

# Madina Insider

## Save The Date

- There is no school on March 19
- The third quarter ends Friday, March 23

## Message from the Principal

Assalamualaikum,

As we move on to the second half of the year, it is a good time to check back to our initial goals. In September, our main goal was to establish and solidify the new programs we had started the previous year. One such initiation was the NWEA Map testing. By May 2018, it will be our fourth round of Map testing for students, and simultaneously, we are honing in our skills to read, interpret and utilize the, sometimes overwhelming, data to best help each student based on their unique needs and strengths. Eventually, and hopefully in the very near future, it will enable us to make accurate decisions about piloting a gifted and talented program- which ties back to our overall school mission of providing an appropriately challenging education for every student.

Other programs have stabilized, such as the Connecticut Invention Convention. This year we have 5 students entering the competition, and it promises to become a hallmark of our school along with History Day and State Science Fair. Many of our school clubs are still going on strong, such as Theatre, Robotics, Arts, Martial, and outdoor adventure clubs, and yet others have unfortunately dwindled due to lack of interest from our students, one such club is the Futsall club.

An exciting addition this year, not on the beginning of year agenda, is the formation of Madina Falcons Basketball team. Brother Abdul Malik, Brother Abdullah and Greg Mankevich are organizing and will coach eligible students, based on official policies, to play against teams from other private schools.

We are happy to announce that we have received

from the town of Windsor, more brand- new devices: 2 smart boards, 14 chrome books, and 4 lap tops.

This is in line with creating multiple ways of learning, digitally being a prominent one.

Looking ahead: we are reshaping our Islamic studies program to graduate students who are, yes, definitely knowledgeable in Islam, but those who practice with conviction not rituality, so upon entering college they are prepared for the onslaught of Islamophobia; they have already been exposed to and discussed hot, modern topics/phenomena, that may be taboo in our cultures, but could inevitably place the seeds of doubt in their minds if left unattended; they are young American citizens who are confident with their self -identity and productive in their community. This we know will need more than sitting in class and learning from textbooks.

We have a strong Arabic/ Quran program, but to further streamline, and aim for every graduating student to least be able to recite the Quran impeccably in terms of tajweed and pronunciation, there will be two benchmark tests per year for every grade. Students will be grouped based on their needs for mastery of tajweed skills and not on the number of surahs memorized, nor on their ability. Our goal is to meet the students where they are and bring them to the next level. We are veering away from options and preference of teachers/students. All of our teachers are highly qualified in their area and will do the best for every child in their class.

Lastly, I invite you for coffee/doughnuts and an informal chat about things you are wondering about or if you would like to give suggestions- we don't only welcome them- we need them! **Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>:**

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## Letter from the Editor

Assalamualaikum,

We are rapidly approaching the end of the year, but not without rapid development to follow.

The high school basketball team is official, and handbooks have been distributed. The first two practices have been completed. As a member of the team and someone who had been pushing for an official school sports team, this is a huge accomplishment. Please see the article on the

program for more information. Spirit week was also a success, with parents giving a talk on their jobs on Career Day. This was an enlightening experience. We have Ayman ElSherbini and Sarah Abdelrehim to thank for pushing for a more unique spirit week, which they accomplished.

Samir Khan  
Grade 9

## Slogan Competition

As you may know, the student council had requested a change of mascot, which resulted in our mascot becoming a falcon. The next problem was finding a suitable slogan, so the council asked the students. The following is an article from the winners of the competition: “Assalamualaikum!

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Madina Academy Student Council for inviting students to take part in the slogan contest. I enjoyed discussing slogan ideas with my friends before settling on my final choice. While I was trying to come up with the perfect slogan, I thought about what makes a falcon special and unique. Did you know that falcons are known to be a dominant predator

within their environment? Did you know that their airspeed can reach up to 320 km/hr?

Likewise, we Madina Academy students aim to fly high, dominate, and succeed with the help of our teachers and parents! I was so excited to learn that the Student Council picked my slogan. My friends cheered for me when the announcement was made and it made me feel proud of myself. I am happy that my slogan will become a part of Madina Academy for generations to come.

Aanum Khan  
Grade 4

**We Rise High  
We Dominate the Sky  
Go Madina Falcons!**



## Slogan Change

This year’s Student Council in Madina Academy has unanimously voted to change Madina Academy’s mascot from the current bee to a falcon. This initiative has been taken because a majority of students within the school have said that they would like an alternative mascot and that the bee doesn’t properly represent the “spirit” of the school, which is the essential idea behind a mascot.

Madina Academy is also trying to assemble real sports teams in collaboration with the Hebrew Highschool of New England, a high school that we already have a partnership with. In this way, both schools will have enough members per team to compete. Madina Academy high school students who plan to play in the sports teams have all said that a bee doesn’t amount to the proper degree of spirit, excitement, or exhilaration needed for a sports team’s mascot. Because of these growing complaints, the Council had decided to look over a number of potential animals to serve as mascots for the school and after much consideration, finally settled on a falcon.

Why did we choose a falcon? Based on their common behaviors/habits, we believe that a falcon symbolizes success, visionary power, wisdom, high aspirations for every aspect in life, determination, and the ability to

“rise above all difficulties”. This promotes the idea of Madina Academy students succeeding by aiming to rise high in terms of academics, religion, and lifestyle. It also encourages the belief that as long as they have a vision and they are determined and willing to work towards it, it can be accomplished.

Finally, it brings to light the concept of overcoming rough patches in life, and coming out even stronger than before by having faith in oneself. The former qualities mentioned are aspects of Islam that are greatly praised and encouraged.

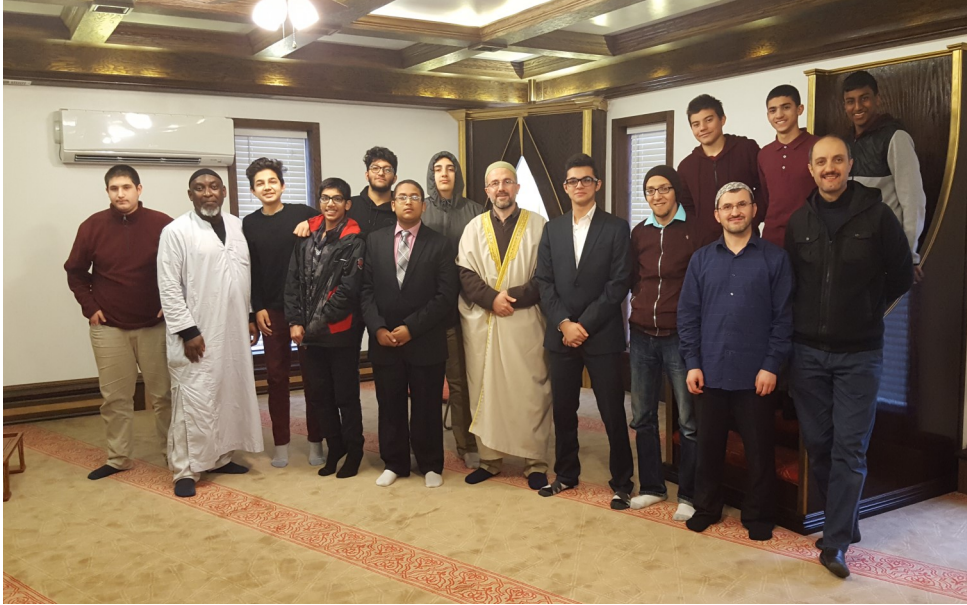
These qualities would also add “spirit” to Madina Academy’s possible sports teams and the school in general. For our mascot, we decided on a new motto to embody these qualities with the help of wonderful inputs by Madina Academy students via contest.

More recently however, the Council has finalized the designs for the new falcon uniform sweaters! Insha’Allah, we will be handing out the order forms soon.

Alina Mohamed  
11th Grade

## 9th and 10th Grade Field Trip

The 9th and 10th Grade went on a field trip to the Bloomfield Islamic Center, where we were met with great hospitality. The brothers introduced themselves, and we did likewise. We were greeted with Turkish delights like baklava and Turkish tea. We then prayed Asr and had a Halaqa. Many important lessons could be derived from it. It talked of our Creator. It gave many materialistic examples which cemented our belief in one all powerful Creator.



This was important as living in a largely secular or non-Muslim society can gradually reduce your faith. It gave examples of the harmonious balance between things, like the mixing of elements to create medicine in a pharmacy, and the slightest upset in the bal-

ance of these ingredients can prove to be fatal to the consumer, and there are several hundred thousand species of plants and animals on Earth. These things had in common that they are all on Earth. All these little meticulous processes exist within a larger process.

Who controls that process? Well, it would have to be someone who knows and can process all these

processes occurring simultaneously that are all part of the larger picture. That 'someone' is Allah. The brother clarified things for many of us and I hope this can help you as well.

Muaz Sharaf  
Grade 9

## Basketball Program

Alhamdulillah, the basketball program has finally started. As captain of the team, I would like to announce this accomplishment and go into a little more detail. My co-captain, Mohamad Melhem, and I would like to explain more about the program. Br. Abdulmalik, the middle and upper Religious Studies teacher, and Br. Abdullah, Mohamad's brother, have volunteered to oversee the program. The program is not just a way of representing Madina Academy and the Muslim community, but also a way of blooming the character of our students. We work to focus on each other's weaknesses and better them, all while encouraging each other with Islamic positivity. We hope that other teams who see this in action can

practice this as well, and have a special memory of us. Handbooks and registration forms have been distributed, and jersey designs are being finalized. I want to respectfully ask the parents to encourage their children that are in the program so that their confidence and attitude can become a positive contagion.

Fahad Ilyas  
Grade 10

## Career Day

### Being a Biomedical Scientist

Have you always wanted to find a cure for human illnesses? If so, you could be a biomedical scientist. This particular type of scientist studies human conditions or diseases. One such scientist explained to us her job during our career day assembly. The people at the Center on Aging at UCONN Health, where Dr. Iman Al-Naggar works, try to find ways to either delay or prevent some of the health problems that occur as people get old. Some of these conditions include bones becoming brittle, not being able to hold it when needing to use the bathroom, weakened immune systems, and muscle wasting.

If a researcher comes up with a hypothesis about how to delay or improve an aging-related condition, how would they test it? Obviously not on humans, it is illegal and besides, imagine if something went wrong! Instead, they use animal models. By testing their idea on an animal first, no person will get hurt. However, the scientist must abide by very strict rules set by an animal care committee (the IACUC) that oversees no live warm blooded animals get mistreated in the process. Some species used in research are fruit flies, worms, mice, rats and birds. Because humans and animals have differences, scientists must first choose a species that is similar enough to humans as it relates to the condition they are studying, for the experiments to be meaningful. Believe it or not, so much has been learned about human diseases from flies and worms!

Dr. Al-Naggar and her fellow scientists use young and old mice in their studies and they first had to get approval from UCONN Health's IACUC. They had to tell the IACUC exactly why they had to use the mice, how many they needed, what they were going to do to make sure the animals did not suffer, make sure no one else has already done these studies in the animals, and that

if something was going to hurt the mice that they tried really hard to find an alternative.

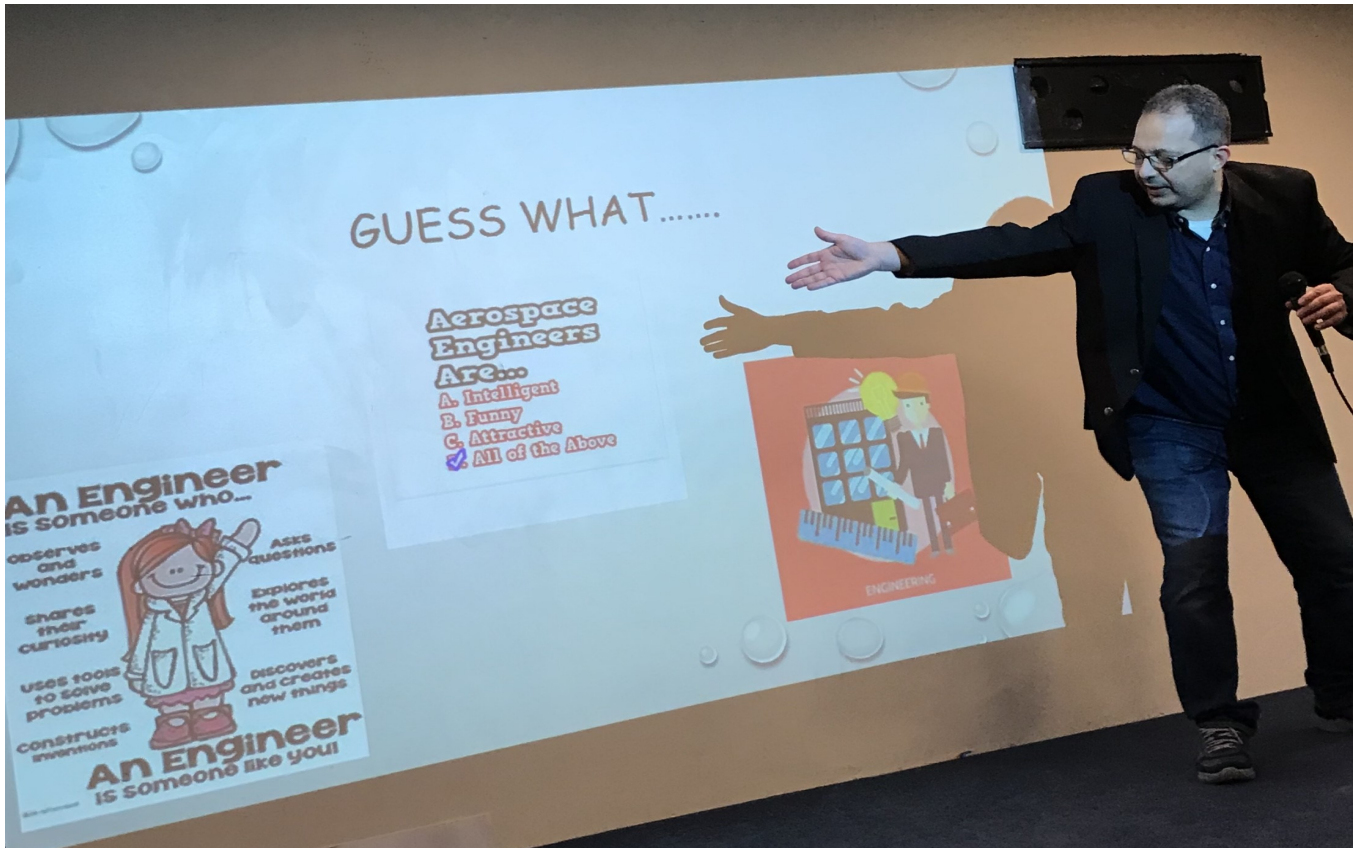
Not all biomedical research scientists have to work with animals, though. Some can work with bacteria or cells or just molecules like proteins that are taken from cells or made in bacteria.

Salma Mahmoud  
5th Grade



## Career Day

### Being an Aerospace Engineer



On Friday March 2, Career Day, we had two special guests who spoke during morning assembly. Both are parents of Madina Academy students.

One of these guests was Mr. Samir Kabatilo, an aerospace engineer who works for NASA. He began his career as a mechanical engineer before working to become an aerospace engineer. He said that to be an aerospace engineer you absolutely have to love math and science. Mr. Samir was very humorous and received much laughter from the students, especially after his comments about math.

Mr. Samir is one of the seventeen NASA aerospace engineers who inspect every aircraft, whether it is an airplane or a rocket. An airplane or rocket will not take to the sky unless Mr. Samir and the other sixteen engineers give it the go ahead. On

that team of seventeen, Mr. Samir is one of the four Muslim aerospace engineers. Mashallah, Muslims make up 24-percent of this elite group of aerospace engineers! It was extremely inspiring to know that there are no limits to what Muslims can achieve.

He is extremely proud to be Muslim. Everywhere he goes, he makes sure everyone knows he is a Muslim. He said he makes sure to let people know he needs a space to make his daily prayers.

It was a great and informative visit. Next time any of us fly, we know our plane is safe thanks to Mr. Samir and his team.

Muhammed Bakr  
7th Grade

## What are the Third Graders Up To?

Writing, writing, writing! The third graders continue to work on elaborative detail in writing both expository and narrative pieces, as well as learning how to avoid the dreaded grocery list. Alongside this, they have begun to delve into poetry—they have worked on “I Am” poems and cinquain poetry, and will soon work on biography poems and limericks.

In addition to this, they respond to bi-weekly, in-class writing prompts meant to broaden their imaginations and help them exercise writing about a variety of topics. These range from the imaginary to

serious topics such as bullying and who our heroes are.

Mashallah, the third grade class has been working hard on publishing a book with original poems and artwork. They are extremely excited and cannot wait to be published authors!

Ms. Asiya

### Cinquain Poetry

Bird  
Feathered, winged  
Flying, nesting, soaring  
Tweeting beautifully sky-high  
Bluebird

By: The Third Grade Class

Shark  
Strong, finned  
Hunting, striking, attacking  
Fierce, sharp-toothed fish  
Mako

By: Abdullah Khaled

Stars  
Shaped, yellow  
Staring, staying, sitting  
Not moving at all  
Light

By: Yunes Hales

### I Wish I Lived In...

I wish I lived in my very own secret candy land where no one could find me in it. It will have really big lollipops everywhere. There will be yummy candies and treats. I will even have my own hiding place with a house. There will also be unicorns that spin around. There will be many houses that are made of candy! The End.

Faqiha Faheem

I wish I lived in Florida. I could go to Universal Studios and ride on the roller coasters and swim in the big swimming pool. Almost every day I could go to the beach and make sandcastles and swim in the ocean. I could go to Disney World and go on all the rides and eat the Mickey Mouse shaped ice cream bars. That is why I want to live in Florida.

Ayoub Elamrani

I wish I lived in the ocean where red sword fish pass by bouncy neon sponges that fill the ocean floor. There is nothing better than a ride on an orca whale. Hammerhead sharks swim in this underwater village. Wow! Everything is relaxing and perfect.

Rejhan Adjinsoka

## An endearing apology letter/reflection from a lower elementary student:

"Yesterday in the library class I was playing with my friend and suddenly the Shaytan came! He said: \_\_\_\_\_ make a mistake to your friend.

I did not even know if he was talking to me. I thought he wasn't even here. So I did what he said. and put a note on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the one who I hurt her feelings.

Also I hurt other people's feelings too like my parents and teacher, and Allah.

If somebody did that to me and people were laughing at me I would not like it. This means I should never do that again."

Anonymous

## She Killed Me With Her Own Pain

YOU ARE FAT! YOU ARE UGLY! The girl who bullied me with her own pain. I can still hear her voice in my head and the nights I would cry myself to sleep. She was in pain because of years of being bullied. The days when I wouldn't want to go to school because of her and how she hurt me mentally. The one day when I chose to conquer life and, the pain went away and my life changed.

I would go to school every day and hide the pain, what nobody knew was every day when I would go home, I would look at myself in the mirror and kill all the happiness that was left in me. This made me very depressed and I would take my anger out on myself. Getting angry at my self

was the only answer at the time. Looking back on it, I could have told someone and spoke out, but I didn't. Deep down, I know that there was a way out of the deep dark tunnel that was my life.

She ruined my life enough by this point I was done. When I got home I looked in the mirror and told myself, stop letting that monster of a girl kill you inside. From that day forward, I blocked her on everything and also blocked her out mentally and physically. From then on, everyone noticed how much happier I was and how my life changed in a good way.

Anonymous

**BULLYING  
IS NEVER OK**

*PictureQuotes.com*

## Spirit Week





## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Spirit Week



## Eighth Grade Bowling Field Trip





## 11th/12th Grade Field Trip to Yale University Sterling and Medical Libraries



## Islamic Studies Guest Teacher for a Day Dr. Mohamad Khaled



## Sixth Grade Visit to Local Synagogue



*What a wonderful visit yesterday, I wish that these warm feelings would permeate throughout the world. Those kids are so sweet and I appreciate having the parents there as well. May our relationship be the seed that we plant for friendship and peace.*

*Respectfully, Rabbi Alan Lefkowitz*

## Student of the Month



Salma Eid  
3rd Grade

Salma is a wonderful student whose most powerful attributes are her patience and willingness to stick up for her fellow classmates. She is an extremely polite and is a dedicated student, both to her friends and in regards to her academics. Ma-shallah, she never fails to come into school with a smile, a fun story, and a positive attitude.

We rise high.  
We dominate the sky.  
Go Madina Falcons!

Reminders

Challenge Yourself!

**How many Prophets are mentioned in the Quran?**

The first student to bring to the principal the correct answer to the "challenge yourself" question will receive an award and will be recognized in the upcoming edition of the Newsletter.

The biggest of all  
sins is being the  
reason behind  
one's sorrow

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