

# Scouting and the Muslim Community

BY MUNEEB NASIR

**T**he Scouting Movement has been successful over the last century because of its brilliant Principles, Mission and Practices which have allowed it to appeal to a wide cross-section of people. How is Scouting compatible with the Muslim community?

From a religious perspective, a successful life is one in which we develop, maintain and nurture meaningful relationships to God, to our fellow humans and other creations, and to ourselves. The message of Islam calls humanity to have faith in, and a relationship with, the one transcendent God.

Our relationship to God is in the meaning of the word Islam itself. Islam can be defined as the continuous effort to submit and surrender to God and thereby achieve peace. When we read the Qur'an it speaks of these relationships and duties – to God, fellow humans, nature and ourselves. As such, the three broad Principles which represent Scouting's fundamental beliefs – Duty to God, Duty to Others, and Duty to Self – resonate



with Muslims, making the Scouting Movement attractive over the last century in the Muslim world. Indeed, throughout the world, Muslim communities have enthusiastically embraced the Scouting Movement.

The Mission of Scouting emphasizes the development of the potential of young people to help build a better world and play a constructive role in society. This concept of development of potential is how success (*Al Falah*) is defined in the Islamic terminology. It is bringing out the latent faculties to the best of one's ability; bringing out our potentiality and converting it into actuality.

But over and above this, the Scouting approach of learning by doing, commitment to the values of doing one's best, contributing to the community, respecting and caring for others, contributing as a family member, etc. is what makes Scouting appealing to parents, educators and civic leaders. These are some of the more attractive elements to Muslims.

There is a strong ethic in Islam that encourages engaging in good deeds and giving of oneself. The terms faith (*Iman*) and righteous deeds (*'amal-us-saalihaat*) are used so often in the Qur'an that it leaves one convinced they are intertwined.

To the growing population of Canadian Muslims which has a large youth population, Scouts Canada's programs have a lot to offer and can be an instrument for engagement and civic education. The Muslim community will greatly benefit by being part of this major Canadian Movement that is devoted to children and youth, and Scouts Canada will be enriched by growing its membership in this faith community. ✕

– *Muneeb Nasir spoke on April 8 as part of the Scarborough Missions' Interfaith Education Series workshop titled "The Multicultural and Multifith Journey of Scouts Canada". As of February 2009, there are nine Muslim groups registered with Scouts Canada.*

## Little Mosque Stars Meet 163rd Scout Stars

**T**he stars were truly out on the night of Friday December 12, 2008, when Scarborough's Islamic Institute of Toronto (IIT) and the 163rd IIT Scout Group welcomed celebrities to their halls. Cast members from the popular family sitcom *Little Mosque on the Prairie* were welcomed to the IIT for the "Little Mosque Meets Big Mosque" event.

However, *Little Mosque* cast members Derek McGrath (Reverend Duncan Magee) and Manoj Sood (Baber Siddiqui) were not the only stars at the IIT that night. The 163rd Scouts were stars themselves, as well as the many congregants of IIT who partnered with *Little Mosque* to collect food for the *Sounds of the Season* Winter Food Drive in support of the Daily Bread Food Bank.

Over 200 people turned out for the event to hear brief talks from IIT Vice President Farhad Khadim and *Little Mosque* stars Derek and Manoj. In their talks, each stressed the importance of remembering and helping the hungry and stated how proud they were of the community for stepping up to the plate. The two-week long food drive at the IIT raised over 1000 pounds of non-perishable food for the Food Bank!

To cap off the event, the *Little Mosque* stars graciously posed for pictures and signed posters for attendees until well into the evening. – *Anwaar Syed is a parent of one of the Cubs with the 163rd Islamic Institute of Toronto, ON.*



Photos: Vanessa DeAngelis