabic talent into the community, the family and friends of those who establish residence utilize MHS for healthcare services. The practice is known for its willingness to see any patient, despite ability to pay or type of insurance coverage. It has supported the residency dreams of many by providing low cost or pro bono immigration physicals. MHS estimates it has donated more than \$100,000 in care over its two decades in existence.

## COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD: Dr. Robert McMahan



Dr. McMahan became the seventh President of Kettering University in August 2011. Kettering, formally known as GMI, is one of the nation's premier engineering, science, and business universities and is dedicated to offering a curriculum that deeply integrates classroom learning with experiential and co-operative educational opportunities for all students. Prior to joining Kettering, Dr. McMahan was the Founding Dean of and Professor of Engineering in the Western Carolina University College of Engineering and Technology, a role he was asked to take by the Chancellor and UNC system leadership. Prior to that, while simultaneously holding the position of Research Professor of Physics and Astronomy at University of North Carolina at Chapel

Hill (a position he held from 1989-2010), Dr. McMahan was Senior Advisor to the Governor of North Carolina for Science and Technology, and the Executive Director of the North Carolina Office of Science and Technology. In that role, he also acted as a Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce, the General Assembly, and the Economic Development Board. Prior to his work with the Governor, he was a Senior Technology Strategist and Venture Capitalist for In-Q-Tel, a private venture capital organization funded by the Central Intelligence Agency, where he was responsible for developing a technology investment strategy for the intelligence community, and then deriving, molding, and structuring individual investments and technologies within the portfolio in response to it. Dr. McMahan has spoken and consulted with national and international organizations interested in innovation policy, investment capital, technology based economic development, university research, and the university's role in economic development at the invitation of organizations including the National Academies, the US Congress, and the Federal Reserve as well as a number of international governments.

## ARAB AMERICAN OF THE YEAR: Farid "Fredwreck" Nassar



FredWreck was born Farid Nassar in 1972 to Karam & Aida Nassar in Flint, MI. His parents are Palestinians who immigrated in 1967. From 1995 to 1997, Farid was hired by renowned producer Hank Shocklee as an A&R executive at MCA/Universal Records where he oversaw the recordings of artists such as Jodeci, Mary J. Blige, Aaliyah, Immature, Al Green, Shai, Bobby Brown and created movie soundtracks for films such as Dangerous Minds, Tales from the Hood, and others. Farid eventually got his music to Snoop Dogg & Dr. Dre when they were both leaving Death Row Records and went on to produce music for their newly founded labels, Aftermath Records & DoggyStyle Records. As a multi-talented instrumentalist and producer, Farid plays keyboard, guitar, and bass, and has produced music for some of the biggest artists in the world, including Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre, Eminem, 50

cent, Ice Cube, Brittany Spears, Cypress Hill, Lil Kim, Notorious BIG, Xzibit and many others. He recently had the #1 Urban Adult Contemporary record in the country for Anderson Paak which he produced and wrote with Smokey Robinson. The record was nominated for best R&B Song at the 2019 MTV Music Awards. Farid founded the STOP Movement in 2003 to inform the world about the US war in Iraq through music. The movement gained widespread popularity and featured artists such as KRS-One, Mobb Deep, and The Alchemist among others. In 2007, he produced and hosted the first Arabic Hip Hop music show on MTV Arabia in the Middle East, reaching 180 million viewers worldwide. In 2009, Farid hosted a weekly Arabic Hip Hop Show called "Beit el Hip Hop" alongside the famous Saudi Arabian hip hop artist Qusai. Additionally, Farid has been very charitable to Arab and Palestinian causes, frequently giving to organizations across the Middle East and United States. Currently, Farid is a co-host of the VH1 show Potluck Dinner Party alongside Snoop Dogg & Martha Stewart.



# SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### 2010 Anthony J. Mansour Scholarship Winner:

#### Tamer Abuaita



Tamer Abuaita is a Palestinian Arab from Flushing, MI. His family immigrated from Beit Sahour, Palestine and are members of St. George Orthodox Church in Flint. Tamer graduated from Flushing High School in 2010 and received the Anthony J. Mansour scholarship before attending the University of Michigan-Flint. Tamer has said that the scholarship allowed him to fund specific educational experiences during his undergraduate career, including the opportunity to study and work in a molecular biology research lab in Germany for 6 weeks. This was an amazing experience for him and gave him an edge when applying to medical schools. After his graduation from the UM-Flint

Honors Program, Tamer was accepted to the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine - Auburn in Alabama. He graduated from medical school in 2019 and is currently in his first year of residency in Internal Medicine at the Detroit Medical Center.

For Tamer, his Arab identity is a central part of who he is. It has allowed him to communicate with Arabic speaking patients in a way that allows them to relax and feel comfortable. Overcoming cultural and language barriers helps Tamer better serve Arabs by allowing him to focus on serving their direct medical needs. This helps his patients find comfort in knowing that they can see a physician that understands them and can relate to them in their native language and cultural identity.

We are sure Tamer will continue to serve as a role model for Flint Arab Americans for many years to come!

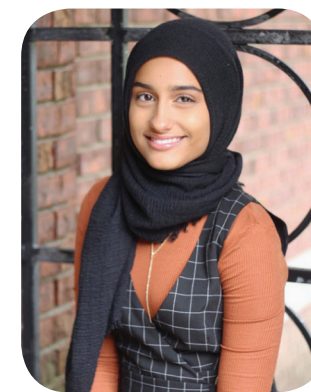
# AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



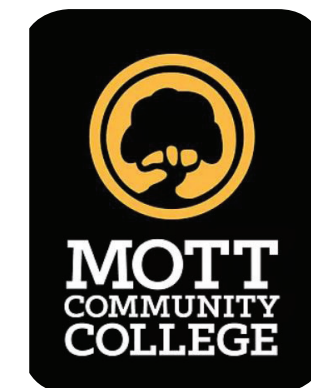
#### Jennah Shah

Jennah is a Syrian & Pakistani American who graduated from Genesee Academy and is currently a computer science engineering student at the University of Michigan-Flint. Jennah is an active member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Society of Automotive Engineers, and the Society of Women Engineers and continues to contribute to the Arab and Muslim community through her involvement in the Muslim Student Association and the Flint Islamic Center Youth Group. An ultra-athlete, Jenna played hockey and soccer, competed and placed in multiple Jiu-Jitsu tournaments, ran 2 Crims, a half marathon, and a full marathon, and, currently, does CrossFit. Jenna hopes to pursue a career as an engineer and serve as trailblazer for Arab and Muslim women in the STEM fields.



#### Reena Al-Sewari

Reena is a Yemeni American who graduated from Grand Blanc High School and is currently a pre-med student at the University of Michigan-Flint. In high school, Reena served as President of the Muslim Student Association and a member of the World Culture Club, representing Yemen. In 2018, Reena was elected Grand Blanc's first ever Hijabi Muslim Homecoming Queen. Reena is a community activist and has spoken out against discriminatory policies towards Arabs and Muslims, helped raise money for international humanitarian issues, and served as a panelist for the International Women's Day celebration hosted by the International Center of Greater Flint. Reena hopes to pursue a career as an optometrist and continue to support her community both here in the US and abroad.



#### Khalid Albasheer & Eman Alnajjar

Khalid is a Computer Network Engineering and Cybersecurity student at Mott Community College. Khalid is an academically excellent student with a GPA of 3.8 and actively participates in IT activity on campus in his spare time. He hopes to become an IT intern during his undergraduate career to help him with his professional ambitions. After graduating in September of 2020, he plans to pursue a career in Information Technology.



# BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

## ARAB LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



This year the AAHC, along with Arab American community organizations from across the nation, participated in the annual Arab American Leadership Days in Washington D.C. AAHC leaders had the opportunity to learn about the latest updates from policy experts. They were then able to advocate on the issues of healthcare, immigration, & Census 2020 with members of Congress.

## ARAB AMERICAN SERVICE DAY

The AAHC partnered with Habitat for Humanity on June 15th to help improve community gardens on Flint's east side as part of National Arab American Service Day. Arab American Service Day was started by NNAAC in 2004 as a way to engage Arab Americans in community service to create stronger communities and make connections among neighbors.



## COMMUNITY PICNIC



The Arab American Heritage Council hosted its 5th annual Family Picnic! Family and friends joined us for a fun day at Seven Lakes State Park. We had over 50 people come out to play games, socialize, and eat lots of lamb.

## MOVE CONFERENCE

The AAHC Staff attended the MOVE conference this year in Dearborn! This was an incredible opportunity for our staff to connect with Arab American leaders, organizers, and allies in order to discuss the issues impacting our communities today. Executive Director, Devin Bathish, was also invited to speak on one of the panels during a breakout session.



# IMMIGRATION AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

## General Immigration Services Offered

The AAHC ran a successful immigration and language program throughout 2019. The AAHC served a total of 59 clients from all different racial and ethnic identities. These clients averaged 3 contacts per client, constituting about 170 instances of contact with the AAHC throughout 2019. Additionally, AAHC staff attended 14 training sessions, webinars, and workshops on immigration law and policy. The yearly breakdown is as follows:

Activity	Number of Clients
Translations	12
Educational Classes	9
Filed Applications	3
Consultation	35
Contacts	170

**TRANSLATION:** Official document translations included marriage certificates, state identification records, and birth certificates. In-person translation was offered in the office or over the phone for social security announcements, insurance letters and doctor appointment notices.

**EDUCATIONAL CLASSES:** Clients have the opportunity to practice their English skills in conversation hours with our staff or test their knowledge of US history with civics practice hours.

**FILED APPLICATIONS:** The applications filed included naturalization (citizenship), adjustment of status, removal of condition for Green Card, and family visa.

**CONSULTATIONS:** We discussed each client's case with them, and then either assisted them in-office, the clients pursued the case on their own following AAHC instructions, or the client was referred to trusted immigration providers in our network.

## IMMIGRATION DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT: Mohammed Alhammadi



This past year, AAHC Immigration Director, Mohammed Alhammadi, received accreditation by the Department of Justice to assist immigration clients. He had spent months working and training in immigration law under the guidance of a local immigration attorney, learning about family based immigration, citizenship, waivers, and adjustment of status. He attended a 40 hour intensive Immigration Law Course held in San Antonio, Texas and then passed his final exam allowing for his application to the Department of Justice. He was highly recommended as well, with letters of support from multiple local attorneys, Dan Kildee's office, and Senator Debbie Stabenow's office. The accreditation allows Mohammed to more fully assist immigration clients and give important advice for clients to pursue their pathway to citizenship. Congratulations, Mohammed!

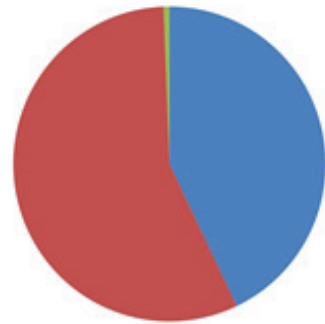


# FINANCIALS

## TREASURER'S REPORT

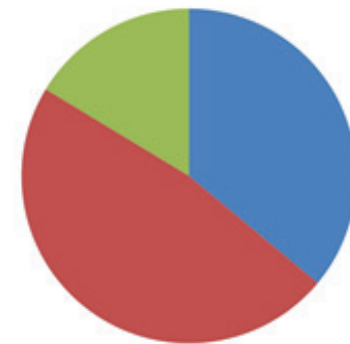
### Revenues for Year Ended December 31, 2019

Grants (Restricted)	\$ 46,468.00	42%
Donations/Contributions	\$ 62,941.67	57%
Program Fees	\$ 680.00	1%
Revenue Total	\$ 110,089.67	100



### Expenses for Year Ended December 31, 2019

Programs	\$ 40,583.68	36%
Operations	\$ 55,658.18	50%
Administrative	\$ 15,946.58	14%
Expenses Total	\$ 112,188.44	100



**Said Farah**  
AAHC BOARD  
TREASURER



**Judy Gratsch**  
AAHC ACCOUNTANT

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