

Application for SSMU Award

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SSMU CLUB OF THE YEAR

Club: Muslims Students' Association

Dear Committee:

I am nominating the Muslims Students' Association for this year's SSMU Club of the Year Award. The Muslims Students' Association (MSA) has done a huge amount on campus in the past two semesters, and it has impacted students in many different ways.

The MSA is McGill's biggest campus club with a membership that I have stopped counting. The active student participation of the MSA is phenomenal, and thus there are several committees designated for specific tasks:

1. Social Service Committee (SSC) – This committee is active in providing assistance to underprivileged in the Montreal community. This is either through assistance programs or fundraising projects
2. Social & Political Activist Committee (SPAC) – This committee is involved with many other campus groups and often initiates or co-sponsors events. The main mandate is to empower Muslim students by educating themselves and working with others.
3. Muslim Educational Group (MEG) – This group within the MSA was started up just this year. The main mandate is to educate Muslims within the MSA on psychological issues such as self-esteem, leadership, and emotional-awareness. Each member of this group is part of a subgroup which researches a certain topic and then educates the rest of the group on that topic. Eventually, MEG plans on educating the Montreal community through workshops and events.

The MSA holds many events throughout the semester that give it a unique presence on campus. Some trademark events of the MSA are *Islam Awareness Days*, *Ramadan dinners*, and *MSA FROSH*.

What made this year an exceptional year for the MSA, and the reason I believe the MSA is worthy of this award, is the amount of interaction and outreach that the MSA has done in the past 2 semesters. The MSA started the academic year with a public lecture series entitled *Islam 101*. Throughout Ramadan (the holy Muslim month of fasting), the MSA served dinners to Muslims students but also actively invited different campus clubs to share the breaking of the fast. There was even an *Open Ramadan Dinner* so that any McGill student could learn about Ramadan while enjoying a pleasant halal dinner.

The winter semester kicked off immediately with events that further fostered interaction with the McGill community. When the tsunami struck, the MSA immediately hit the streets, raising over \$10,000 for the affected individuals. At the end of January, the MSA spearheaded the Forgotten Genocide Awareness Week, which was a collaborative effort of 10 different groups. And even at present, the MSA is continuing its interaction with the McGill community with open house tours of their prayer space during the week of March 14th – 18th. (More pictures and events can be seen on the MSA website at: www.msamcgill.com)

This year, the MSA has done a truly remarkable job of outreaching beyond its Muslims membership and to the general McGill community. All these events and activities have exemplified the active participation of the student body that the SSMU prides itself upon. And the MSA continues to grow and add the SSMU's diverse and multifaceted nature. It is without any reservation that I nominate the MSA of the **SSMU Club of the Year**.

Sincerely,

Nafay Choudhury
Economics U3

(Enclosed: List of MSA Event)

LIST OF MSA EVENTS 2004-2005

La Mauricie National Park 11th July 2004

To enjoy the summer a trip was organized by MSA McGill, to the gorgeous and breathtaking La Mauricie National park. Activities included swimming canoeing and other sports (e.g. football, volleyball etc). Breakfast and a huge BBQ were also organized at the park. For transport buses were hired.

MSA Frosh 28-29th August 2004

To provide new Muslim Students an Islamic alternative to Frosh MSA held its own Frosh. The activities included BBQ at Mt. Royal, Ice Skating, movie at IMAX and Go-carting. A trip to the botanical Gardens was also scheduled but due rain it had to be cancelled. All participants were given a Frosh which included a mug, agenda and various tourist maps.

Welcome Dinner 24th Sept 2004

To introduce the new Muslims students to other Muslims on campus a welcome dinner was organized in the Shatner Ballroom. The dinner was free for all new students and returning students were charged \$4.00. Speeches were given by the MSA president as well as other members of the MSA. After dinner games were played (e.g. tug of war and three-legged race)

Islam 101 Lectures 9th Sept – 7th Oct

A series of 5 lectures to introduce basic Islamic principles to both Muslims and non-Muslims were organized. These lectures were held on Thursdays at 5:30 pm in Leacock 26. The topics and the speakers were as follow

1. Attributes of God: Lecture given by Sh. Asim (Imam of Madani Mosque)
2. Prophet Muhammad: Lecture given by Yasin Dwyer (invited from Ottawa)
3. Women in Islam: Lecture given by Khadija Haffajee (Member of ISNA board or directors)
4. Quran: Lecture given by Abd Alfatah (Student in the Institute of Islamic studies- McGill)
- 5: Spirituality: Lecture given by Abd Alfatah

Leadership Conference 10th Oct 2004

This seminar was aimed at developing Muslims into independent and active members of community through teambuilding and resource management skills. Lectures and workshops were conducted throughout the day by Ayman Faris. Ayman Faris was invited from Ottawa.

Ramadan 14 Oct -13 Nov 2004

During the month of Ramadan MSA McGill organized free dinners in the Shatner Cafeteria open to all Muslim students and guests. The food was cooked at Concordia University and many students from McGill helped in the cooking.

Food was served every weekday for the 4 weeks. Along with this congregational evening and night prayers held everyday.

Islam Awareness Days 20th-21st Oct 2004

To give students in McGill an opportunity to learn about the different aspects of Islam through their peers for two days MSA set up booths in the Shatner Ballroom about different aspects of Islam (e.g. Women, Comparative Religion, God, Quran etc). Free books, Qurans, pamphlets, CDs as well as food was given to the visitors.

Open Iftar 29th Oct 2004

To increase awareness of Ramadan and the show how Muslims pray and open their fast on the 29th of October numerous students groups were invited to have dinner with the Muslim students. When it was time to open the fast dates and milk were passed around. After praying dinner was served after which one of the students from the Institute of Islamic Studies gave a speech about Ramadan, fasting and the obligations on Muslims during this month.

Eid-ul-Fitr 14th Nov 2004

The end of the month of Ramadan the festival of Eid was celebrated first by congregational prayers in Shatner ballroom followed by refreshments.

CultureFest 15th-19th November 2004

MSA McGill had the following 5 tables during the Cultural Bazaar of the SSMU CultureFest:

1. Oil Perfumes table
2. Calligraphy
3. Pakistani National Dresses
4. Mosques backdrop
5. Islamic Posters, Post Cards

Lecture By Dr. Umar Abd Allah 19th Nov 2004

Dr. Umar Abd Allah, a internationally renowned Muslim Scholar from Chicago was invited to speak in McGill on the topic of "Spread of Islam in the Classical Islamic World". Dr. Umar Abd Allah is the general director of the Nawawi Foundation in Chicago. This lecture took place in Leacock 132 and was attended by students from other universities as well.

Tsunami Fundraisrer 5th-7th Jan 2005-03-13

To raise money for the people affected by the December 2004 Tsunami MSA organized a fundraiser. For three days members of the MSA stood near the Roddick Gates with donation boxes. Including donations collected after the Friday congregational prayers, altogether \$10800 was collected.

Lecture by Qari Imran Khan 7th Jan 2005

Imran Khan (a renowned Qari (Quran reciter) from Halifax) was invited by the MSA to give a lecture entitled, "How Can We Empower Ourselves with the Quran?" The lecture was held in the Samuel Bronfman Building in Room 151 at 6:30 PM on January 7. This is an event you do not want to miss.

Eid-ul-Adha 21st Jan 2005

Eid-ul-Adha (Festival at the end of the Hajj) was celebrated first by congregational prayers in Shatner ballroom followed by refreshments.

Forgotten Genocide Awareness Week 31st Jan-4th Feb 2005

This event was organized in coalition with numerous other student organizations. This coalition was headed by the MSA. The purpose of the event was to focus on genocides that have occurred within the last 20 years, having taken place in lifetime of most of the students on campus, often to their total obliviousness. The Schedule of events was as follows

Monday Jan 31st: General Information on Genocide/Balkans

6:30 pm – 7:45 pm General Information Lecture Speaker: Sevak Manjikian (Vanier College)

8:00 pm – 9:00 pm Balkans Video: Calling the Ghosts – A Story About Rape, War and Women – (Women Make Movies, Inc.)

9:00 pm – 10:00 pm Genocide Video: Genocide: The Horror Genocide Continues – (Films for the Humanities and Sciences)

Tuesday Feb 1st: Gujarat

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Gujarat Speaker: Dolores Chew (Marianopolis College)

7:45 pm – 9:45 pm Gujarat Video: Final Solution

Wednesday Feb 2nd: Chechnya

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Chechnya Video: Murder with International Consent (Chechnya Film Festival)

7:45 pm – 8:45 pm Chechnya Speaker: Omar Ashour (McGill; PhD Candidate)

8:45 pm – 10:00 pm Chechnya Video: Disbelief (Chechnya Film Festival)

Thursday Feb 3rd: Rwanda/Balkans

6:30 pm – 7:45 pm Rwanda/Balkans (comparative analysis) Speaker: Dr. Peter Stoett (Concordia)

8:00 pm – 10:00 pm Rwanda Video: Frontline: Ghosts of Rwanda – (PBS)

Friday Feb 4th: Where to Go From Here

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Dr. Rex Brynen: The Necessity to Act (Leacock 132)

Ice cream Social 4th Feb 2005

Coinciding with the end of the Genocide event was the Ice Cream Social. This event was especially for the students who had started McGill in the winter semester. Students who had recently comeback from Saudi Arabia after performing Hajj spoke about their experience. In between the speeches Ice Cream was served.

Ski Trip to Mont Bromont 24th Feb 2005

After the success of the first Ski Trip Organized by MSA last year another Ski Trip was organized during the study break. Many Muslims are international students and had never skied before and therefore it was a very exciting experience for them. The Ski Trip was organized to Mont Bromont and buses were arranged for transport.

Prayer Space Debate 11th March 2005

The MSA and the Debating Union co-hosted a debate on “Should Muslim Students be provided a prayer space on campus”. This debate attracted a capacity audience in the Lev Bukhman room in Shatner.

Asalam u alaikum (peace be onto you),

We, the MSA, would first like to congratulate everyone here tonight for their immense participation and hard work this year at McGill. You people, here tonight, are amongst a distinguished group of individuals who have truly made the SSMU a remarkable experience for all students. It is with great humbleness that the MSA accepts this award tonight. Countless individuals from all walks of life have had something to do with the MSA. To all these people, we say thanks you, and wish you the best in all your endeavors.

On a last note, the issue of the prayer space has been draining for many people, inside and outside of the MSA. To all those who are involved in this issue at any level, the MSA extends a special thank you, as your actions do not go unnoticed.

To everyone, keep us in your prayers, as we will do the same for you.

Wasalam u aliaikum, (and peace onto you)

The Muslim Students' Association