

Keeping up with the Tigers

TOLEDO ISLAMIC ACADEMY

FALL ISSUE – 2023

STUDENT NEWSPAPER

As Toledo Islamic Academy students, we strive in our reporting to uphold and promote the values of our School's Vision and Mission Statements.

ARABIC READING DAY

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL BREAKFAST



Written by Dana Al-Syoof

Arabic Reading Day is an annual celebration that focuses on the beauty of Arabic language and culture. Culture is a crucial part of our lives; it's the lifeblood of a vibrant society, expressed in the many ways we tell our stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves, and imagine the future. Our creative expression helps define who we are and helps us see the world through the eyes of others. In addition to its built-in value, culture provides important social and economic benefits. With improved learning, increased tolerance, and opportunities to come together with others, culture enhances our quality of life and increases the overall well-being for both individuals and communities.

On Arabic Reading Day, students wear the color green — a symbolic representation of the *Green Library*, a library said to be filled with countless ancient Arabic tales. Students engage in activities related to the Arabic language, such as making posters with Arabic letters, Arabic paper crafts, and so on. The Arabic Reading Day also gives students the opportunity to interact with their teachers and friends, learning about each other's different cultures.

The Arabic Breakfast, hosted in the middle and high school, brings the entire school body together for delicious food, great company, and wonderful conversations. The breakfast includes Arabic dishes from different parts of the Middle East that teachers, parents, and students gather around to enjoy.

After a bountiful breakfast, everyone comes together for memorable photographs - making this day one of the most beautiful and memorable days of the year.

PHOTOS TAKEN BY MR. SHAHER ALSHARIF

TOP: STUDENTS AT THE ARABIC BREAKFAST
BOTTOM: ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

In an interview with Mrs. Sawsan Nawari, the Head of the Arabic Language Department, Mrs. Nawari tells us about the importance of this celebration. "Every year, Toledo Islamic Academy celebrates the Annual Arabic Reading Day to inspire students to love reading in Arabic. It's also the language of the Quran." Mrs. Nawari explains that a large part of the reason behind this celebration includes inspiring students to read the Quran.



"On the second day," Mrs. Nawari continues, "we usually celebrate by hosting an Arabic breakfast with a variety of Arabic dishes". As the Head of the Arabic Language Department, Mrs. Nawari emphasizes that "reading is the key to knowledge," and that "you must read. Reading is also about traveling with your mind and feelings outside of the borders of place and time. When you read in Arabic, you leave America and travel to an entirely Arab atmosphere." Mrs. Nawari thereafter expresses a heartfelt thanks to everyone who has made this memorable event possible - including teachers, parent volunteers, and the school administration.

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VISION STATEMENT

"Empowering students within a healthy, Islamic environment through academic excellence."

MISSION STATEMENT

"To develop life-long learners who are responsible and moral citizens within a global community"

CURRENT EVENTS

SCHOOL NEWS

Written by Jude Awad

Every Friday, the high school and middle school students of TIA walk from the south building to the north building to attend Jummah prayer. As events in Palestine unfold, the khutbah has been a reminder to not stay silent; reminding us of our duty as Muslims to make dua for those in suffering.

On November 3rd, 2023, the Khattib at Jummah prayer was Dr. Alo. Sarah Zarour, Hadeel Aljabouri, and I had the pleasure of interviewing Doctor Alo. During our interview, we asked Dr. Alo questions about his background and his focus for this week's khutbah.



MRS. HINDIYEH GREETING FAMILIES DURING PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

PHOTO BY HADEEL ALJABOURI

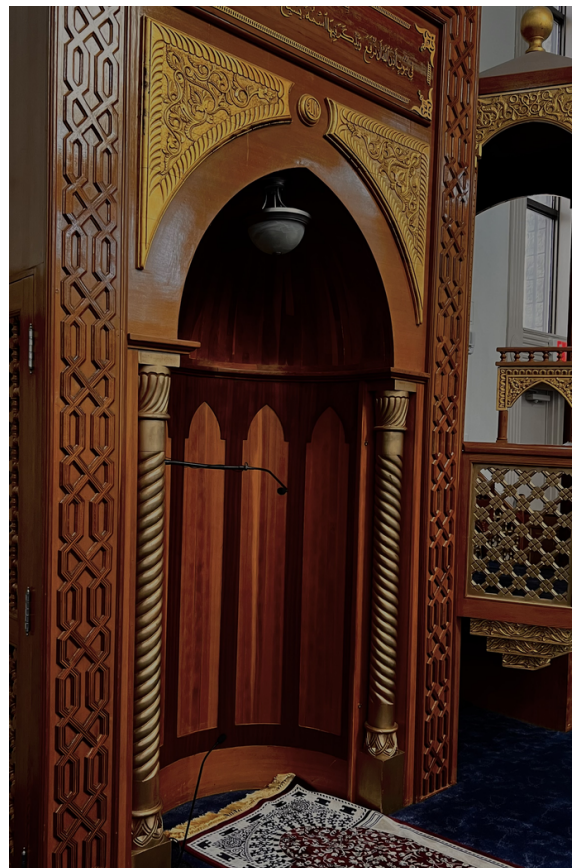


MR. ELBRIKI MEETING WITH PARENTS DURING PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

PHOTO BY HADEEL ALJABOURI

The end of the first quarter also brought about parent-teacher conferences. Parent-teacher conferences play a big role in our school's goal of providing Muslim students with a healthy and Islamic scholastic environment. Parents gathered with their children's teachers to hear about their academic accomplishments and achievements.

MUSALLAH



THE MASJID SAAD MUSALLAH WHERE TIA STUDENTS ATTEND JUMMAH PRAYER WEEKLY

PHOTO BY SUKAINA ABOGANAH

CURRENT EVENTS

SCHOOL NEWS

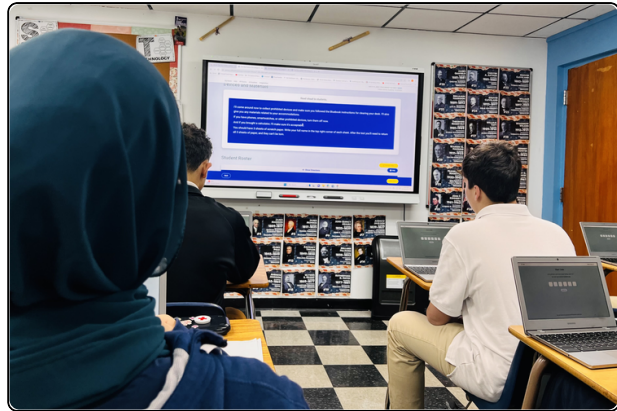
Written by Jude Awad

In local news, the PSAT's were held on October 18, 2023, for students in grades 8 to 11. 8th and 9th graders gathered in the lecture hall while 10th and 11th graders gathered in room 132 to take the PSATs, which lasted from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. On the same day, the school's annual book fair was taking place in the North Building. After the PSAT's, students were able to walk to the North building to explore the book fair. Book fairs always bring back childhood memories, especially for those of us who have been at TIA since elementary. Even if it's just walking around, seeing all the books and small toys that we used to beg our parents to give us money for brings back many nostalgic memories.



TIA.s Annual Book Fair

PHOTO BY HADEEL ALJABOURI



High School Students Preparing for the Practice SATs

PHOTO BY HADEEL ALJABOURI

GLOBAL NEWS, LOCAL IMPACT

Written by Jude Awad

October was filled with many events, in school and worldwide. Some of these worldwide events significantly impacted the TIA Student body. The beginning of October had come as a shock to us, as we witnessed the events of October 7th and the following military onslaught against Gaza. Many of TIA's students have family and friends who were, and continuously are, impacted by the current conditions in Gaza. Social media coverage of the atrocities happening has affected all of us both at school and with our families at home. It was hard to turn a corner in the school without hearing students speaking about their hurt and concern over the injustice of collective punishment. Feeling helpless in the face of the images of suffering coming out of Gaza, many students gathered to discuss how to voice their opinions - through boycotts, protests, and spreading awareness.



Local Community Members Protest Siege on Gaza

PHOTO BY HADEEL ALJABOURI

CURRENT EVENTS

PRACTICE SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TESTS



PHOTO BY YASMEEN SMIDI

Written by Yasmeen Smidi

The SAT, which stands for Scholastic Assessment Test, is an important exam used for college admissions in the United States. It helps colleges understand how well high school students are prepared for academic challenges. The test was first introduced in 1926, and over the years, it has become a common way for students to showcase their skills and knowledge. The SAT covers subjects like math, evidence-based reading, and writing, providing colleges with a standardized measure to evaluate students' readiness for higher education. It's a significant step for students aspiring to attend college and pursue their academic goals.

Mr. Sarsour, the Assistant Principal here at TIA, explains that the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) is "important for students for several reasons. Firstly, it serves as a valuable practice test for the SAT, a standardized exam widely used in college admissions for certain programs of interest. Taking the PSAT allows students to become familiar with the test format and types of questions, helping them to better prepare for the SAT."

Additionally, the PSAT provides an opportunity for students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in various academic areas, which can guide their study efforts. Furthermore, the PSAT is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program, which can lead to significant financial aid for college. Finally, the PSAT gives schools a benchmark on which students are AP ready. Having an academically rigorous course load and doing well in them can lead to further financial aid for college. Overall, the PSAT plays a crucial role in the college preparation process, aiding students in their academic and financial future. On October 18th 2023, students from 8th to 11th grade took their PSAT's.

Mr. Ruff, TIA's high school English teacher, offers valuable advice on preparing for PSATs. He emphasizes that success on the test is not just about mental preparation but also physical well-being.

The three key elements to success, according to Mr. Ruff, are rest, breakfast, and studying. He advises students to prioritize rest, stating that studying excessively late into the night can be counterproductive. Sleep is essential for alertness during the test and a balanced breakfast provides the energy needed to perform well on the test. Skipping it in favor of more studying can be a mistake. A full stomach can fuel your brain and help you focus.

Studying is also crucial, but there comes a point when more studying doesn't mean better results. Students should aim for quality, not quantity, in their study sessions. Overloading on study material can lead to burnout and exhaustion. Commenting on the fall 2023 PSATs that were held in TIA on October 18th 2023, TIA junior, Samiha Tarabeshi offers her advice for PSAT success: "Prepare yourself for the PSAT by taking it seriously." The PSAT is a chance to practice for the SAT, a crucial college entrance exam. Rushing through it is not the path to success. The most important thing, according to Tarabeshi, is to put in all your effort and review your answers. Utilize all the time given to complete the test thoroughly. Taking the PSAT seriously and committing to doing your best can help you gauge your readiness for the SAT. It's important to remember that PSATs play an essential role in a student's collegial journey. They serve as practice for the SAT, help identify strengths and weaknesses, and can open doors to financial aid opportunities. To prepare effectively, remember the advice of Mr. Ruff : prioritize rest, breakfast, and quality studying. Take the PSAT seriously, and don't rush through it, as advised by Samiha Tarabeshi. Success in the PSAT can pave the way for a bright academic future.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SCHOOL

TIA'S PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Written by Hamdi Ibrahim



TOP: STUDENT ACTIVITIES DURING LITERACY NIGHT
BOTTOM : PTO HOSTED ANNUAL BOOKFAIR



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TIA PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO is a parent-teacher organization made up of parents and teachers who work together to support the school and create a better environment for students. School fundraisers are a big part of what PTO does. They help raise money for various things like field trips, new equipment, and extracurricular activities such as clubs. These fundraisers benefit the school by providing additional income and resources that aren't a part of the school's budget. All money raised benefits the school in various ways by sponsoring events like Literacy Night.

Here at TIA, the PTO does a variety of events and fundraisers. One memorable event hosted by the PTO this year was the annual Literacy Night. This event not only encouraged students to develop a greater interest in reading, but also promoted a feeling of community among students, teachers, and families. Activities such as these create a fun and inclusive atmosphere while also fostering academic excellence. It's a great idea to promote literacy while creating a fun and educational environment for everyone.

The PTO has also hosted events at Chuck-e-cheese, Urban Air, and Funigains this year. Activities such as these create a fun and inclusive atmosphere while also fostering academic excellence. In hosting these activities, the PTO is able to raise money towards the funding of future school events.

Healthier and more positive social lives can help contribute to higher academic performance, and we are grateful to the PTO for the memories that they help our student body create.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA

Written by Haider Al-Quraishi

Imagine waking up gasping for air through the dust only to choke on little pebbles and stones. Once you dislodge the pebbles and peek your head through the rubble to breathe, you try calling for your family as you slowly move the stones of the house that was once filled with laughter and love. The same house your little sister took her first steps in. The same house your mother and father waved you and your brother off to attend your first days of school in. The same house that has since bore witness to the screams of terror and the blood shed of your family. This horrific scene is a reality for the people of Gaza.

Following the events of October 7th, 2023, Israel, declaring war on Hamas, launched an aggressive series of attacks on the civilian population of Gaza - bombing residential homes, mosques, universities, schools, hospitals, and even the evacuation routes that were declared a safe passage. Despite declaring the onslaught an effort to eradicate Hamas, the thousands of Palestinian civilians and children killed suggest otherwise.

According to Aljazeera News and civilian-captured footage coming out of Gaza, Israel has controlled, and cut off, civilian access to water, food, fuel, medical aid, and communications. They are without food and water.

Top Right: Protest in Washington, DC.

Bottom: Protest in Northwest Ohio

PHOTOS TAKEN BY DANA AL-SYOOF



On Saturday, November 4, 2023, people from all across the country flocked to Washington, DC to demand an immediate Ceasefire.

Reports from inside Gaza have indicated that surgeries are being performed without anesthesia and doctors are using vinegar as a disinfectant. With dwindling access to fuel and electricity, newborn babies in incubators - and the tens of thousands injured - are at high risk as medical equipment will begin failing.

A war is typically fought between two armies, but this is not a war. This is a vicious act of aggression against a civilian population. Those who will survive the bombing will continue to suffer inhumane conditions. Without access to basic necessities, the people of Gaza will continue to suffer from displacement, hunger, thirst, illnesses associated with a lack of sanitation, and bodily injury without access to medical assistance.

The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza will only get worse. All across the United States, people have begun protesting against the atrocities being carried out in Gaza. It is important, now more than ever, that we band together and speak up for the basic human rights of the Palestinian people.

Information referenced in this article can be found at the following Links:

[AlJazeera](#)

[Bisan Owda](#)



GUEST EDITORIAL

CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Written by Kawther Farah

A charity is a nonprofit organization whose efforts are focused on aiding those in need. This can take several forms, which can be local or international in scope. Some raise money or provide services like food, clothing, or shelter to underprivileged communities. Society and governments aren't set up to protect everyone who needs it. That's why charities are here to fill the gaps and provide dedicated resources to help the most vulnerable. Two such nonprofits are the Palestinian-American Medical Association and the Toledo-based Food For Thought organization.

The goal of the Palestinian-American Medical Association, more commonly known as PAMA, is to provide an accessible register for all medical professionals in the US who support PAMA's objective. Working together with Palestinian health institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), PAMA aims to support the development of healthcare in the West Bank and Gaza, facilitate medical aid from the United States to these regions, and assist in the professional development of healthcare workers.

Moreover, In educating and training future Palestinian healthcare providers, PAMA works to build the capacity of the Palestinian healthcare system as a whole. With its capacity-building efforts, PAMA's initiatives enable healthcare workers to provide the emergency medical assistance that is so desperately needed in Gaza and the West Bank.

PAMA envisions a time when every Palestinian living in Gaza and the West Bank will have access to sustainable, all-encompassing healthcare. PAMA strives so that the Palestinian medical community can grow and attain the best caliber of care for the patients it treats. PAMA's signature projects include an emergency appeal to support hospitals in Gaza, aid in care for those with autism and other disabilities, and the hemodialysis program. Currently, the National Honor Society is fundraising money on behalf of PAMA for the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, a local Toledo-based and Toledo-focused organization called Food For Thought is committed to feeding and strengthening our community. In Toledo, one in four families goes hungry. The goal of Nourishment For Thought partnerships and initiatives is to build a community where everyone's needs for nourishment, respect, and a sense of belonging are satisfied. With 20,242 people served, 8,769 of them children, and over 10,800 meals distributed, Food for Thought continues to make a difference and lasting impact on our Toledo community.



PALESTINIAN AMERICAN
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

See how you can help by exploring their websites:
[Palestinian American Medical Association](#)
[Food for Thought](#)

CULTURAL COLUMN

IRAQ

Written by Fatimah Alsaedi

Iraq is the birthplace of modern civilization, it's known for its art and architecture. There are Iraqi traditions, dating back to the establishment of Mesopotamia in 5000 BCE, that are rich and deeply rooted in its history. Mesopotamia is known as “ the land between the rivers.” The first of the river valley civilizations, Mesopotamia was developed between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. For thousands of years, the people of Iraq have toiled the land and built the cities around them. The legacy of those people echo today in the traditions that modern Iraqis have inherited from their ancestors.

The Iraqis are known for their generosity and their humility. In Iraq, as a way of welcoming guests, men usually shake hands and kiss each other on the cheeks, and likewise amongst women. The Iraqis are considerate people who are always willing to give free things to the visitors that come to visit so that they are comfortable and feel welcome. They love to invite them over and introduce them to Iraqi food and culture.

A delicious Iraqi main dish is Maskoof which is a type of fish that is split in half with a very tangy sauce. Maskoof is typically eaten with bread and a side of vegetables. Iraq also has more traditional foods like Biryani which is a type of rice that has. Peas, carrots, and chicken or lamb cooked with lots of spices. Then there is Dolma which is stuffed vegetables, which are stuffed with rice, meat , diced onion and peppers, and covered in a sour tomato paste sauce prior to cooking. One of the most famous Iraqi dishes that everyone loves is Kubba, which is made of sticky rice and is stuffed with ground beef, onions, and spices that is then fried in a hot pan of oil. This is eaten with bread and Barbecue sauce. The most famous desserts are Kleicha and Minalsima.

Kleicha is made of a very soft doughy that you can stuff with dates, coconuts, sesame seeds, and other sweet fillings. Once filled, you can make fun shapes out of the dough and top it with a sauce made from eggs, coffee, and apple cider vinegar. Cooked in the oven, this dish is so delicious! The Iraqis tend to make this dessert on Eid.



TRADITIONAL IRAQI DISH
PHOTO BY FATIMAH ALSAEDI

Iraqis love to feed guests and are very hospitable, but they are also very generous. For Iraqis, generosity comes in many forms, including helping each other in times of need with things like paying off debts, organizing interest-free loans, and donating to good causes. All of these acts of kindness are integral to the Iraqi spirit of generosity and hospitality. Many Iraqi families, including my own, annually donate clothes, hygiene products, and food to aid those in need. In a local Iraqi/Lebanese Masjid, the community gathers together to raise money for individuals struggling financially and for countries that are in need.

Iraq is a place of deep cultural roots and it's vibrant cultural history can be seen in the Iraqi sense of community, our delicious cuisine, and our open invitations into our homes.



TRADITIONAL IRAQI DISH
PHOTO BY FATIMAH ALSAEDI

SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMUNITY

LESSONS FROM JUMMAH PRAYER

Written by Sarah Zarour

On the Jummah of November 3rd, 2023, the Masjid Saad Khateeb for that week, Dr. Alo, drew lessons from the life of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and explained how we as a community can draw parallels between the events that occurred then and what we are witnessing now. Specifically, Dr. Alo discussed the hardships being faced by the Palestinian people and how those hardships were similar to those faced by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

During the Khutbah, the community was reminded of when the non-believers tried to humiliate the Prophet (PBUH) by throwing garbage at him while he was praying and even trying to assassinate him. During Prophet Mohammed's life (PBUH), the Khateeb continued to explain, the Prophet (PBUH) experienced extreme hunger, persecution, war, and displacement. Similarly, the people of Palestine are struggling to find even a cup of water to quench their thirst. They are unfairly labeled as liars and terrorists, much like how the Prophet was unjustly accused of falsehood even though he spoke the truth.

From these reflections, the community was reminded of the importance of patience and staying steadfast to one's faith. We were reminded that our worldly possessions are insignificant and that what truly matters is the content of our hearts and our faith in Allah (SWT). Moreover, the khutbah reminded us that just because the Palestinians are being portrayed as the wrongdoers doesn't make it true. Just as the Prophet (PBUH) faced opposition, he was, and is, revered as one of the best individuals in history.



DR. ALO
PHOTO BY SARAH ZAROOUR

Dr. Alo, a long-standing member of the local Muslim community, was gracious enough to sit down for an interview with us. During our interview, Dr. Alo shared his story - explaining that his journey began with his departure from Syria and his arrival here in the United States with his wife. Dr. Alo told us how important it was to him that his children stayed close to their faith and that he and his family became members of the Masjid Saad community. In speaking with us, Dr. Alo emphasized the obligation to spread the message of Islam and be actively involved in the Islamic community. In addition to being a dedicated member of the community, Dr. Alo is also a surgeon who had studied medicine in Syria and currently practices in the United States.



THE MINBAR OF MASJID SAAD
PHOTO BY SUKAINA ABOGANAH

LESSONS IN ISLAM

VIRTUES OF TAHAJJUD

Written by Mohammad Abuhamad

According to Islamic Fiqh, there are two primary categories of Salah - Fard or Wajib and Sunnah. Wajib Salat is a mandatory act, and failing to perform the Obligatory Prayer is considered a serious transgression. These include a Muslim's five daily prayers. Salat within the Sunnah category are supplementary prayers that are derived from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Within the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) are prayers known as Salat Nafl. While performing these prayers is not mandatory, praying these supplementary prayers result in substantial rewards.

Tahajjud is a Nafl or voluntary prayer, meaning that it is not compulsory, and missing it is not a sin, though missing it means that you miss a great reward. Tahajjud is a night prayer that is offered during the last 3rd of the night when Allah (SWT) comes closer to the earth in a way that fits Allah (SWT). During the last 3rd of the night there is a feeling of tranquility that can be experienced by the person performing Tahajjud. While this provides the believer with the opportunity to get closer to Allah (SWT), this prayer also helps the believer attain mental strength, peace, distance from the attachment to the dunya, and increased focus on the hereafter.

In this time, when Allah (SWT) gets closer to the lowest heaven, it is a time when Duaa has a greater chance to be accepted. We are informed that Allah (SWT) awaits His servants to come and ask Allah(SWT) for whatever they may need so that Allah(SWT) can forgive them and help them through their worldly struggles. It is also known to help the believer stay away from acts of sin.

Praying Tahajjud is a great opportunity for the believer to directly communicate with Allah, seek forgiveness, and have their needs fulfilled. Trust that Allah grants what is best for you during the blessed time of Tahajjud, and do not pass up this daily opportunity. Inshallah, we will all take advantage of this blessed time.



THE MIHRAB OF MASJID SAAD
PHOTO BY SUKAINA ABOGANAH