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# Seeking expressions of faith

## Muslim youth get in touch with their faith, culture

By Geneive Abdo  
KRT CAMPUS

CHICAGO — As an 18-year-old Palestinian, Lena Abuelroos appeared to have bought into all the trappings of American life: She was an aspiring model, a clotheshorse and top saleswoman at an Armani Exchange in Troy, Mich.

So one July morning, when she showed up for work wearing hijab, her long, black curls out of sight beneath the folds of her veil, her co-workers were so alarmed they stopped speaking to her.

For Abuelroos, putting on hijab, or modest Islamic attire, was her way of getting in touch with the Muslim identity her family of Arab immigrants often downplayed. Her transformation mirrors that of many of the 2,000 young Muslim women and men who gathered recently for a weekend in Chicago as part of the 40th annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America, which organizers say drew tens of thousands of lay activists.

In the basement of McCormick Place, a Chicago convention center, away from the glitz of the adult convention upstairs, young Muslims from hundreds of universities vowed to create a more pronounced Islamic identity in the United States through their Muslim students associations. Not only do they plan to become more devout than their parents, whom they described as cultural — not religious — Muslims, but they also are on a mission to change the negative images of Islam in America.

"The media say Muslims are this or that, and it's not true," Abuelroos said. "We have to show that we are not afraid to reveal our Muslim identity. Now I have convinced my father to go to the mosque, and my mother has also become more religious, though she will never wear hijab because she's a beautician."

The Muslim students said they feel under siege since the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, and want to take a stand. But even before Sept. 11, many attended Islamic youth camps and Islamic Sunday schools to learn more about their faith.

"Our parents, who were immigrants to



Wajeeda Shuttari, 18, left, Lena Abuelroos, 18, center and Ifra Ali, 19, admire a scarf at one of the booths at the Islamic Society of North America's convention in Chicago on Aug. 31.

this country, were consumed with just making a living," said Atif Jaleel, 23, a Chicago native whose family came from Pakistan.

"I am more religious than my father because I have the luxury of thinking about my faith. I discovered Islam when I became involved in the campus mosque at the University of Illinois in Champaign," said Jaleel, who organized the weekend's student conference. "Our new awareness is also a reaction to the treatment of Muslims in this country. After Sept. 11, the older generation who ran the show thought it was best to lie low."

"As that happened, the younger generation was uncomfortable with this, especially at colleges and universities. We decided we must become active."

Muslim leaders say a revival is afoot in the United States, not only for youth but also for the entire Islamic community, estimated at 6 million. Attendance is rising at the 1,300 mosques and 300 to 400 Islamic schools nationwide.

The number of Friday prayer services has increased to accommodate the influx of

worshippers, and plans are under way to build more Islamic schools.

For Muslim students, the best strategy for establishing a future free of hate crimes and discrimination is to educate their classmates. Muslim student associations sponsor Islamic Awareness Week each year, which teaches the principles of Islam. Students also encourage non-Muslims to fast with them during the holy month of Ramadan.

By creating Islamic organizations on their campuses, many Muslim students say they are developing a support network to keep them from drifting into an American lifestyle filled with temptations that violate their religious beliefs, such as dating, drinking alcohol or wearing heavy makeup.

"Let's face it, everyone is attracted to me because of my face," said Abuelroos, her dark eyes touched with mascara. "But you can't be because it leads to sex. The first social contact we have with boys is when we are nice, but not in a sexual way. And being a model is definitely out because Islam revolves around modesty."

# States differ on ordering divorced parents to pay college costs, tuition

By David Crary  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Alexander Duran was delighted when his daughter earned admission to two of New England's top private colleges. He was furious when a judge ordered him to help pay tuition at the school offering far less financial aid.

A married parent would never be subjected to such an order. But New Hampshire, where both Duran and his ex-wife live, is one of a growing minority of states allowing courts to force divorced parents to pay for their children's college costs.

"It's not so much the money — it's having no input in the decision," said Duran, 48, whose daughter and ex-wife preferred Brown University despite a better aid offer from Brandeis. Duran said the court order means he must pay more than \$6,000 per year for college expenses instead of \$3,000.

The issue is generating debate nationwide as lawyers, legislators and parents argue over whether the children of divorce — in an era of skyrocketing tuition — deserve legal protections different from the children of intact marriages.

Last year, Connecticut — through a law passed by the Legislature — became the 17th state to allow such court orders, according to family law specialist Laura Morgan of Charlottesville, Va.

This year, due partly to impassioned lobbying by divorced,

noncustodial fathers like Duran, New Hampshire lawmakers took a step in the opposite direction. The House of Representatives voted to prohibit courts from ordering a divorced parent to pay college expenses of a child 18 or older; the bill is expected to be considered by the state Senate next year.

"States are all over the place on this issue," said Sandra Morris, president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. "In many situations, it's very tragic — the divorced parents don't do what they would have done if they had stayed together, and the children are pretty much cut off (from any support)."

Kate Haakonsen, an attorney who helped draft Connecticut's year-old law, said a majority of her state's lawmakers felt it was appropriate to treat divorced parents differently from married couples when it came to college support.

"Children of divorced parents are less likely to go to college, less likely to go to prestigious schools, and generally are less economically successful than their parents," she said. "As a matter of public policy, we have to decide if that's what we want."

In the states with laws like Connecticut's, courts have repeatedly upheld that rationale. The exception is Pennsylvania, where the state Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that there is no basis for distinguishing between divorced and non-divorced parents in regard to paying for college.

Jean-Claude Sakellarios, a New Hampshire attorney, believes a former client might still be alive if his state's judges shared the view of Pennsylvania's high court.

The client, Luke Hovland, committed suicide June 3, eight months after spending 43 days in the Strafford County jail for failing to pay more than \$16,000 to his ex-wife to cover half of their daughter's tuition at Tufts University.

Hovland — a forester-turned-salesman — made about \$55,000 yearly and had struggled to keep up with child support payments while earning enough for his new wife and young daughter, Sakellarios said. The lawyer said the court-ordered tuition payment deepened the 50-year-old Hovland's despair.

"You get more and more convinced they're going to chase you forever," Sakellarios said at his office in Manchester. "There was a sense of hopelessness."

*"The divorced parents don't do what they would have done if they had stayed together, and the children are pretty much cut off."*

— Sandra Morris  
matrimony lawyer

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### White House names cybersecurity chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Monday selected Amit Yoran, a former executive from Symantec Corp., as the nation's new cybersecurity chief for the Department of Homeland Security.

Yoran, who is hardly a household name but is known within the cybersecurity community, will be the government's evangelist for persuading Americans to improve their computer defenses against hackers, disgruntled employees, commercial rivals and foreign governments.

"He's been one of the leaders in this area in the private sector," said Howard Schmidt, former deputy special assistant to President Bush for cybersecurity issues. "He'll do quite well." Yoran, also vice president, also will be responsible for carrying out dozens of recommendations in the administration's "National Strategy Secure Cyberspace," a set of proposals to better protect computer networks.

"There are a number of challenges, but I wouldn't point any one in particular and say it's the most difficult to overcome," Yoran said in an interview with The Associated Press. "There's definitely a lot of work ahead of us."

The Department of Homeland Security announced Yoran's selection Monday. Industry executives and other government officials. Yoran, who was not at the announcement, said he expects to report for work within a few weeks.

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WASHINGTON panel offered for permit the music copyright subpoena users who down. The three-judge Appeals for the questions at law

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