



## Ithna-asheri Muslim Association of the Northwest

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# 1. Executive Committee Report for 2008/2009

IMAN Executive Committee expresses gratitude and thanks to its membership for the opportunity given to it to serve and to complete the term ending September 30th, 2009. This report outlines our progress and activities since October 2008. This would not have been possible without the continued sincere dedication, support and participation of the community at large. The Executive Committee is honored to have had this opportunity to serve.

Alhamdulillah 2008/2009 was another incredible year in the growth of richness of activities being offered and pursued by the IMAN community as detailed in later sections of this report.

The following observations augment what is covered in sub-committee reports.

The following were the IMAN Executive Committee members for 2008/2009:

Mohamed Jawad Khaki	President
Sameer Tejani	Vice President
Sanaa (Joy) Carey	Secretary
Kristen Jawad	Assistant Secretary
Mohammad Nikjoo	Treasurer
Syed Iqbal Rizvi	Committee Member

## 1.1 Executive Committee Priorities

From the recommendations of last year, the following five areas had a priority focus from the Executive Committee.

### 1.1.1 Sustainability

IMAN community like any other community has had to weather the effects of a bad economy. As is evident from the financial reports our humanitarian funds reserves are running lower than in the past. We encourage all to be generous and help us build the reserves we need to ride out the bad economic times.

We are encouraged by increasing contributions to the operational expenses at IMAN. Our goal is to have sufficient reserves for one year's expense which we seem to have met this year.

However, an area of concern is insufficient reserves for maintenance and renovations. Assuming thirty year depreciation and adjusting for inflation we need to be accumulating funds at the rate of \$150K per year to develop a capital reserve so that we are in a position for major renovations when necessary.

IMAN as an organization needs to work in developing a good succession plan for long term sustainability. Several people at IMAN have been devoting their services for several years now

and they carry with them critical organizational history and know how. For long term sustainability of IMAN, efforts need to be underway in devising a succession plan for all key functions essential to the running of IMAN. We encourage people to work cooperatively in subcommittees and help us develop the leadership pipeline to sustain the organization for the long term.

### **1.1.2 Children and Youth**

We need to work cooperatively together in providing a caring nurturing environment at the IMAN Center for our children and youth. It is also important to take sufficient measures towards a well-disciplined and successful community that we can all be proud of. We recommend a group of parent volunteers come forward and help provide necessary leadership on this front.

An important focus here could be to tap into the youthful energies in our younger members and mentor them to serve and contribute to IMAN. We are encouraged with enhanced parental participation on the weekend school front. However, we are also confident there is much more that we can do. An area of particular focus and priority is to improve the connection between the weekend school and other programs at IMAN. This is not only an important vehicle for the development of our children but also essential to the long sustainability of Muslims in North America.

Our programming at the center must be enhanced to win the hearts and the minds of the youth. We are encouraged to see enthusiasm from our youth as they have continued to find ways to organize themselves. The future Executive Committee should formally constitute the IMAN Youth Committee and help nurture it to be a success.

Muharram youth speaker was well received.

We are encouraged by the response to the Saturday programs.

IMAN Farsi school pilot was a new initiative to reach an underserved population of Muslims in the area, particularly the youth.

### **1.1.3 Operational Excellence**

Operational processes devised over the years have continued to help ensure stable running of IMAN. IMAN by-laws and sub-committee terms of reference need to be revised to reflect the improved and revised operational framework and organizational learning of the recent years.

IMAN Board is in the process of reviewing revisions to IMAN by-laws proposed by Sr. Shahina Piyarali and Br. Syed Abbas Rizvi. This is an activity that will be carried forward for 2009/2010.

As our organization grows and matures, we need to devise formalized policies, procedures and recommend a code of conducts for all our members, volunteers and office bearers.

Coordination between different sub-committees needs to improve.

We also need to continue improving on-boarding procedures for new members and volunteers – this task was started earlier in the year by a group of volunteers who worked on a document. Part of this work has been reflected on the website which gives visitors a good idea on the activities and contact information for different services. See: <http://www.iman-wa.org/aboutus.htm>.

A bulletin board has been installed in the rear entrance foyer.

At the same time, a small group of volunteers worked on the website redesign specifications to taking into account the content that people usually look for and making it easily accessible. The website is currently being worked on based on these specifications with a goal of having it live by end of January 2010.

Alhamdulillah, we have seen some new people stepping up to help in the different aspects of running IMAN. We still need to get better at recruiting and retaining talent.

#### **1.1.4 Resource Center**

Simply put there is a great need for educational materials and reliable information about the history and religion of Islam for anyone wishing to deepen their understanding of Islam. The remodeled center and our growing community of professionals provides an excellent opportunities to create a much needed Islamic resource center here in the Northwest that we must pursue.

Progress made on establishing a Resource Center is detailed in a later section. The current thinking on providing an on premise library is to:

- Focus on 100% on-premise English reference library that is open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Sundays and expand opening hours to others days in the week subject to volunteer availability
- Connect with King County Library System and explore synergies: devise a compatible system, learn best practices, understanding broader community needs to discover what books we should carry, suggest to KCLS books they should carry, recruit community volunteers

There is a lot more that could and needs to be done on this front. We need people with passionate dedicated volunteers to help

### **1.1.5 Increase Relevance - towards living Islam**

Several new programs and activities were undertaken this year to appeal to different audiences details of which can be found under subcommittee reports and Additional Activities. We greatly increased our speaker pool to bring exposure to a diversity of views and topics.

A notable milestone is the establishment of at least one daily prayer every day of the week.

Saturday evening programs is one new area that was geared towards adopting “Family Friendly Mosque” Initiative where appropriate programs are run to help families and young couples to develop their children and themselves to the fullest potential and instill strong family bonding and community support systems.

As in the years past, IMAN needs to be open to new ideas to cater to the diverse needs of the community, e.g. programs for senior citizens, tuition help for students, subject expert speakers, etc.

Increasing relevance will not only help us meet more needs of our membership but also attract others to grow our small congregation.

As we learn from and share the rich history of Islam, our religious rituals need to help us live Islam in North America and not merely revive customs for another era or place.

One of the challenges we encountered this year as we tried to appeal to different audiences was on the Farsi School. There was lack of unanimous consensus on the Board and the Executive Committee with regards to IMAN Farsi School. Those dissenting on the Board and the Executive Committee with regards to IMAN Farsi School have expressed concern if such an activity is in alignment with the mission and priorities of a multi-cultural religious institution that pursues the religious, educational and cultural activities of the Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim religion. After much deliberation and discussion, go ahead was given for IMAN Farsi pilot project to continue for another year as we work towards building consensus on this topic.

## **1.2 IMAN Remodeling Efforts**

Alhumdulillah, the remodeling has been completed.

All constructions invoices have been settled.

The new facilities are meeting the present needs of the community. It is heartwarming to see every part of the building being utilized. The new facilities are also opening up opportunities for a variety of programs that would not otherwise be possible.

On behalf of all of us at IMAN we express our deepest gratitude to all for those who contributed for their generous donation and support. May Allah SWT reward all those who contributed towards establishing a beacon to Islam here in the Northwest of the USA.

With IMAN Remodeling completed, building maintenance is being handled by the Facility Committee as of this year (see section 2.6 for details).

### 1.3 Humanitarian Relief

In addition to the efforts lead by the IMAN Social Services Committee covered elsewhere in this report, as a community we have responded to financial appeals from various appeals around the world details of which can be found in the financial report

### 1.4 Funeral Services

IMAN continues to provide funeral services for people when contacted. We have recommended people to use the services of the House of Mercy in Kent, since it is a Muslim cemetery. However, there have been cases where the bereaved families have insisted on burying at another location. In those cases we have had to administer ghusl, kafan and lead salaatul mayyit for the deceased.

[imanfuneral@yahogroups.com](mailto:imanfuneral@yahogroups.com) e-mail list has been set up and is operational. This list includes several people from IMAN and other local communities in Greater Seattle. We encourage more people to sign.

### 1.5 Aqd Nikah Services

As a sign of a growing community servicing increasing needs, IMAN conducted several Aqd Nikah ceremonies during the past year as a service to Muslims in the area.

[imannikah@yahogroups.com](mailto:imannikah@yahogroups.com) e-mail list has been set up and is operational. Br. Sameer tejani and Br. Jawad Khaki are the people who currently officiate the Aqd Nikah ceremonies.

### 1.6 Communications and Archiving Our Journey

We are deeply appreciative of the countless hours and dedication of Sr. Amina Al Sadi and Sr. Ala Soufiyan in sifting through and filing years of paperwork.

IMAN Web site, IMANews, live transmission and archival of lectures on the web are valued by the community. There is still a lot that can be done in improving communications with the community at large. There is a lot to be said for preserving our efforts for the benefit of those who will succeed us. This is an area that can benefit from more dedicated volunteers and needs more attention and dedication

## 1.7 Newsletter/Communication

Communication with IMAN community has been through announcements made at the IMAN Center, our web site and through email lists. Whilst this has been adequate to serve in the past from, with increased interactions between various committees and members, new people moving into our community and an expanded set of activities at IMAN, this is an area that requires significant focus and investment moving forward. Our on-boarding process for new people moving into the area is weak. We also are not fully preserving the content we develop so that it can be easily re-used or shared with other communities.

## 2. Sub-Committee Reports

Over the past year we have focused on the sub-committees described below. In order to expand our range of activities, we have also begun several additional projects which are described in Section 3. Below is a brief report on sub-committee activity.

### 2.1 Sunday School Committee

#### 2.1.1 Members

The school year for 2008-2009 began in the middle of September with the following individuals serving in the sub-committee:

- Homa Azadi (Principal)
- Mehboob Ali Khaki (Vice Principal)
- Azita Mohammadian (Administrator)
- Shahina Piyarali (Treasurer)
- Aqeela Dhalla (Secretary)

#### 2.1.2 Accomplishments

- Starting the school year of 2008-2009 on the 28th of September, in conjunction with Eid Al-Fitr celebration and IMAN open house, was a success as it was also exciting for all students, whether they were returning students or newly enrolled students.
- There were a lot of challenges with a new facility, new rules, lots of new students and a new principal.
- Financially the school has done well and is planning on doing even better.
- The number of students increased almost 60% compared to the previous year to 118 registered students with 4 students on a wait list. Two families were granted scholarships, consisting of a total of 5 students. There were 7 classes in session consisting of **kindergarten, Alif, Ba, Taa, Tha, Jeem, and TA**. The school year started with using 7 rooms, but we eventually had to split Class Alif into two - Alif A, and Alif B, due to the large class size. Students are enjoying the new facility and have adapted to the new school rules very quickly.
- Classes were renamed from Grades 1-5 to Alif – Jeem to better reflect 2 year curriculum.
- A total of 22 teachers were involved in teaching various subjects.

- The school moved to using new text books for the Qur'an class for those learning the Arabic alphabet and this was a big shift. In the beginning we were short on supplies due to the unexpected increase in student enrollment. The new text books have been a good change, as they have proven to be a better way to evaluate students' skills and abilities, therefore placing them accordingly in classes that fit their needs.
- Activities: Several activities were planned during Muharram, Hajj, and Milad-un-Nabi. The school celebrated Eid-ul-Adha with a bowling activity, but attendance was very low due to weather.
- Recognitions: The final day was dedicated to recognizing the students' achievements during the school year. Among the honorees were Arya Nikjoo for the Senior Leadership award for 2008 and Abbas Jaffery for the Junior Leadership award. This year's School T-shirt design competition was won by Zain Khaki.
- School Camp: The school completed its last event with a camp held at the Sound View Camp near Gig Harbor from June 20th to 21st. Students participated in various sporting activities and shared stories around a camp fire.
- Volunteers: Initially it was difficult to get parents involved with the school, but as we are moved forward during the school year, more parents became involved with the school and accepted responsibilities in forms of various tasks, such as: school security, weekly cleaning, etc.
- Snack time is the students' favorite time. Healthy snacks are provided, and the process is organized and efficient. The pizza lunches are more popular than ever.
- Tuition: There was an increase in monthly tuition to account for the cost of running the school (which also included the cost of snacks that are provided by the school). In addition, IMAN School contributed \$1,000 a month for the upkeep of IMAN Center
- Monthly newsletter: A monthly newsletter was sent out to parents to keep them informed about school activities.
- School-wide testing: There were three testing periods during the school year where students are evaluated on what they have learned. This has helped with aligning the whole school with exam weeks.
- Regular meetings: There is now an established monthly parents' meeting, which occurs on the 1st Sunday of the month. The teachers' meeting is on the 2nd Sunday of the month, which is followed by school committee meeting on the 3rd Sunday of the month.
- Safety: The first fire drill was conducted, which went very smoothly. More drills need to be scheduled so as to improve safety.

### **2.1.3 Challenges**

- Some classes got filled to capacity and we had to put some students on a waiting list.
- The school needs to establish a better setup and system for Quran classes for next year. One suggestion is to increase the Quran recitation time, or combine it with the Akhlaq and Quranic study.
- Attracting parents' support and involvement: A possible solution is to establish a parents committee and encourage parents to step in and help with different indoor and

outdoor activities (hiking, etc). Select one parent to attend school committee and teacher's meeting.

- The school needs to improve communication between the committee, parents, and teachers
- Creating and enforcing a school policy on attendance and absenteeism

#### **2.1.4 Opportunities**

- We have students who are at a critical age where greater involvement in the community would fulfill their needs. We need to find ways to encourage them to participate and create opportunities for them to serve the community.
- Many Sunday school parents do not participate in other programs at IMAN. We need to find ways to create an environment for parents to be able to participate in other IMAN programs so that the children get an opportunity to enforce what they learn during the Sunday school.

#### **2.1.5 Recommendations**

- A call out to parents to participate more in the school activities. Moving the school system to a co-op model would be a recommended start - during the last parents' meeting of the school year, a recommendation of 20 hours of volunteer time per school year was made.
- Parents working together with students during the week to ensure that the education imparted on Sundays is reinforced during the rest of the week.
- Getting adequate training for teachers to best impart their knowledge and inspire the students to seek more.
- Enforcing school policies around attendance so as to not interrupt classes.
- Interaction with other IMAN sub-committees to get parents and students more involved with different aspects of IMAN, so that the learning goes beyond the time spent at Sunday school and combines it with other programs at IMAN.
- Parent support group: Create an environment where parents can meet regularly to support each other and the school.

The school would like to thank all the teachers and volunteers who dedicated their time in making 2008-2009 a successful year. The school committee for 2009-2010 nominated at the end of the school year was as follows:

- Homa Azadi (Principal)
- Rouhollah Rahmani (Vice Principal)
- Mehboob Ali Khaki (Administrator – with extra help from Neelam Khaki, Sukaina Versi & Farhat Tejani)
- Shahina Piyarali (Treasurer)
- Tanzeela Merchant (Secretary)
- Moustafa Nouredine (Parents liaison)

The new school year started on September 27th. We have more than 60 students enrolled this year and a good team of teachers and volunteers who ensure the smooth running of the school. We look forward to your commitment to help the school reach greater heights.

## 2.2 Program Committee

Alhamdulillah this has been another full year of vibrant activity with regards to Programs at IMAN. Program Committee work requires many hours of work from many people that may not be obvious to most. This not only includes PC meeting time, but outside of the meeting work to follow-up on various aspect of programming, not to mention significant speaker time investment.

### 2.2.1 Members

Jawad Khaki, Robina Qureshi, Kristen Jawad, Sanaa Joy Carey, Aunali Versi, Meisam Aliroteh

### 2.2.2 Accomplishments

- Weekly regular programs such as Friday Night, Jumu'ah Prayer, Al Mizan & Dua Kumail have continued. Varied program formats e.g., using documentary films such as The Imam & the Pastor movie, Hazrath Mariam (A.S).
- Invited a variety of out town speakers and recruited new local speakers as well as moderators for programs.  
Out of Town speakers included: Sayid Hassan Al-Qazwini, Sayed Mustafa Al-qazwini, Sayed Haidar Bahar Al-Uloom, Dr. Dato, Sheikh Mazin Al-Sahlani, Asaad Sultan Altaee, Dr. Liyakat Takim, Husain Khaki (youth), Shaykh Hanafi Muhammad  
Local Guest Speakers included: Rev. Dr. Andy E. Larsen, Kirkland Mayor Jim Lauinger, Dr. Andy E. Larsen, Mohammad Sabbaghi, Dr. Rouhollah Rahmani, Elder Pastor Stretchen, Abdul Hakim, Hassan Yaghi, Sameer Tejani, Meisam Aliroteh, Dr. Sanaa Carey, Hussain Zaidi, Jawad Khaki, Zafar Khan, Janice Tuftte, Momen Mokhtari, Mahmood Khadeer, Mahbubul Alam Ali, Ken Stewart, Maryam Sabbaghi, Amina Al-Sadi, Rizwan Nazarali, Abed Jawad, Dr. Mahmood Sarram, Kristen Jawad, Moustafa Nouredine, Syed F. Abbas, Dr. Ali Naini, Rayyan Jaber, Alireza Hannani
- Established new programs:
  - Daily night prayer with several people accepting responsibility to be primary and back-up on a rotational basis
  - Sunday morning fajr prayer, dua-a-sabah and breakfast program
  - Saturday Community Village Nights geared towards building community, in a family friendly way have been popular with 50-80 people attending.
  - Dua-e-Tawwasul program in Tuesday nights
  - Reflections from Nahjul Balagha on Thursday evening.
- Several memorial and wedding ceremonies were scheduled at the IMAN Center
- Muharram program this year include a special program for the youth (6-12) featuring Br. Husain Khaki focusing on lessons from the life of Imam Hussain which were streamed live. Dr. Mahmood Dato was our main speaker for

Muharram. His lecture series concentrated on the events after the tragedy of Kerbala focusing on the life of Mukhtar-e-Saqafi. To promote interaction with the audience e-mail Q &A was set up. In addition, IMAN organized multi-faith Muharram blood drive where local Unitarian and Christian congregations were invited to participate in the blood donation via Puget Sound Mobile Blood bank.

- Muslim Unity Week Event was organized around the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny)
- Ramadan activities included public iftar, guest speakers, video lectures, Quran Reading in English & Arabic, Children's Ramadan Program, aamals on night of Qadr, etc. Due to late timings and lower attendance during weekdays from past years, weekend speakers for two weekends in Ramadhan were arranged instead of a nightly guest speaker. Dr. Liyakat Takim and Sayed Haidar Bahar Al-Uloom were the two weekend speakers.
- As is becoming the norm in many centers around the world, once again accommodations were made for Eid-ul-Fitr on two separate days.
- TWB event on Oct 11th & building weekends.

### 2.2.3 Challenges

- Budget for guest speakers year round and Ramadan iftars.
- Rituals & Traditions- An ongoing discussion we have had is on the observation of the wiladat and wafaat of the Imams. There is a view that this should be observed on the actual day as it may not always be possible or appropriate to have them all on a Friday (e.g. wafats presentation on the night of Eid al Adha). If there was broader community participation on weeknights it will be good to have these observances on the actual day instead as is done in communities worldwide. (All communities started with small weeknight attendance.) . So that we properly commemorate the wafats and wildats.
- Volunteer help is required to help speaker with research and provide presentation guidance.
- Rigor & Relevance- program content & synthesis: need more speakers to volunteer and researched content on Ahlul Bayt & other Islamic topics.
- Creating individual and communal sense of belonging, purpose and togetherness:
- We would like community member participation in and cooperation with advanced sign up for recitation of qur'an, duas, poetry, latmiyah etc to ensure smooth programming and so that everyone feels they have been included. It is hard to juggle schedule at the last minute. The ad hoc fashion we have in place today will inevitably result in people feeling not included and/or left out. Feedback has also been that on important occasions preference is given to those who are considered good reciters. We need someone to volunteer to help set up a system that could help this aspect of programming.

### 2.2.4 Opportunities

- More educational programs that reflect current needs.

- Improved integration of Madrasah student activity with IMAN Programs.
- Building community, in a Family Friendly way during Islamic Holidays, Winter and Summer Breaks.
- Peer /Study/Discussion Groups to form for youth & adults.

### 2.2.5 Recommendations

- Establish programs schedule a year in advance.
- Program Committee ToR documents needs to be revised to reflect current operation.
- Implement regular formal and informal feedback mechanism on IMAN Programs
- Incorporate feedback received:
  - Monthly themes are helpful and should be continued
  - Interactive Q&A discussions need to be better moderated or format changed so that it is a positive experience for all, all the time
  - More community input and volunteer help will greatly aid Program Committee work.
  - Devise classes and programs to help new Muslims or adult Muslims who have not had much exposure to Islamic learning
  - Devise introductory classes for non-Muslims on Islam and Muslims
  - Invite speakers on broad educational topics to help increase appeal and relevance of the programs.
  - Provide regular briefs on day to day fiqh primarily on rules of salaah and taharah as those providing feedback have observed that this is an area of improvement for many in the community
  - Continue to use varied audio/video content and try new approaches to make programs more engaging and more relevant.

## 2.3 Social Services Committee

### 2.3.1 Members

**Homa Azadi:** Co-Chair, caseworker.

**Hamed Esfahani:** Co-Chair, caseworker, treasurer.

**Sumaira Qureshi:** Committee member, food bank lead.

**Abed Jawad:** Committee member, Feed the Hungry program lead.

**Alireza Hannani:** Committee member, Feed the Hungry program coordinator.

**Aunali Versi:** Volunteer, consultant in affordable health insurance.

**Arash Abdi:** Volunteer.

### 2.3.2 Accomplishments

- Helped 19 applicants, mostly comprised of families with 1 or more children.

Majority of applicants required help and follow-up numerous times throughout the year. Some families had as many as 9 cases opened during the year.

- Established a new process for distributing food bank funds via food card. We now purchase and collect food cards for this “Virtual Food Bank”. Those who are in need of food items can contact any of the Social Services Committee members to learn about how to receive these food cards.
- Make more regular connection with local food banks. Continued running the food bank as in previous years, however, most of the food this year was donated to local food banks and Tent City. Most applicants prefer to receive food cards, even if they are in small amounts (\$5, \$10, \$20).
- Identified local needy families (sayyed and non-sayyed) before Eid-ul-Fitr and distributed Fitra funds.
- Cooked warm meals for over 300 people at the Sacred Hearts Shelter in Seattle. A group of volunteers from IMAN participated in cooking dinners 10 times throughout the year.
- IMAN Social Services was a contributing member of the Day of Dignity event, in which many Muslim organizations throughout Seattle area cooperate to feed the homeless in Seattle.

### **2.3.3 Challenges**

- Short staffed with caseworkers
- Increased number of applicants
- Increased amount of funds that each application is requesting (compared to previous years)
- Helping applicants with complicated cases that require ongoing follow-up during regular business hours

### **2.3.4 Opportunities**

- Opportunity to get connected with more local food banks
- We had a diverse set of applicants from various backgrounds and different areas in Seattle area
- Based on the feedback we get from the applicants, IMAN Social Services is becoming more known to the larger community. Applicants were referred to IMAN by other Masjids and organizations.
- New members have joined the committee.

### **2.3.5 Recommendations for next year**

- Do a better job of informing IMAN Community about Social Services activities and contributions.
- Continue building on existing connections and build new connections with the local Social Services organizations, such as shelters, food banks, tent city.
- Recruit one or two additional caseworkers.
- Provide more opportunities for members of the community to help with Social Services needs, even if they are not members of the committee. Privacy concerns need to be addressed carefully in these cases.

- Work on long-term and sustainable plans to help those who are in need of jobs, not just emergency help.
- Get involved in early planning with the Day of Dignity organizers (initial steps were made towards this already this year).

## 2.4 Health and Fitness

No activity.

## 2.5 Ladies Committee

No activity.

## 2.6 Facilities Committee

### 2.6.1 Members

**Hamed Esfahani:** Chair, main point of contact.

**Ismail Alnoori:** Committee member. Liaison to Hospitality Committee.

**Meisam Aliroteh:** Committee member. A/V. Access to building.

**Arash Abdi:** Committee member.

**Samad Faghih:** Consultant to the committee (not a member).

### 2.6.2 Accomplishments

- Formed Sub Committee (committee did not exist last year).
- Recruited members.
- School was made operational.
- Library Room has been setup with professionally made shelves.
- Obtained permit from City of Kirkland for signs to be installed on the north wall of the building and along State Street.
- Process established for issuing access cards/keys to the building.
- Finished off remaining items from the remodeling project.
- Managed to convince SD Deacon to take responsibility for majority of the cost of repairing the moisture damaged wood floor in multi-purpose room.
- Signed new contract with landscaping company.
- Signed contracts with Alarm Company and conducted fire drills with their cooperation.

### **2.6.3 Challenges**

- Completing remaining work from the remodeling project.
- Fixing the moisture damaged floor in the multi-purpose room, while keeping school operational.
- Dealing with shortage of storage space after removing the MiniMobile container from parking lot.
- Getting used to the new building.
- Responding to a series of requests from various sub committees to make changes to the facilities, or purchase/install new furniture or fixtures.

### **2.6.4 Opportunities**

- Establishing this new committee and getting new members of the community involved.
- Having the opportunity to provide better service to the larger community in the new facilities:
  - More classes on Sundays
  - Memorial services
  - Larger and better organized gatherings for Eids
  - Simultaneous programs and meetings happening.

### **2.6.5 Recommendations for next year**

- Increasing more community involvement in keeping the facilities clean and safe.
- Consider Installing bollards and security chain on parking lot entrance.
- Establish and document safety and security guidelines.
- Work out the Terms of Reference for subcommittee.
- Estimate an annual budget and ongoing maintenance cost.
- Get more involvement from committee members by having regular meetings.

## 3. Additional Activities

### 3.1 Hospitality

Numerous people have helped to make IMAN a welcoming place with efficiently run programs. Br. Abed, Sr. Kaniz and all the volunteers have done an exceptional job organizing numerous events that have been appreciated by all in the community.

IMAN expresses deep gratitude for the many ways its members serve the community including: bringing refreshments, setting and cleaning up, and by contributing to the success of all its programs.

Br Ali Sherif and Sr Kaniz are working on having a Hospitality team ready for this Muharram, and we hope that this effort will be sustained and grow during 2010.

### 3.2 Resource Center

These are the highlights of the IMAN Resource Center:

- Library Shelving was completed
- Existing books have been categorized
- Library is open for use as a reference library
- An initial draft of Library terms of reference was created
- Donating the existing Urdu books at IMAN to a Shia Islamic Center in Houston.
- It is planned to create a reference library with majority of books in English in the initial phase of the library launch.
- An initial list of reference books is being prepared and contact was made with a publisher to provide the books when it is ready
- Purchased two glass shelves and Pamphlet holder for displaying new books and announcements.
- Purchased Quran, Nahjol-Balagheh, Children, and Adult Islamic books for the bookstore.

### 3.3 Farsi School

#### 3.3.1 Team

**Ghadeer Baghai:** Principal

**Hamed Esfahani:** Administrator

**Mastan Heshmatpour:** Parent Liaison

**Mohammad Nikjoo:** EC Liaison/ Treasurer

### **3.3.2 Accomplishments**

- IMAN Farsi School was established in March 2009 to serve the educational needs of the community interested in learning Farsi.
- With limited advertising, 55 students registered in the program.
- The parents and the students were extremely cooperative, helpful, and very pleased with the program.
- Farsi classes were once a week for two hours on Sundays with a 10-min. break for snacks.
- There were a total of 4 regular classes for ages 5 to 17 and two adult classes.
- We had 6 experienced volunteer teachers and 8 assistants.
- The focus of teaching has been mainly on basic Farsi: Reading, writing, and speaking.
- Different yahoo groups were established to communicate information to parents, teachers, and school administrators.

### **3.3.3 Challenges**

- Number of registered students was a pleasant surprise which created some challenges.
- Experienced volunteer teachers were formed. Everyone was informed of some basic guidelines to be in line with Islamic practices & values.
- Compilation of text books from various sources, within U.S. and overseas. Some textbooks were purchased from Farsi School of Houston.
- The school administration was short staffed.
- Student's attendance due to time change.
- School timing was also a challenge in that some families who attended Sunday Madrasah had a longer day on Sundays.
- To educate families and especially non-Muslim families to adhere to Islamic etiquette and dress code of IMAN Center.
- We were faced with some resistance from some community members about having an IMAN Farsi school.
- To convince everyone at IMAN that IMAN Farsi School is not an exclusive cultural activity for Iranian families only, but an educational language program targeting the entire community to help open doors to the diverse and rich Islamic resources, and it should be adopted as a regular IMAN program.

### **3.3.4 Opportunities**

- An opportunity to create a safe atmosphere for children in our larger community to engage with one another.
- An opportunity for a more diverse set of families to get to know the IMAN Community and also bond with their Islamic heritage.
- An opportunity for IMAN Center to become a learning center for both Muslims & non Muslims.
- An opportunity to serve the educational interests of the greater Seattle community.

### 3.3.5 Recommendations

- Conduct a survey to collect feedback from students/parents/teachers.
- Teacher training.
- Form a committee for 2009-10
- Have a standardized testing for new student's placement.
- Participants with different language skills need to be in different classes and therefore have different teachers.
- Farsi language proficiency to qualify for a foreign language college credit.

## 3.4 Muslims 360

Muslims 360 is a forum where professionals and entrepreneurs can come together on a regular basis to share and explore different ideas from their respective professional backgrounds and worldviews that will help the communities we live in. **The overall objectives of the group is to Network, Learn and Grow.**

### 3.4.1 Team & Roles

Five teams were formed out of the discussion:

- 1) Students counseling - Ali Hanani, Meisam Aliroteh
- 2) Food and shelter - Sr. Janice
- 3) Professional mentoring - Moustafa Nouredine, Ali Sheriff, Jawad Khaki
- 4) Speakers bureau - Syed Wasti, Rayyan Jaber, Sr. Sanaa
- 5) Professional Banquet - Rouhollah, Jaafar AlAli

#### **Additional participants:**

Mahmoud Khadeer, Azfar Moazzam, Ayesha Sheikha, Azam Sheikha, Kabir Jeddy, Spideh Dibay, Asif Choksi, Ibrahim Saoudi

### 3.4.2 Accomplishments

- Met multiple Muslim professionals from diverse background - **Network**
- Got a hint of some of the challenges with building an institution - **Learn**
- Learned about activities such as the ones driven by Sr. Janice, toast master, and good will – **Network and Learn.**
- Had fun as a group, had iftar together, prayed Jamaa together – **Network activity**
- Met CEO of Goodwill Seattle Colling and transitioned some ideas to improve our program – **Network and Learn**
- Learned about conducting a Banquet and the challenges with pulling something like this together - **Learn**
- Learned a lot about individuals, their capabilities, and their energy – **Network** – I think in general there's passion and energy but lack of focus.

### **3.4.3 Challenges**

- Too many projects and no clear outcome
- Too many meetings and lots of homework (at times it felt like work, pressure, and commitments)
- Lack of commitment behind a unified project / cause – we could not prove to ourselves that we can pull a simple project off the ground. Due to the number of projects and the diversity of the projects we could not get critical mass behind a single project
- Big goals but not enough experience
- No realistic success metrics

### **3.4.4 Opportunities and Recommendations**

- Focus on key projects that produce measurable results
- Drive the meetings per project
- Consider networking events (low key, just meet and mingle)
- Re-evaluate our vision
- Where do we want to go?
- Set clear goals
- How are we going to get there?
- Set realistic success metrics
- Start with a low-bar

## **3.5 Arabic Classes**

Arabic 101, Arabic 102 language classes.

Arabic 101 and 102 were a series of classes in the Arabic language, whose goal was to help class participants expand their Arabic vocabulary, develop Arabic reading comprehension skills, build grammatically correct Arabic sentences (verbally and in writing) and understand the basic rules of Arabic grammar. The long term objective is to help participants understand Islamic material (Holy Quran, ahadith, supplications and prayers, etc.) in their original Arabic language.

### **3.5.1 Team Roles**

Rayyan Jaber – Class Facilitator

Meisam Aliroteh – Backup Facilitator

### **3.5.2 Accomplishments**

- The class facilitator and a core team of students met regularly at the IMAN center (two times for Arabic 101 and three times a week for Arabic 102), over a period of around 8 months (Oct 2008 to May 2009). The classes focused on basic Arabic grammar, to help students understand the language structure of the Holy Quran.

- A self assessment survey was conducted at the end of the Arabic 102 class and was filled by the students. The survey results suggest that the following topics were successfully conveyed (at a high level of detail) to the majority of the class (>80%).
  - 1 the significance of “7arakat” in the Arabic language (high level)
  - 2 sun/moon letters, definite/indefinite nouns, demonstrative pronouns
  - 3 parts of speech: classification of words to nouns/verbs/preposition
  - 4 forming the singular, dual and (regular) plural of (masculine and feminine) nouns
  - 5 the two sentence structures: verbal vs nominal
  - 6 the interrogative form: where, what, when, etc.
  - 7 the doer (“al-fa3el”)
  - 8 adjectives (“as-sifa”) and possessive forms (“al-mudaf ilayh”)

*Based on participants' feedback, classes helped some participants connect more with Quranic verses and supplications in their original language.*

### 3.5.3 Challenges

The Arabic 101 and 102 faced several challenges, the most prominent of which are the following:

- Class participants were at significantly different levels and familiarity with the Arabic language. This made some classes boring to some people and too difficult to others.
  - Ideally, there would be multiple classes (either in parallel or at different times of the year) that would target different levels of the language, but the very low overall attendance rate (3 to 5 participants on average) made it hard to split the class.
- Lack of a good reference text book:
  - While having weekly class presentations made sure the content is very relevant to the participants, this takes way too much time from the facilitator. It also makes it harder, due to time constraints, to give homework, reinforcement material, etc for the participants to practice with at home.
- Relatively low attendance rate:
  - Regular class participants were around 6 in Arabic 101 and 4 in Arabic 102. This can be due to many reasons, including but not limited to inconvenient meeting time, classes too easy / too advanced or irrelevant, etc.
  - Low attendance rate 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.
  - It is a challenge because it is hard to sustain a program when the number of interested people is too low.
- Lack of a very detailed curriculum:
  - A high level syllabus was discussed in the first week of classes, but the syllabus was at a relatively high level and did not mention timelines of by when, certain pre-specified topics would be covered. Based on some students' feedback, this was sometimes confusing, since they didn't know what to expect to learn next.

While it is ideal to have a clear roadmap, it would have been extremely expensive (time and resource-wise) to come up with a detailed curriculum.

- The next time these classes are offered, the class facilitator can build upon the material, lectures, etc that were previously prepared and hopefully come up with a clearer roadmap.

### **3.5.4 Opportunities**

The classes encouraged the participants to connect what they are learning with Quranic verses and supplications they recite after prayers, etc. Indeed, this is the main long-term goal of the classes, and is a key opportunity for IMAN center to be an educational beacon to both Muslims and non Muslims in the greater Seattle area.

### **3.5.5 Recommendations**

- Conduct a survey to evaluate IMAN members' interest in an Arabic learning program at IMAN. If there isn't a critical mass of committed people who are willing to attend a regular program (at least once a week), then it doesn't make sense to keep going forward with this program. A critical mass for a class is 8 to 10 participants. It takes a lot of time and resources to sustain a high quality language program.
- If the critical mass is met, the program needs more facilitators to be sustainable in the long term. Since class facilitator position is currently a volunteering position, and not full time position, more class facilitators are needed to smoothly cover for each others' absences. Moreover, moving forward, participants who have very different background levels in the Arabic language, need to be in different study groups. This will also require more class facilitators.

It is noteworthy here that class facilitators, would have to commit to spend certain time at home, preparing for classes, to make sure the classes are relevant and beneficial to participants. This should not be taken lightly, otherwise, the classes will gradually become irrelevant or wasteful (time-wise) to the participants.

- While the sample text books surveyed so far do not seem to be good enough to be used as standard textbooks at IMAN, we need to look for more books, or start compiling previous lecture notes to a book that would be available at registration time, if such classes are to be offered again.
- It is beneficial for IMAN library to have reference materials, such as Arabic/English dictionaries and different (prominent) translations of the Holy Quran (with the original Arabic verses printed side by side).

## 3.6 Al-Mizan Study Group

### 3.6.1 Brief History

The study of Al-Mizan (An Exegesis of the Qur'an) by al'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i was first encouraged by the visiting scholar Brother 'Ali Khalfan. After the English translation of the exegesis was purchased by Brother Abdul Quddus, weekly reading and discussion sessions began in the winter of 2007. The enthusiastic organizers and participants from the beginning have been Brothers Abdul Quddus, Abed Jawad, Muhammad Sabaghi, and Mariam Noor Sabaghi. Many brothers and sisters have participated off and on in the Study Group over the years. The goal and focus of the endeavour has always been the understanding of the Qur'an according to the 'Allamah Tabataba'i.

### 3.6.2 Review of Year 2009

- This past year has seen Al-Mizan Study Group complete Surah Al- Baqarah, and begin the study of Surah Ali 'Imran. The number of participants ranges on average from four to eight.
- The facilitator is Brother Abdul Quddus. His responsibilities are to read the English translation out loud and to maintain subsequent discussion and analysis within the underlining goal, i.e. understanding the Qur'an according to 'Allamah Tabataba'i.
- The Arabic language specialist is Brother Abed Jawad. This contribution is crucial because the original language of the exegesis is in Arabic.
- This year has seen the addition of another valuable Arabic language specialist in the person of Brother Hassan Yaghi.
- The other essential contributor to the study of Al-Mizan is the Persian and English language specialist and philosopher Mohammad Sabaghi.
- The format of the Study Group has evolved and been refined in 2009.
- Any participant is free to inject at any time during the reading relevant questions or comments. This has resulted in more relaxed, enjoyable, informal proceedings.

### 3.6.3 Goals for Year 2010

- Building on enthusiastic and dedicated contributors, we hope new and returning participants will recognize the seasoned and refined approach of the Study Group and make a commitment to attend. Fresh insightful input is always welcomed.
- The Al-Mizan Study Group recognizes the methodical meticulous analysis of the Qur'an by 'Allamah Tabataba'i is not for everyone. His approach is serious and deep. The regular core participants of the Study Group find great pleasure in discovering not only the particulars, but also 'Allamah Tabataba'i's great vision.

## 3.7 Outreach Efforts

IMAN does not have a formal Outreach Subcommittee at this point. Br Jawad and Sr Sanaa have represented IMAN at various activities in the larger community, and have also been involved in numerous events under their own auspices as Muslims. Br Abed Jawad represented IMAN in the planning activities for the Interfaith 2009. In addition, several IMAN members have participated in interfaith and community programs, thereby, providing a greater Muslim voice and visible presence in the area, as well as, fostering more accurate information about Islam and greater interfaith cooperation.

Given the unfortunate misinformation about Islam and fear of Muslims in the US today, IMAN outreach is an important area to expand. Both reliable sources of information about Islam and opportunities for others to interact with practicing Muslims, are desperately needed if Americans are to have a greater understanding and respect for Islam and for Muslims.

All who are interested in helping in this area are very welcome and are encouraged to contact Br Jawad or Sr Sanaa.

### 3.7.1 Accomplishments

#### Hosted at IMAN

- About 20 youth and adults from Seattle First Baptist Church
- 50 Forrest Ridge 5<sup>th</sup> graders and several teachers
- Several non-Muslim community member guests for Iftar
- Together We Build Interfaith Service
- Several guests from University Presbyterian Church
- Several guests from other Christian congregations

#### Talks about Islam given off-site

- “Islam 101” at the University Congregational Church
- Lakeside School “World Religions” class
- Joint sermon at Newport Presbyterian Church during a Sunday worship service
- Dinner & Talk about the “Holy Spirit in Islam” at Seattle First Baptist Church

#### Community Networking

- Series of exploratory meetings with Jim Lauinger, Kirkland Mayor regarding Muslim involvement and visibility in the larger community
- IMAN was represented and very well received in the Kirkland 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade
- Br Abed Jawad represented IMAN in the planning meetings for the Interfaith Fair 2009 that spanned several months. Regrettably, due to concerns expressed by several members from the IMAN community on the event venue picked for the Interfaith Fair 2009, IMAN Executive Committee was urged to and decided to refer the matter for theological guidance. A decision was made not to participate in the event unless timely response in

support of IMAN's participation was received from Ayatullah Sistani's office. Regrettably a clear response to the questions posed to Ayatullah Sistani was not received in time for us to consider participating in the fair. The response that was eventually received still needs clarification as it did not speak to the specific questions asked.

- Participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Together We Build
- On-going consultation with Northwest Interfaith Community Outreach, Camp Brotherhood, and Compassionate Action Network
- Several exploratory discussions regarding possible joint projects with various Christian denominations and representatives from Temple B'Nai Torah.

### **Community networking (on an individual level)**

Br Jawad and Sr Sanaa, in their own capacity as practicing Muslims, have worked on expanding a relationship with Seattle University by

- Serving on the Executive Advisory Board for the School of Theology & Ministry (Br Jawad) and on the Advisory Board for the Inter-religious Institute (Sr Sanaa)
- Collaborating on the compilation of educational resources related to Islam
- Offering an Islamic response after a SU sponsored public presentation by Rabbi David Rosen (Jerusalem base president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace involving over 50 countries)
- Offering introductory remarks from an Islamic point of view at a SU sponsored performance of an interfaith Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at Benaroya Hall
- Being part of an interfaith team that visited several University campuses in search of best-practices in inter-religious education
- Providing Islamic representation at a SU sponsored workshop with 3 international UNESCO Chairs for Intercultural and Inter-religious Dialogue

Sr Sanaa, on her own and with several others, has attempted to make the beauty of Islam more visible to more people by offering presentations such as:

- "Parallel Teachings in Islam & Christianity" at Seattle Town Hall
- "Islamic perspectives on death and end of life issues", at a credited teleconference for health professionals at Virginia Mason Medical Center
- "Muslims in America" at the University of Washington

And by participating in activities such as:

- A breakfast talk at SU by Eboo Patel (Muslim member of Obama's new Faith Advisory Council, and founder and executive director of the Interfaith Youth Core)
- A daylong workshop called "Re-visioning Israel's Future" (sponsored by local Jews and activists from Israel)
- Consultation and planning regarding a proposed 2010 Interfaith educational trip to Israel & Palestine
- A United Religions Initiative planning session for their regional assembly in Vancouver
- A series of three Muslim-Christian Dialogues at various locations
- An on-going interfaith scriptural reflection group

### 3.7.2 Challenges

The greatest challenges have been having outreach efforts perceived as a priority at IMAN, and the over commitment of the IMAN members inclined toward outreach.

### 3.7.3 Opportunities

A key opportunity for Muslims becoming more active and visible in the larger community did not materialize. This was a suggestion from the Kirkland Mayor that IMAN host a Kirkland City Council Candidates Forum and have each candidates express their perspective on the needs and potential contributions of minority groups on the Eastside.

This did not occur for several reasons, including the over-commitment of key IMAN members, the proximity of the event (October) to Ramadan, and differing ideas about the importance of local community outreach and involvement.

### 3.7.4 Recommendations

- There have been several requests from Jews and Christians to re-start “Roots to Fruits: A Study of Abrahamic Family Values”, an interfaith series that began in 2007, but sitting on a back burner for awhile. Reviving some version of this program is being actively considered. It is educational, scripturally based, and has proven to be a good venue for interfaith learning and respectful dialogue.
- It is also recommended that IMAN offer a study group geared toward those with Western trained minds who have either converted (re-verted) to Islam, or who are interested in learning more about the universal dimensions of Islam.
- In addition - when qualified people with a strong commitment and time available can be identified - classes related to specific Islamic beliefs and practices should be offered on a regular basis.
- There should also be well thought out, well supplied and easily accessible resources available for visitors, those interested in learning about Islam or Muslims, and for new converts.
- Stimulating discussion among IMAN members interested in these areas is recommended as a means for clarifying outreach interests, level of commitment, and resources needed. The results of such discussions (which have already begun) can provide a basis for pilot project proposals. This would enable small steps, the effectiveness of which could be evaluated and realistic modifications recommended before any major commitments are made.
- Recruitment of IMAN members to be involved in outreach efforts must be done in the context of their existing commitments. Individuals interested in reaching out tend to be the same members who are already heavily involved in multiple IMAN activities.

## 3.8 Philosophy Study Circle

### 3.8.1 Team

**Rouhollah Rahmani** – Facilitator

**Hamed Esfahani** – Backup Facilitator

### **3.8.2 Accomplishments**

- Completed 30 lessons (3 out of 7 sections) of the book “Philosophical Introductions” by Ayatollah Yazdi.
- Decided to transition to a different book to broaden our learning with different perspectives and change the pace of the Philosophy Circle.
- The book we are using now is “[\*The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr\*](#)”, a collection of essays by Dr. Nasr compiled and edited by Dr. William Chittick.
- Completed 3 chapters from the new Seyyed Hossein Nasr book.
- Consistently had between 3 to 15 attendees. Averaging about 6.

### **3.8.3 Challenges**

- Finding the optimal timing for the class to appeal to most interested attendees. Before Isha prayers is too early for some, and after Isha prayers is too late for others.
- Keeping consistent attendance from a set group. Attendance fluctuates from one week to another.

### **3.8.4 Opportunities**

- Reaching out to a section of our community that’s interested in perusing Islamic Philosophy but doesn’t find the opportunity.
- Adding diversity to the range of programs provided at IMAN.
- Community members with various background and levels of knowledge helping each other understand philosophical concepts which we may otherwise not think about very deeply.

### **3.8.5 Recommendations**

- Continue building awareness about the program within IMAN.
- Invite people from outside of IMAN community to join us.
- Continue to gather feedback about the program and make adjustments based on interest level of participants (this is how we came to change the book we use).

## 4. Executive Committee Recommendations for 2009/2010

### 4.1 Continue progress on priorities established from last year

Here are the priority areas from 2008/2009:

- Sustainability
- Children and Youth
- Operational Excellence
- Resource Center
- Increased relevance – towards living Islam

Please refer to section 1 for further context.

### 4.1 Develop/Refresh Vision for a Diverse Multi-cultural Islamic Community

Diversity of members at IMAN is a distinct asset that we must nurture and treasure. The opportunity ahead for us is to develop a *shared vision* and *shared goals* as we dedicated ourselves to establishing a *thoughtful, caring, sharing community whose members seek closeness to Allah SWT in everything they do..*

Development of this vision will require a process in which we all need to engage whilst valuing the diversity and enrichment that each of us represents and brings.

### 4.2 Decision Making

As operations and activities of IMAN grow, so must our decision making processes. From the developments of the last year it is clear that we need to improve our decision making so that the decisions that are made have the appropriate level of consultation to avoid turbulence and unnecessary misunderstandings.

### 4.3 Resident Aalim

IMAN Community can definitely benefit from services of a well qualified resident aalim who is dedicated to the spiritual and religious education needs of our community. Whilst easily expressed, this is something that will require carefully planning and an extensive search process.

### 4.4 Matrimonial and Matchmaking

This continues to be a growing need in our community that we must address. Networking with other North American Muslim communities is key.