

Reflection on the past four years

2010 – 2013

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES, HARNESSING TALENT AND OWNERSHIP TO MOVE THE COMMUNITY FORWARD



Inshallah, once again, we will meet for the Annual General Meeting on April 11, 2014 and celebrate 40 years of SIJPA and over 10 years in this Al Ahad Islamic Center. I hope that history will remember our term as productive, beneficial and valuable. Without question, there are challenges and changes that this community will face in the near future. We must remember, however, that unity will allow our community to grow and succeed no matter the challenge. We already see unity in our sports, which will allow us to bring home the trophies. Al Ahad – One Community! One Ummah!

We look forward to the next stage in the development of our community in regard to youth, sports, seniors, health & medical advances, match making and matrimonial issues. The Management Committee is simply a skeleton; the community members are its flesh and nervous system.

Al Ahad Islamic center is a generous community which does not flinch when doing Allah's work, be it for this community or the wider Ummah - a community whose generosity knows no bounds, whose philanthropy is not timid, whose response to crisis is expedient, as seen in the rebuilding of the Mosques in Pakistan or helping victims of calamities worldwide.

The Management of Al Ahad Islamic Center would like to express its gratitude to its membership for the opportunity given to us to serve this community – (Khidmat-e-Qoum). We are extremely thankful for the experience.

This report outlines our progress and activities since April 1st 2010. The achievements identified herein would not have been possible without the continued dedication, support and participation of the community at large. The Management Committee, Ladies Committee and Madressah Committee are honored to have had this opportunity to serve.

Al Ahad Islamic Center is one of the diverse Islamic Centers in the Lehigh Valley. SIJPA was first registered in Philadelphia, PA by Sister Fatmabai Mawji. As the community grew through an influx of Ugandan immigrants, it purchased a center at 1335 Chew Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania. The community continued to grow and in the year 2000 members embarked on the journey of building a new Islamic center in South Whitehall Township. It is now a vibrant and respected Islamic institution, which stands as a symbol of our devotion. We left our homeland in the hopes of finding a land of “*greater opportunity*.” Alhamdu Lillaah we have achieved that goal by becoming well established, known and respected.

Accounts:

Br. Mir Mansoor Ali will present the accounts for the term. As a result of increasing generosity from the community, this community was able to achieve all of its capital projects. With a high degree of prudence and diligence, unnecessary expenditures and waste was removed from the expenses. SIJPA must maintain a record of fiscal responsibility and accountability. Our Hon. Treasurer, Br. Mir Mansoor, has done a remarkable job of maintaining the accounts, impressing our auditors.

Children and Youth

"We cannot always build the future for our youths, but we can build our youths for the Future."

As a community we need to make our children a priority. During the past four years, we have held more youth-oriented activities, but much more can be achieved. The Management embarked on many youth and children's programs during Muharram and Ramadan. In order to be able to facilitate all of our activities and programs successfully, however, we need a large pool of dedicated volunteers and financial resources.



Children and youth are greatly influenced by their friend's behavior. In this society, where use of drugs, alcohol and illegitimate mixing of sex is so common, the question facing the community is how we can save our children and youth from such influences? Our youth are our future. Thus, to establish our future, we must assist the youth. We must provide them with strong Islamic education. We should build their self-esteem to that great level that no matter how they are humiliated, defamed and ridiculed, they are on the right path, and neither do they eat pork, nor drink alcohol,

nor they do drugs or listen to sexually suggestive music, because of their conviction of *"being the best of mankind to enjoin the good and forbid the evil"*

We should also help our youth to marry within our community by assisting with introductions and activities for all of our children.

The top priority for SIJPA has to be the development of our children and our youth. A few steps were taken over the past four years, but a lot more can be done to engage with our children and youths. For example, we integrate activities with local schools, such as Dr. Martin Luther King day celebrations.



Humanitarian Relief

As a community, we have responded to financial appeals around the globe, including economic hardship locally, Somalia Drought Relief, Building of two Mosques in Pakistan and many appeals from NASIMCO & World federation. Al Ahad Islamic center is a generous community which does not flinch when doing Allah's work, be it for this community or the wider Ummah - a community whose generosity knows no bounds, whose philanthropy is not timid.

Funeral Services.

Over the last four years, we have had twenty one (21) deaths in this community and the Management has facilitated and executed all funeral rites according to the wishes of the next of kin and for the pleasure of Allah. There is community interest in a Funeral/Burial program (BAP/FAP), such as the one in New York and Orlando.



Marriage & Nikah Services

With every growing community, the demand for social services increases. SIJPA has helped perform eight Nikah ceremonies during the past four years. Management has produced a Marriage certificate and Wakaletnama document. Management requests your forgiveness of any shortcomings during the marriage ceremonies.

Newsletter/Communication/ Resource Center

Communication with SIJPA members has been through announcements made at the Al Ahad Center, answering machine, our web site and via e-mail. There is a need of volunteers to create a monthly newsletter that covers important events taking place during a month and to begin the development of a text messaging system.

The SIJPA website has made improvements by adding a video of the week, an article of the week, comic of the week and relevant information on Islam. The website has the potential to reach many individuals in the community and teach them about the peaceful message of Islam. SIJPA needs volunteers to add fresh content and give a face lift to the SIJPA web site as well as to develop an online library of books. There is also a need to generate revenue through the use of advertising through e-mail and website announcements.

Program Committee:

Br. Riyaz Kermalli & Mohammed Khaku

Alhamdulillah we have had four years of vibrant activity with regards to programs held at the Al Ahad Islamic center. The Program Committee works many hours, which may not be readily apparent. This work does not only include creating salaah timing and monthly circulars, but also includes various aspects of programming, such as coordinating recitation, tabaruk, nyaz and speakers. With that said, we would like to thank our sheikh (Imam) Mohammed Kermalli, Zakir Nisar Rahim and Mohammedhussein Rajmoh'd for investing their time and effort to assist us when we are unable to secure a guest speaker. As our community grows, we need to secure a resident A'alim who is well versed in Arabic and Islamic studies, motivated, and able to relate to our youth. The search for a suitable A'alim will continue in the coming years.

Accomplishments

The following regular programs were conducted during the last four year:

- Participation of youth in soccer & volleyball tournament at UMOJA and R.K Memorial games.
- Hosted an excellent & world class LDP Seminar held at Al Ahad Islamic center.
- Youths conducted the Book reading program for younger children's
- Conducting Maghreb/Isha prayers every Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- Recitation of Dua Kumai/Ziyarat-e-Waritha for Jumarat program weekly.
- Friday Juma prayer, Children's Workshop & Majlis at Bargh-e-Mustafa – (Greenwood cemetery)
- Salaatul Fajr prayer on Sunday mornings followed by lecture and breakfast.
- Wiladaat and Wafaat of the Ahlul Bait as per WF calendar.
- Conducted a successful Ramadan program with thirty days of Iftar with help Ladies Committee.
- Conducted a successful Muharram & Ashra-e-Zainabiya program with Nyaz with the help of Ladies Committee.
- Conducted Community Sports Night with co-operation of Union Sport Club & Allentown Challenger.
- Blood Donation on the Ashura Day.
- Display and making of Karbala Model done by the Youths under the guidance Br. Mustafa & Ahmad Sumar.

- Children's majlises on Friday's in Muharram & Safar.
- Black clothes for the Center with the help of Arif, Abdullah, Moh'draza, and Ladies Committee & Volunteers.
- Spiritual retreat (sleep over). More Needed -
- Developed Tabruk, death announcement & Material Distribution policy.
- Participated in and organized various outreach events with other communities.
- Interfaith programs at Al Ahad Center were a success and received very positive feedback.
- Facilitate majlises on the behalf of the marhumins.
- Participated in Islamic games.
- Organized the Family Fun Day for the Lehigh Valley Muslims.
- Facilitate the interfaith meeting with Lehigh Valley Conference of Churches & other Islamic Centers in the Valley.
- Providing a calendar of events/Salaat Time Table to the community weekly and monthly in advance to ensure smooth running of the programs and better participation.
- Participated in the Lehigh Muslim Sport Festival for last four years.
- Arranged for live broadcasting of various events such as Muharram, Ramadan, and interfaith programs.



Challenges

We need to promote the spirit of volunteering in the community. All of the challenges and opportunities require participation and volunteering from the community members. We need to ensure that membership and guests are respectful of the volunteers who are enforcing SIJPA rules and guidelines. We need to create, develop and formulate programs to bridge the gap that exists between daily programs and the participation of the youths of the community, particularly on Thursday program, kabrastan program, Salaatul Jamaat and Fajr program. We

need to develop programs that are specially tailored for the youth and children. We need to continue to find reciters that meet the need of all of the community members, given that we have a diverse and multi-cultural / multi-lingual community. We need to implement a method to ensure the safety of the children, and to discipline and prevent them from running in the hallways/multi-purpose room and hurting themselves and damaging Al Ahad Islamic Center property. We need to invest in a better security system and a sound system for archiving all recordings of the majalis and programs

Opportunities:

The Program Committee cannot achieve its goals without an increasing number of community volunteers. One should ask ***"What I can do for the Al Ahad Islamic Center and not what the Management can do for me"***. It is absolutely crucial for the community to recognize the importance of volunteering.



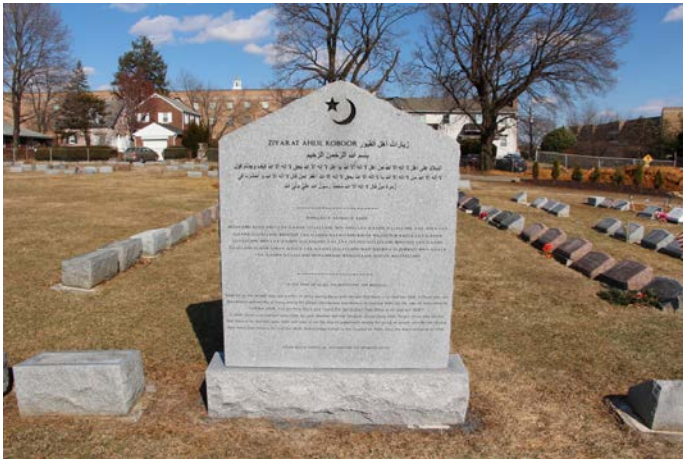
Suggestions and ideas

- Include more fun and playful events for the children's and youths.
- After school activities (indoor and outdoor) – Tuition/Basketball/soccer etc.
- More Sports activities including martial arts classes
- Formation of team and groups for recitation of Quran, Nasheed and Nauhas.
- Conducting programs for girls such as Sewing/Embroidery, Yoga, Cooking and etc.
- Senior Citizen programs, Health Seminars & Educational Workshops.
- Classes for the converts – such as Journey to Islam.
- Big Sister & Big Brother mentor Program.
- Tutoring for regular school homework.
- Competitions on Hifz Quran and Recitation.
- Book club & story telling emulate from the life of the Ahlul Bay.
- College preparation & counseling (writing essays, choosing classes, SAT classes).
- Create opportunities for the college youth to share experiences with others.
- Youth speaker development program – toastmasters program for the youth
- Focus on Quran recitation with Tajweed and Arabic Class.
- Understanding the American education system and Political process.
- Enriching existing programs to make them appealing to youth.
- Motivational guest speakers for the youths.

Projects in Progress:

- Resident A'alim.
- Burial Assistance program (BAP).
- Installation of Solar Panel – Saving over five dollar a month.
- Instituting and establishing a new entity to safe guard the assets of SIJPA.
- Need of Security system
- Beautify the Entrance with Shade and new door. Donors are welcomed!
- Seminar on parenting training within the Community.
- Matrimonial Committee: Marriage facilitation, Counseling service & ongoing education on marriage.
- Develop more sleep-over program in Ramadan & Muharum.
- Poetry and Juma Khutba Competition.
- Advance & increase Children Majalis, Marsiya and Nauha recitation.
- Children's workshop to be expanded to include games and martial arts program.
- Greater female representation at all levels of community work.
- Conference of Youths to strengthen the institution of marriage within our community
- Organize an annual medical screening, flu vaccinations and Islamic medical ethics and Medical seminars...
- The Community must explore the possibility of building seniors housing and create more seniors programs
- Concentrating on Education & Career guidance seminars
- Create exhibition of faith & culture: - Journey into Islam, part played by African Muslims and cultural diversity.

- More inter and intra faith seminars to display and to bridge the gap between various faith.
- HD security cameras and Bar coding technology for Al Ahad madrasah.
- Update the landscape to add some color to the center especially at the entrance.
- Virtual Cemetery Module at Barghe-e-Mustafa with pictures and history of all marhumeens.
- Revise & Redraft the death announcement policy, tabaruk policy, fund raising policy and rental policy.
- Generate revenue through e-mail announcement, advertising and sale of GIFT cards.
- Installation of Gas Generator in case of power blackout – very crucial for the community member's safety & wellbeing.
- To facilitate NASIMCO & World federation for a retreat for madrasa workers globally to enable Quran recitation with meaning and E-Madras.
- Implement new website, increase social media, new wireless structure, iPhone app for the website, electronic bulletin board & good quality live streaming available on mobile devices.
- Seminar for healthy Aging through Healthy Living Program such as healthy eating, Injury prevention, Tobacco use, physical exercise and Social connectivity.



Arabic Classes:

In the past the Arabic classes were started, however, due to relatively low attendance rate, lack of commitment and lack of qualified instructor, it did not materialize. Low attendance rates could also suggest that there is not a lot of interest in the community to learn the Arabic language. It's hard to be conclusive here since no official survey was conducted, but once we acquire a resident A'alim this program could be re-visited. The goal of Arabic classes is to encourage the participants to connect with what they are learning in Qur'anic verses and supplications they recite. Indeed, this is the main long-term goal of the classes, and is a key opportunity for Al

Ahad Islamic Center to be an educational beacon to both Muslims and non-Muslims in the Lehigh Valley.

Social Services:

- Management needs to do a better job of informing SIJPA Community about Social Service activities and contributions.
- Continue building on existing connections and build new connections with the local Social Service organizations, such as Coat Drive, Teen Portal, soup kitchen, blanket drive, shelters & food banks.
- Expand volunteer capacity in Social Services.

Facilities: Repair and Maintenance

- Install Internet control heating system & Light Sensors for the Bathroom.
- Increasing more community involvement & awareness in keeping the facilities clean and safe.
- Suggest to SIJPA management to create a reserve fund for building depreciation.
- Create an annual budget estimate for ongoing maintenance cost.
- Revised the Rental Policy to cover the cost.
- Minor repairs and Paint touch-up maintenance needed throughout the building.
- Investigate addition of security cameras at the entrances.
- Maintenance of heating system by changing Filter.
- Install New Grease Trap & Clean the Grease pit twice a year.
- Install Water softener.
- Install Closet.
- Audit of the Fire Extinguisher, Exhaust system & Kitchen Hood as require by SWT fire code.
- Install Stainless Steel plate between the fryer and the stove for safety.

- Major Investment is needed for the Video room and PR system.
- Painting the Light poles in the parking Lot.
- Landscaping – Mulching & Weed killing however, need to replace 6 trees
- Encouraging community members to treat Al Ahad Islamic Center facility as their own home and help with maintenance.
- Roof Repairs and Leaks fixed – More work is required after the sever winter storms.
- A'alim Apartment refurbished.
- New Kitchen Cabinets & Madressah office Library done.
- Shampoo at least twice a year.
- Need to have storage shade for storing.



Outreach Committee:

Together we can build an Interfaith Coalition of Christians, Jews, and Muslims who are seeking to find a common ground and learn from one another. We each have differing beliefs and certainly many points upon which we disagree. None of these differences, however, should be a cause for violence. We can advance our communities only through understanding, dialogue and non-violent debate. This community has reached out and responded to various invitations to promote interfaith understanding and dialogue.

Achievements:

- Community Outreach Interfaith Program.
- Shared Program with Ghoshopen Church & other churches in Lehigh Valley.
- Muharrum & Ramadan interfaith seminars.
- Council of Islamic Centers Meeting.
- Family Fun Day – Includes Sport Tournament between four Islamic centers.
- Meeting of Council of Churches.
- Drafted and implemented the Tabaruk, Death Announcement & Material Distribution policy
- Created a Volunteer program (No references are given until 100 hours of Volunteering at SIJPA)

Volunteer capacity

A non-profit community organization like SIJPA thrives because of its volunteers. There is no shortage of cool and exciting ideas that can be developed and implemented. We need to reach out to more people and encourage them to volunteer their time and ideas to help plan and organize activities (current and proposed). We are also open to ideas on how we can inculcate the value of volunteerism in our children and have them more involved in helping at Al Ahad Islamic Center. We look forward to a strong volunteer base at SIJPA.

Sustainability

In order to continue meeting the needs of the community and growing demands, SIJPA needs to have a financially sound plan. While we were able to sustain ourselves, we need to build a reserve so that we can expand our programs to facilitate and accommodate different age groups and a larger community. We also need to rely on a broad spectrum of the community for fundraising no matter the amounts donated. As a growing organization with increasing demands and expectations, we need to develop leaders and a viable succession plan. We encourage more members to volunteer in different subcommittees.

With Limited Financial Resources below are the some suggestions.

- Advertising through e-mail & website for Business and Birth announcement
- Sale of bricks
- Sale of Grocery GIFT CARDS

Work In progress:

- Bequest legacy.
- Resident A'alim.
- Burial Assistance program (BAP).
- Installation of Solar Panel – Saving over five dollar a month.
- Instituting and establishing a new entity to safe guard the assets of SIJPA.
- Need of Security system and three new doors Donor are welcomed!
- Seminar on parenting training within the Community.
- Matrimonial Committee: Marriage facilitation, Counseling service & ongoing education on marriage.
- Need more sleep-over program in Ramadan & Muharum.
- Poetry and Juma Khutba Competition.
- Children's workshop to be expanded to include games and martial arts program.
- Greater female representation at all levels of community work.
- Conference of Youths to strengthen the institution of marriage within our community.



Capital Project: Worth over \$350,000.00

- Parking Lot – Contribution by entire community.
- Purchase of Ninety Graves – By entire community
- Madressah Library.
- Calligraphy – generous donations from Family of Abbas Nasser, Abbas Issa & Akbar Rizvi.
- Kitchen Cabinets, Madressah office Library and A'alim Apartment by Contribution by entire Community.
- Bibi Zainab (as) Zarih, Grease trap, Photo Copy Machine & Trip to Dorney Park & Wolf Lodge Compliments of Family of Abdul Hussein Jaffer (Yourway transport).

Acknowledgements - Thanks – Ahsante!

"Volunteer doesn't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. And they do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

I'd like to thank all the members of the Management Committee for their dedication in serving with me. I am proud of the people who have stood by us and worked for us and served this community. I am thankful & proud of my Management Committee - Br Riyaz, Br. Mir Mansoor, Br. Saleem, Br. Ali Moh'dali, Br. Yusuf and Ali Abdul. Job Well Done! Thank You! Asante Sana!

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the true heroes of the past four years - our hard working & passionate ladies Committee, donors and volunteers. There are not enough words to express the thanks and appreciation of these great workers. For without their passion and undying commitment to devote thousands of hours of volunteer service, we would not have begun this journey of transformation or achieved any of our goals. Embracing change is difficult and these volunteers never lost sight of SIJPA's strategic direction even when our road to success got bumpy or was detoured.

My sincerest thanks goes to our elders, NASIMCO and World Federation for their guidance, financial support and services to Al Ahad Islamic Center. But most importantly, my thanks go out to you, the members, for all of your support during this year of change. For without you, SIJPA would not reach to the height of perfection, quality services and humility. It has been my pleasure to serve you.

We thank the well-wishers of the community who have given us support throughout the four years by volunteering and donating. The members of my committee have served this community with simplicity, sincerity and with an aura of dedication rarely found.

- The Madressa is a very important platform, which builds the foundation of Islam in our children, which they cherish, and practice all their life. The Jamaat appreciates and thanks the Madressa subcommittee and all the teachers for their sacrifices of time and energy to educate our children in Islam.



- The Jamaat is very grateful to all our volunteers for their hard work and selfless sacrifices to our community in all areas – including the parking of the cars, to serving, and assisting in organizing mosque activities, to the kitchen responsibilities, as well as the upkeep of the center. Because of their noble sacrifices, members are able to attend the mosque activities in peace and comfort. We pray to Allah SWT to reward them all for their hard work.
- The Jamaat appreciates and thanks the Chairlady, her managing committee and all ladies volunteers for their sacrifices and hard work to organize all the ladies programs, Nyaz, Iftar and cleaning of the center
- We wish to thank all brothers & sisters for all their cooperation and assistance and all the generous donors for their continuous support towards the Jamaat at all times in all our community projects and activities.

Al Ahad Islamic center and its activities would be incomplete without the support, guidance and encouragement of the kind donors and volunteers in producing events of quality and versatility for our ever-changing and ever-demanding times.

It is with this support that Management has never looked back and continued to climb higher and higher. The availability of funds has never been a significant issue in the planning and organizing of events and we have always been content that none of our events would be jeopardized due to the lack of funds available – A satisfaction that surely calls for - Asante Sana



Managing Committee would like to record many thanks, appreciate and praise the entire community to facilitate the Iftars and Nyaz. These were possible because of donations, volunteers and cooking by the Ladies Committee and sister helping the Ladies Committee. We firmly believe that the community has shown unity, patient, tolerance and resolve to embark on projects and execute efficiently. At this moment we sincerely wish to apologize to one and all for any misunderstandings or for any shortfalls which may have occurred during past year.

- Thanks to all Volunteers to help facilitate parking during Ramadan & Muharram.
- Sister Zeenat Walji for conducting the Friday Children's workshop.
- Dr. Amir Famili & Br. Kausar Hassanali for hosting the guest speakers.
- Management appreciates the Good Consul given by the ex-presidents and elders of the community.
- The Management thanks all the members of funeral committee for facilitating the flawless funerals.
- Thanks to Sister Fatima Abdulhussein for sponsoring ladies programs.
- Thanks to our Iranian, Pakistani, Iraqis & Afghan community to sponsor iftars & Nyaz.
- Thanks to all Brothers who helped in snow ploughing the sidewalks at the Center.
- Raza Bhallo facilitating the Friday Juma and Alam & Lash.
- Gulshanbai and Zarina Bhalloo for assisting Ladies Committee in cooking, Alam & Lash.
- Abbas Walji for cooking Rice in the month of Muharram and Ramadan.
- Thanks to Abdulhussein Jaffer for the Flood Lights, Eid program at Dorney Park & wolf Lodge.
- At this point the Management would like to record the word of thanks to the Management of Allentown Challenger and Allentown Union in facilitating the sport & community Night programs.
- Our Thanks to great speaker Zakir Nisar Rahim, Khatib Mohammed Kermali, Brain Anthony, Ali Najafali & Moh'dhussein Rajmohammed.
- Thanks to EBC & Lehigh Print - Facilitated all our printing needs. Thank you Shabir Sumar & Mustafa Jaffer.
- Thank You Shabbir Musa and Hassnain & Hussein Khalfan for all our maintenance needs. These individual were available at short notice and sometimes in the middle of the night. Thank You! Ahsante Sana!

Conclusion:

In order to keep our community together we have to accept each other as we are. We have to be gentle in criticism and generous in our appreciation. We have to love each other and speak well of each other as much as possible. It has been a pleasure to serve this community. Thank you for the opportunity.

Attached Report – By Br. Brian Anthony, Br. Asghar Bhaloo (BAP)

SINCERELY,

MOHAMMED KHAKU
PRESIDENT