

Final Iftar of Ramadan hosted at Trotter

by Michal Ruprecht
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The University of Michigan Muslim Students’ Association and Islamophobia Working Group hosted the last Ramadan Community Iftar at the Trotter Multicultural Center on Wednesday night. MSA President and Engineering junior Taha Shaukat said the event is a way for the MSA to give back.

“As a Muslim Student Association, as the main entity of (Muslim students’) identity, we should be giving back to them,” Shaukat said. “It’s really to provide them a place, one to socialize and to break their fast, so that they have at least something to eat.”

Ramadan is the Islamic holy month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset with Iftar being the meal eaten after sunset. The evening usually begins with a halaqa, a meeting to study a topic of Islam, with a guest speaker. Next, a student performs the adhan, or call for prayer, and everyone breaks their fast with a date and glass of water. This is then followed by a prayer called the Maghrib. Students begin the meal after the prayer.

Shaukat, who has been attending the event since his older brother was a student, said MSA hosted 12 meals this May, an increase from last year. Shaukat added the opening of the Trotter Center has given the organization an opportunity to partner with other organizations that use the building, like the Black Student Union. He estimated the basement of the building was filled with approximately 150 people, which he also said was an increase from last year.

LSA junior Neal Doshi said he has attended the event, which is open to Muslim and non-Muslim students, in the past. He said although he's not Muslim, he feels it's important to learn about other religions.

"It's important to learn a little bit about Ramadan, enjoy a good meal and then converse with people," Doshi said. "I think it's a great learning experience ... to interact with people from cultures of not my own."

Rackham student Anjali Mittal, who is not Muslim, agreed with Doshi, saying she had never experienced Ramadan and thinks events like these help combat islamophobia.

"It definitely opens people up," Mittal said. "Especially, probably, because there is some islamophobia in a lot of countries, it might also help combat that because it sounds like it's not what it is."

Shaukat said, although he hasn't seen many non-Muslims participate in the Iftars, he's excited about the connections being made between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"We'd love for more non-Muslims to come," Shaukat said. "You get to meet other Muslims and non-Muslims that are on campus that want to come to the event ... I usually see it's not always Muslims and Muslims sitting together and non-Muslims and non-Muslims sitting together; a lot of times there's a lot of mixture going on, and I really like that."

Shaukat said the event will run again next year and will have more Iftars, and he hopes MSA will reach out to more non-Muslims in future years.

"(Having non-Muslims presents brings them) closer in with us is just a good way to one ease any tensions that there is," Shaukat said. "A lot of Muslims tend to stay in their little community, and to branch out would obviously be the best thing possible ... so that in the future we can all have a working relationship."