

Ramadan

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SPECIAL EDITION - Ramadan 2017

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State House adopts Hammoud resolution offering Ramadan wishes



LANSING — State Rep. Abdullah Hammoud (D-Dearborn) introduced a resolution that extends best wishes this Ramadan to Muslims worldwide. The Michigan House of Representatives adopted it after he gave a speech on the House floor on Thursday, May 25 — a day before the beginning of the holy month.

"During Ramadan, Muslims spend this period in reflection and prayer while strengthening the bonds of family, friendship and community," Hammoud said in a press release. "Today's Muslim American population is a tapestry of ethnic,

racial, linguistic, social and economic groups. I am proud that this resolution was adopted and that we were able to recognize a few of the many contributions Muslims make to society."

Muslims around the world are currently observing Ramadan by fasting, practicing self-discipline, devotion and charity, as well as reading the Holy Quran to progress patience, humility and spirituality. They will also put their faith into action by organizing the Ramadan Fight Against Hunger to collect and hand out more than 60 tons of food to the needy. ■

A helpful guide to staying fit while fasting

Fitness experts at Dubai's Real Pilates have put together a motivating and safe fitness plan to stay healthy throughout Ramadan.

Many observers of the holy month are unaware of the health-related problems caused by falling out of a regular exercise routine, which include weight gain, higher stress levels, poor eating habits and difficulty getting back into a regular exercise routine after Ramadan.

However, Real Pilates founder Reza Alavi encourages people to focus on their bodies this month and keep up their exercise plan, as it's the time to do so.

"Ramadan is an excellent time to focus and work on yourself," he said.

The organization offered tips to keep in mind, like replenishing the body with enough water the night before fasting to prepare it for the next day, avoiding heavy weight training during fasting and seeking low impact activities to stimulate the heart rate, like yoga and Pilates.



These low impact activities will work the muscles, allow the person to sweat minimally, but still save some water in the body.

According to the guide, the best time to exercise is one hour before Iftar, but this can differ from person to person as it depends on the body type. A person must listen to signs from his or her body and rest if they feel light headed, dizzy or sick. ■

Quitting smoking: Tips and side effects during Ramadan

Regular smokers who must stop during Ramadan certainly experience withdrawal symptoms for a couple of days, like irritability and lack of concentration.

And, some people's unquestionable craving for cigarettes ultimately leads them to chain smoke after breaking their fast. Others binge on carbohydrate-heavy foods to avoid smoking, which leads to weight gain.

Other than the physical withdrawal symptoms that usually last three to five days, the psychological aspect of needing to smoke can last longer and cause setbacks.

However, Dr. Mustafa Saif told Gulf News Guides that this time of year could be the best time for them to quit the unhealthy habit and offered instruction.

"In addition to the fasting aspect, the fact that most people do control smoking for over 14 hours is proof of the fact that they can try and quit for good," he said. "Long hours of fasting lead to a drop in the nicotine level in the blood, making it much easier for smokers to quit."

Tips to quit:

- Use nicotine patches during the month to control the withdrawal symptoms and help quit the unhealthy habit in time.
- Eat healthy foods like carrots, cucumber and more fiber to avoid over indulging on the carbohydrate-heavy iftar favorites.
- Start the iftar meal with soup to help feel fuller and avoid carbohydrate-rich food.
- Be determined to quit, as that's the only way to do it. ■



Hydration: Simple rules and recipe to keep in mind

Every fitness and nutrition expert emphasizes the importance of hydration during Ramadan, but the limited amount of time to drink water has to come with a guide to keep up.

Fitness First's nutritional specialist, Banin Shahine, shared with Masala.com easy methods to get enough water without having to necessarily drink it all in a short time.

She said breaking your fast with water is a must because the body will always require water over food. However, the water intake has to be divided throughout the night and should not be consumed all at once. A personal water bottle could help.

Shahine added that eating high water content vegetables and fruits, like tomato, cucumber, lettuce, watermelon, broccoli and grapefruit, helps and that even dairy is said to have a decent amount of water.

Also, decreasing the intake of salt and caffeine aids in hydration, since they're both known for getting rid of water and leaving the body dehydrated.

Shahine also offered a healthy smoothie recipe for those who are not too fond of water to drink when they break their fast. It is also a great breakfast or a pre-workout meal.

Blend until smooth: 1 medium ripe banana, 1/4 cup of pitted dates, 1 1/4 cup of almond milk, a dash of cinnamon and sea salt and two tablespoons of chia seeds (pre-soaked in water for an hour).

The drink has 325 calories, 50 grams of carbs, nine grams of healthy fats and seven grams of protein. ■



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Hussein breaks his fast with his younger and older brothers



Muslim children teach lessons about discipline every Ramadan

■ By Zahraa Farhat
The Arab American News

DEARBORN — With more than 17 hours until sunset each day during Ramadan, it may seem impossible for children to complete their fast, but that's not the case.

Many children have chosen to observe the holy month, which began on May 27 this year, with their parents and teenage siblings. Some adults, on the other hand, struggle to complete their fasts.

According to local parents and the children themselves, their strength stems from the spirituality, gratitude and familial atmosphere they feel during the month— which they truly say they don't want to miss out on.

Twelve-year-old Mariam, a pro, has been fasting since the age of 9— the age girls are usually required to fast— and shared what she'd learned about the holy month over the years.

"We fast for many reasons," she said. "We discipline ourselves and we control our body and our mind... The second reason is that Ramadan gives us an opportunity to be with our family; not just our family that we live with, but also relatives outside the house. The third reason is it makes you grateful for what you have."

When Mariam eats a date and picks up the water bottle, about to drink after a long day of fasting, she said she immediately thinks of those starving and thirsty on the streets.

"They don't have anything," she said. "We should be grateful for what we have, Alhamdulillah (Thank God)."

Her mother, Rema, admitted that she worried for her daughter when she started fasting at 9.

"But, Masha'Allah (God has willed)



Dalia Arkoub breaks her fast

she had more energy than 10,000 of us adults did," Rema said, adding that just as her daughter said, the main point of Ramadan is to discipline yourself.

"You make sure that your mind is able to control any outside factor, any worldly factor," she said. "Refraining from drinking and eating is a mindset."

Rema said this teaches children how to control anything in life and also allows them to feel a sense of community, which is very powerful and can undeniably prevent them from doing drugs and engaging in other harmful acts later in life.

As for fasting while attending school, Mariam said her focus on her work in the classroom distracts her and keeps

her occupied.

She said 90 percent of her class at Bryant Middle School is fasting and are allowed to sit and watch their classmates during gym— depending on how they feel.

Hussein Mortada, 10, a student at River Oaks Elementary School, said his teacher is also extremely understanding.

"She tells us to answer the questions without having to explain, so we don't get thirsty from all the talking," he said. "And, all the kids who are fasting can sit at their own table during lunch."

He and his brother Mohamad, 11, are not required to fast, but only do so to practice for when they reach the obligatory age— which tends to vary for

boys— and also because they want to feel with the less fortunate.

They said the practice makes them feel grown up like their 15-year-old brother and teenage cousins, as they are just as strong handling the long days.

To waste time, the brothers said they play with their friends during gym and even play basketball before Iftar, the Ramadan mealtime, every day.

"We only get thirsty, not hungry," they both said, adding that they drink lots of water after they break their fast to remain hydrated the next day.

Mohamad said their favorite thing about Ramadan is spending time with family at iftar and Suhoor, the pre-dawn meal — when they all wake up to eat.

Their mother, Leila Chaban, said she only allows them to fast because they want to, but doesn't mind if they don't— not until it's expected of them.

Dalia Arkoub, a 10-year-old Henry Ford Elementary School student, also shared her experience of fasting since she was 9.

She said that she loves it because it makes her feel happy and powerful, especially when she successfully completes the month.

Even though not all of her classmates fast, Arkoub said it doesn't affect her or make her feel left out.

"The hardest thing about it is just gym because you have to run and you get thirsty," she said.

Arkoub said her favorite part is going out for ice cream every day after iftar with her family.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed by Muslims around the world as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the holy Quran to the Prophet Muhammad. ■

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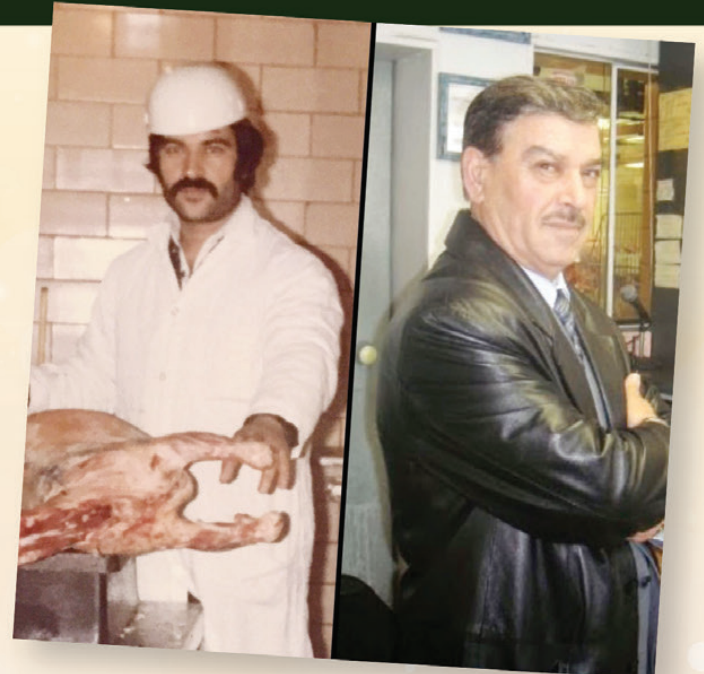
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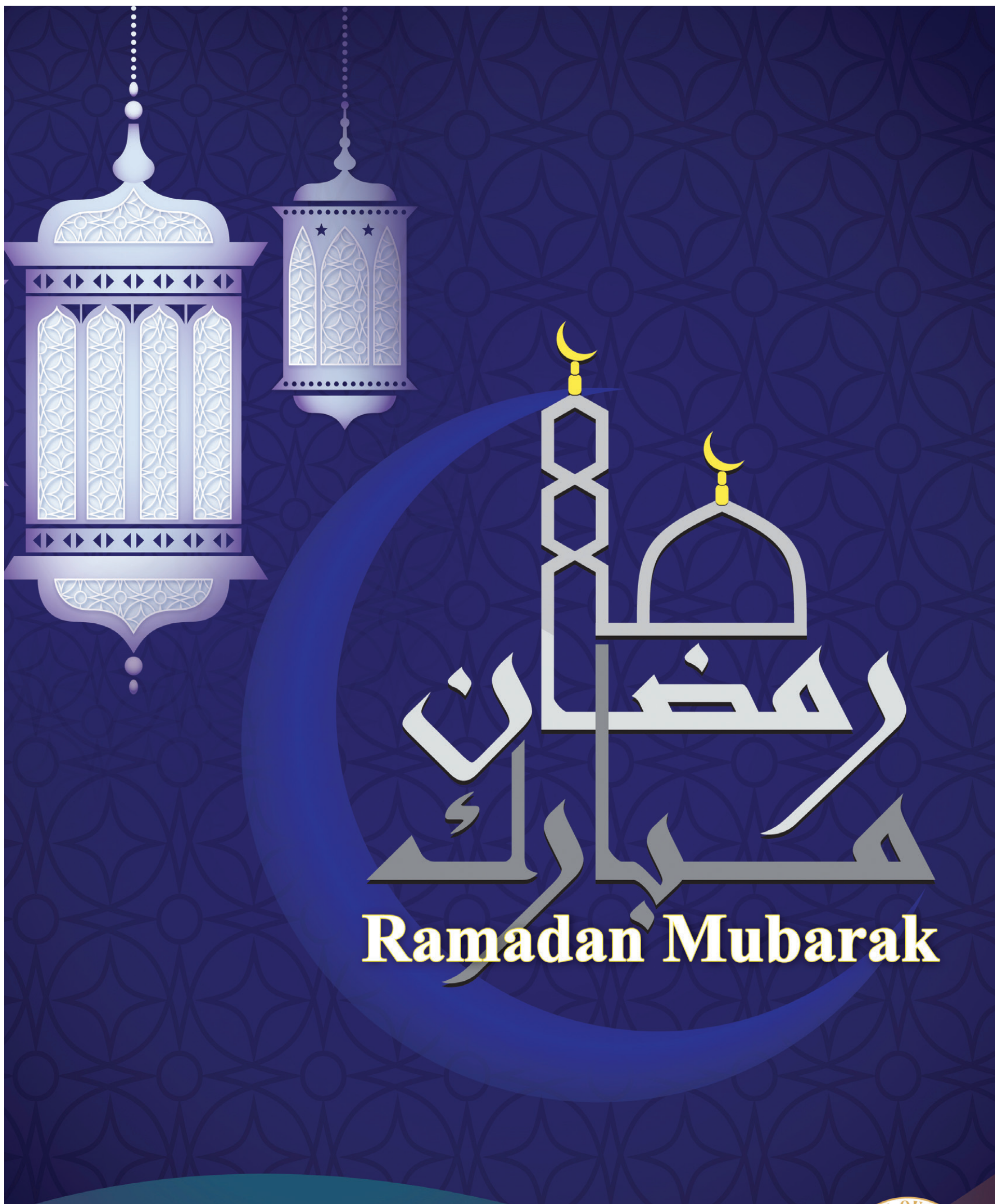
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