

Message from the Principal:

What a delight it is that our newsletter is gradually morphing into a more robust, informative and highly interesting read that, we hope in time, our community will look forward to reading regularly. This is a slow process partly because children view writing an article as “extra work,” but also culturally our push for math and science supersedes the written expression or creative arts. Also, putting forth our opinions/thoughts/views publically is honestly scary- we are opening ourselves up to critique. But in the world that our children are growing up in, this is a highly important skill which is especially in dire need of developing within our Islamic schools. We therefore encourage and invite students from all grades to publish their work. Having taught many of the students myself- I know for sure within our building lies a ton of talent that is no less than in any other school.

From another point, there are numerous attention deserving activities that take place - but go unnoticed; the newsletter becomes such a powerful communication tool that not only does it give insight into school happenings but the added bonus is that it is from student perspective. An example of an attention worthy occurrence in our school - but would never have been amplified- is the

fishing club, initiated by 9th grader Ahmad Mohammad. More than the actual club, it is his conscientiousness and effort put forth that is so impressive. He was so enthusiastic to start this club that he worked hard to bring about a very detailed, meticulous and well thought out proposal. He included every unfortunate mishap that could occur in this endeavor, and then found solutions for each problem. He created guidelines/ rules and consequences for breaking rules (he should work in admin!) He then negotiated with teacher supervisors to chaperone. Ahmad’s leadership skills shone through this enterprise more than he would have shown for a graded class assignment. What a great place to celebrate our students’ achievements such as Ahmad’s. Likewise, we are happy to include in this issue a teacher’s review of a major event in our school: the Upper School collaboration with Hebrew High school of New England. We will continue to have more interviews, narratives from alumni, and ongoing updates. We hope that eventually our articles will be read and spread to the larger community, eventually reaching people across the state.

Masuda Vohra

Letter from the Editor

Assalamualaikum,

Alhamdulillah, we have already started another blessed school year. Along with a new year, the school has already made many major improvements, my favorite being the basketball/tennis court. It has been repainted, which makes things a lot more comfortable, as before the sun would reflect off of the concrete and limit our vision. The limited vision would cause many injuries. Speaking of injuries, the court has been coated with a special layer which is less rugged.

This is more joyful news for my parents who don’t have to deal with ripped pants anymore. My friends and I find it a lot easier to play with the fencing around the court. No longer do we have to go get the ball from long distances. Instead, the fence keeps the ball in the court. Inshallah, there will be more great improvements like this one throughout the year.

Samir Khan
Grade 9

Save The Date:

- Nov 10th: PTS Family Night
- Nov 11th: Community Open House
- Nov 22nd: Multicultural Fair
- Nov 22nd: Early Dismissal
- Nov 23rd and 24th: Family Break
- Dec 15th PTS Bakde Sale

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Should Cellphones be Allowed in the School?

Here's a Student's Opinion:

Cell phones: they are a vital part of everyday life in the 21st century. We use them to communicate with each other, call for help when every second matters, navigate the shortest routes to our desired destination, and to generally ease our complicated lives. However, the more they develop, the more these devices are being used for more than their sole purposes. As cell phones become more common in society, many teachers, students, principals, and parents are led to ask a common question: Should cell phones be allowed in school?

Most of the time, the only supplies needed for school include pencils, paper, pens, erasers, folders, notebooks, textbooks, and in *rare* cases, a laptop or computer. None of the daily student practices in school require the use of cell phones. Only in rare situations does a student require a cell phone, which includes forgetting to bring lunch, or forgetting to arrange a pickup from an afterschool club. These situations aren't even problems since, most of the time, schools have a phone that students can use to make calls with in deserving situations.

The main purposes of

going to school are to learn and to prepare ourselves for the near future, both academically and morally. It is known as a common rule of thumb that the harder someone works, the more successful the outcome of their work will be. In order to lead a successful academic outcome, students must work hard by closely paying attention in class, doing both their classwork and homework, and studying on a regular basis. One of the most troubling aspects of phones in school is the amount of distractions they cause. In class, the main goal is to pay attention to the teacher and to understand what they are teaching. When students have their cell phones with them they are vulnerable to multiple distractions. One student might be addicted to a certain game and instead of listening, would secretly be playing on their phone. Another student could be constantly texting another student, which would spark a silent but active conversation that is well beyond what the teacher can see and hear. All these distractions can easily cause a negative impact on the academic success of not just the involved students, but the class as a whole.

One of the major problems in school is the act of cheating. According to a survey conducted by Donald McCabe, out of 24,000 students, 95 percent said they

participated in some form of cheating. Because most cell phones have the ability to text, a student can text another student for answers and questions during or before a test. This form of cheating is usually hard to catch since it doesn't use verbal or physical contact between students. Because students can cheat by using their cell phones, the learning environment of a classroom can be damaged further

Cell phones are a necessary part of everyday life. They help to ease our lives and are vital in emergency situations. Despite their usefulness, cell phones should be kept out of school for multiple reasons. Cell phones are responsible for many of the distractions that arise in class and for much of the cheating that occurs in the classroom. Cell phones are also not needed in the classroom since they have nothing to do with daily student activities. In order to better enhance the learning environment and the academic success of students, cell phones should be prohibited in school.

Al-Yaman Zoghol

Grade 9



Cellphones Should be Allowed in School:

This question is always a topic of debate: “Should Cellphones be Allowed in School?” The answer is yes. Here’s why:

Cellphones are always looked at as a method of distraction. However, they can be used in many positive ways in school. Many schools already use different types of technology and integrate it in their curriculum. Why can’t a phone be included? Is it because they are more inconspicuous? Well, actually, it is easier to hide what you are doing on a laptop than a phone. When you are looking at a laptop screen, you always seem like you are working hard, if you are looking down at something, people will suspect you right away, even if you are actually working. Say you want to quickly research something and don’t have a laptop on you, wouldn’t it be a lot easier to just pull out your phone?

Don’t get me wrong, I don’t mean that teachers should ignore what students are doing. There are many methods in technology which allow administrations to track searches and which device they come from. Even private browsing can be monitored. Instead of ruining it for everybody when someone abuses their privilege, that specific person can be punished and lose their privileges. This system is fair and efficient.

The same goes for cheating. The zero tolerance policy can be enforced on

searches as well. Staff can be informed ahead of time when testing hours will be, and they can keep an eye out for any suspicious searches.

Besides cheating, there are numerous websites inappropriate for school. The existing content filter the school uses already blocks them, so there is no extra expense there either.

Another main concern is liability. This can be avoided by having a sign-in sheet that leaves the school innocent in case of theft or loss.

My last argument is that there is no reason to ban phones if people bring them anyways. Certainly some students will stop, but teachers still catch many students. Say the punishment is a detention. By the time you will have caught everybody, more than half the middle and high schools would have detention. I conducted an anonymous survey, and about sixty percent of the high schoolers alone bring their cellphones.

Next time you hear this question, remember, if the legislature is correct, and the privilege is granted to the appropriate grades, would there really be an issue?

Samir Khan
Grade 9



Going Back to Madina Academy

I was in kindergarten in Ms. Tessa's class and my big sister was in third grade in Ms. Vohra's class three years ago. By then, we just moved to Windsor Locks from Enfield. I loved Madina Academy, but then I had to move to public school for first and second grade. Ms. Ryan was my teacher for two years in a row. She was a very good teacher, and even when I was not in her class, she came to my house and brought me a present. Now I am in Madina Academy again, and I am very happy to be in Ms. Asiya's class.

Mariam Haroun



First Field Trip of the Year

Second and third grade went on a field trip to North West Park. We started our day at school, we then got to go on a bus together to go to the park. The bus ride was so much fun because we all got to sit next to our friends. It was so exciting! When we got there, Mr. Tom met us outside the park. Mr. Tom was so much fun. He showed us around the park. We got to go see animals, insects, and a cool turtle! We also got to go hiking, and it was very exciting. After visiting the gift shop, we got to play on the playground. After we played a lot, we went back on the bus and went back to Madina Academy. It was a fun field trip and we hope we can have another field trip soon!

Asmaa Al-Tareb



“Homework”

Homework, it sucks
I'll do it if you give me five bucks
How confusing it looks
The way it comes from the books



The sour taste in my mouth won't ever go
In my mouth it keeps its putrid flow
The way it comes from the books

I open up my agenda
It reminds me of the taste of Splenda

Homework is a waste of time
NOT DOING IT IS CONSIDERED A CRIME
Homework is like the blazing sun
I cool down just when I'm done

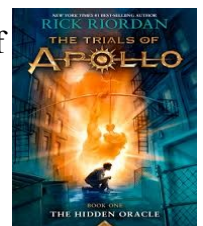
Ahmed Zoghol, Grade 7

“The Trials of Apollo”

The Trials of Apollo
The God of the Sun
From his various specialties
He only has some
His oracle stopped speaking of the great prophecies
And without them he can't continue working
And somewhere in the depths of the deadly labyrinth

Apollo's greatest enemy Python is lurking
A giant serpent whom he has to beat
So is he up for the challenge
Or will he stay in a cowardly sack of mortal meat?

Ahmed Zoghol
Grade 7



Upper School Volunteer Work; The Day of Sadaqah

What do you expect when a group of over 60 students from different schools and different faiths come together to do voluntary community work?

The question sounds like the beginning of a joke or of something negative, but it isn't. It is something more serious and hopeful. This question was the thought that revolved in my head as I led a group of Madina Academy Upper School students to Hebrew High School of New England on Tuesday, October 17 to reciprocate a previous visit by a group of their students to our school and thereafter to go to New Britain for the volunteer work.

The work is part of a collaborative social action project that is developing between the two schools. The day was named “*Day of Sadaqah/Tzedakah*” and was intended to serve many purposes. The shared purpose between both schools was to build bridges of dialogue and mutual understanding between young Muslim Americans and young Jewish Americans at a time when both groups face challenges in the American society because of their respective religions. For us at Madina Academy, we had the additional intention that this collaboration be a learning experience for our students in developing skills to enable them to thrive in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. We had the objectives of teaching the universality of ethics across faiths and the recognition of a shared humanity through a demonstration of the ethos of charity and community service.

Our intentions and objectives were supported by many verses of the Qur'an and traditions (*Sunnah*) of our Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Obligatory charity is a fundamental pillar of our Islamic faith and voluntary charity is imperative for every Muslim. Charity is also imperative in the Jewish faith. The words *Sadaqah* in Arabic and *Tzedakah* in Hebrew are phonetically similar and have the same meaning. There are other similarities between Muslims and Jews—the belief in One God, dietary restrictions in terms of animals for food, etc. Despite these similarities, this was the first time that such a collaboration has been initiated between private

Muslim and Jewish schools that we know of—at least in Connecticut. This made it a historic day.

The Judaic Studies Instructor of HHNE, who is also their Student Activities Director, and I coordinated the project at the request of the principals or Heads of School (Madina Academy and HHNE). Coordination was sometimes frustrating and confusing but often times exciting as I had limited knowledge of Judaism and there was much to learn and share as we planned. I did not know what to expect and what not to expect when our students came together. Hence the thought/question in my head.

I learned many things on the *Day of Sadaqah/Tzedakah*, beyond words, beliefs and diet. I learned that they share the same hopes, aspirations and fears for their future generation to live with faith and in peace as we do ours. The two schools face similar challenges in developing young impressionable minds in a secular, xenophobic and social media driven world. I learned that teenage American students, whether Jewish or Muslim, share similar interests in social media and sports, and the same attitudes towards school, adults, and grown-ups! I also learned that the Principals or Heads of both schools spoke the Queen's English. They are both British!

It should also be noted that there are differences that need to be acknowledged and brought into the discussions.

I know that I speak for my students and myself when I say that we were pleasantly amazed at how easily rapport was built between the students and thrilled by the experience! I imagine that the disabled senior citizen in New Britain is grateful for the volunteer work and experience, and know that there is one grateful Islamic Studies teacher in Windsor. There is nowhere else for our students to go from here except higher.

Br. Abdul Malik

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Madina Academy
We raise children. Higher.

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**Love Madina Academy? Absolutely.
Absolutely, Love Madina Academy.**

Fishing Club:



Student of the Month



Yasser Ali—Kindergarten

Yasser is a dedicated student who always puts his best effort forward. He also made a promise to his mother that he would walk by himself to the Kindergarten classroom after weeks of her walking

Challenge Yourself!

How many Sajdas are there in the Quran?

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

