

MAJDAL

ARAB COMMUNITY CENTER OF SAN DIEGO

Annual Report 2024



Mission

We are committed to uplifting the Arab community in San Diego and supporting community members in overcoming any social, economic, and political challenges they may face in pursuit of their goals.



Deepen Majdal's roots in 2025 by making a donation:

majdalcenter.org/donate

Vision

We envision a just, dignified future and a continued right to individual and collective self-determination for all members of the Arab community in San Diego, including youth, women, workers, families, and elders.

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

Dear Community,

We take immense pride in the strides we've made as a community organization over the past seven years.

Our own journeys with Majdal began in 2020, in the midst of a pandemic, with barely a budget or a plan. It has been our community, unwavering vision, and commitment to building a thriving center that have guided us through times of uncertainty and doubt.

Looking back on this year, we achieved many key milestones: strategic planning, a renovated space, recognition from the County of San Diego, and staff capacity dedicated to advocacy. Our favorite memories would have to be the successful launch of our arts exhibit and the historic adoption of a "MENA" category at the county and school district levels.

Now, more than ever, we remain dedicated to responding to the moment and ensuring that our community is protected, resourced, and most importantly — heard.

We are deeply grateful for your support that has brought us this far. Only with your continued backing can we continue to serve our community and advocate for equity and justice.

Sincerely,

Ramah Awad
Executive Director
ramah@majdalcenter.org

Yasmeen Obeid
Board Co-Chair
yasmeen@majdalcenter.org



2024 Highlights

Launched our arts exhibit at the El Cajon Public Library!

Advanced representation in media & local public institutions



Awarded a Live Well proclamation from San Diego County!



Recognized by San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Awarded 1 of 10 County Equity Grants

Passed Arab American Heritage Month & MENA Resolution at School District!

Advocated at San Diego Unified School District

2025 Goals

Support our goals by donating
at majdalcenter.org/donate!



**Strengthen our
direct services &
case management
to meet growing
needs**

Housing
navigation &
resources

Migrant defense
& protections

**Expand our
educational
services to enable
academic &
professional
success**



Digital literacy
workshops & new
computer hub

Entrepreneurship
trainings

**Grow leadership,
organizing, &
advocacy skills
among youth!**

Summer youth
organizing institute

Meet the Team!



Ramah Awad
Executive Director



Mohammed Alkubaisi
Case Management
Specialist



Farida Erikat
Program Manager



Subrein Damanhoury
Program &
Communications
Coordinator



Ryan Fan
Advocacy & Campaign
Manager



Aalaa Alzoubi
Adult Learning
Coordinator



Zahraa Harbi
Office Coordinator



Abdulrahman Almohamad
Sports Program
Coordinator



Hana Masri
Development
Associate

Advisory Board



Yasmeen Obeid
Co-Chair



Jeanine Erikat
Co-Chair



Nadine Hassoun
Treasurer



Ghassan Hussein
Community Liaison



Afrah Abdulkader
Program Advisor

Our leadership
reflects the
communities
we serve.



Majdal Staff at our Homeland & Homemaking Exhibit Launch!



**650+ families
resourced, impacting
3,500+ individuals!**

Health Access

- Medical appointment scheduling
- Translation & transportation coordination
- Public health workshops
- Health insurance navigation
- Peer counseling & emotional support

Public Assistance

- Enrolled **300 households** in CalFresh & CalWORKs food programs
- Enrolled **120 individuals** in In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- Supported **45 individuals** gain Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supported with enrollment in additional programs including:
 - Medi-Cal Health Insurance
 - Unemployment (EDD)
 - Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)
 - SDG&E Utilities CARE Program



Majdal staff and SDRCC host the BUILD Health Initiative for a site visit.

Housing & Food Assistance

- Distributed **\$42k** in emergency rental assistance from SDG&E to **64 households**
- Supported **216 households** apply for Section 8 housing
- Supported **95 households** apply for low-income housing
- Supported **65 individuals & families** find housing
- Distributed **\$2,000** in food assistance
- Offered tenants rights education & landlord mediation

Employment Access

- Job search and application support
- Resume-writing assistance
- Referrals to local employers & job opportunities
- Work authorization process support
- Career counseling to help explore pathways

We secure critical resources to meet basic needs and address social determinants of health.

A WORD FROM OUR COMMUNITY



"I have been living alone since I came to America 10 years ago. I moved from New York City to California, specifically to El Cajon. When I arrived, I had no one to help me, and I was connected with the Majdal Center team who supported me in every aspect of my life. They helped me get Section 8 housing. I am deeply grateful to them. May God bless them and ease their path, just as they have eased mine."

-Amira

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, I lost my job, and rent became too expensive. I was very close to becoming homeless. I didn't know where to go for help until I found Majdal Center. Mohammed helped me apply for Section 8 housing, IHSS, and SSI. He guided me through every step of the way and made everything easier for me. Because of their support, I was able to find housing and feel stable again."

-Mathafar



A WORD FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS



“As someone who has navigated through the challenges that come with being an immigrant, I know how important it is to be able to properly communicate in order to integrate into society. I've had the privilege of having others help me learn new languages when needed. Being able to do the same has brought me a lot of joy.”

-Pablo Sanchez-Lopez

“When I learned that I could strengthen my language teaching skills by helping curate and lead these English conversational classes, I couldn't be happier for the opportunity. From getting to know some of the wonderful members of the community to watching them learn and improve their English, volunteering with the Majdal Center been a gratifying experience.”



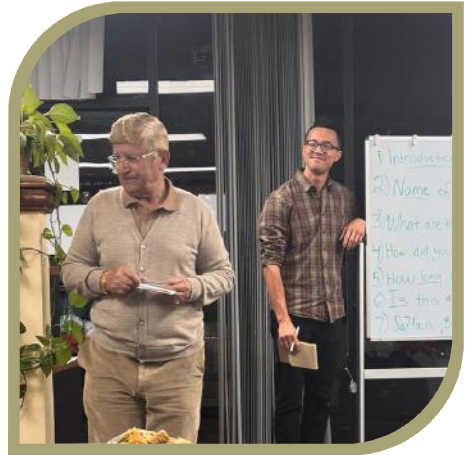
-Aaliyah Habib

40+

participants in English classes

For new refugees, English language leads to:

- Easier integration
- Improved job opportunities
- Access to critical information & services
- Improved mental health
- Better education



English language is one of the highest needs among new refugees and immigrants. To respond to this need, we offer English conversational classes twice a week.

We strengthen necessary skills that promote self-sufficiency.



80+ community members received U.S. citizenship!



We support with pathways to citizenship.

Our citizenship readiness course helps participants prepare for their naturalization exams and interviews.

Citizenship safeguards the following:

- Protection from deportation
- Family reunification
- Freedom to travel
- Right to vote
- Employment opportunities



Youth Programs & Advocacy



We offer cultural
& recreational
activities to
engage youth.

Since 2021, our boys
soccer team practices
weekly and hosts regular
boys nights at the center.

We invest in youth to
promote community
leadership.

We launched our dabkeh
troupe, which performed for
Arab American Heritage
Month in Poway and at the
El Cajon Multicultural
Festival in November!



Youth Fellowships

Members of our **Arab Youth Collective** completed various fellowships through which they organized events for their peers, led critical campaigns, and strengthened their advocacy skills.



Lana Alany



Husam Alkhateeb



Yasmeen Elmezain



Hisham Alkhateeb



Asia Areigat



Elaf Alsaadi



Executive Director Ramah & Advocacy Fellow Lana in D.C. with NNAAC.

We launched our arts exhibit!

"I feel very fortunate to have been able to join you and to witness that powerful expression of community, joy, and resilience in the face of so much sorrow and suffering."

- Felicia Kelley,
California Humanities



2 years, 10 art workshops, & countless hours culminated in a 3-month art exhibit



300+ community members, funders supporters, & partners attended!



"I want to congratulate and thank everyone at the Majdal Center for such a beautiful, moving, and memorable event."

- Giovanna Adleson,
Community Organizer

Debuted our youth-made short film "Stories of Home"

“Homeland & Homemaking”

Featured 11 youth performers through music, poetry & dabkeh



“Congratulations to the Majdal Center for an extraordinary event at the El Cajon Library! It was magical, healing and an opportunity to share talent, establish more anchors, find new friends and forge a plan for our larger Arab-Muslim-Allies community.”

- Doris Bittar,
Artist & Community Organizer



Joined by special guests Omar Offendum, Fouad Sawa, Dlan Dary, & Lorain Khalil Rihan

Collaborated with El Cajon Public Library, California Humanities, Imagine Brave Spaces, & Impact Media

“Thank you for bringing your event to the library and sharing your community with our space.”

- Jarrod Chilton,
El Cajon Library

We mobilized Arab American civic engagement



Student Advocacy

Our youth leaders engaged **46 students** across 4 focus groups and a student forum to **assess and advocate for the needs of Arab and Arabic-speaking students** in East County. We published our findings with key recommendations for schools to support their success!

We mobilized **50+ community members** to give public comment in support of **Arab American Heritage Month** and **MENA Data Equity** resolutions at San Diego Unified School District.

We build
community
power through
advocacy.

"I worked to uplift student voices, address challenges, and create solutions through conversations with youth. This fellowship expanded my network and enabled me to push for meaningful change in education for Arab students."

- **Dalal Erakat**
Advocacy Fellow, NNAAC



Get Out the Vote!

We educated our community on their rights as voters as a way to increase awareness and registration:

- Hosted **3** voter education workshops
- Reached **850+ individuals** through phone & text banking
- Canvassed at local institutions
- Successfully registered **100+ individuals** to vote
- Reached **3,200** impressions via social media campaign

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Partners

- American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
- American Council of Learned Societies
- Arab American Civic Council
- Center on Policy Initiatives
- Council on American Islamic Relations
- Family Health Centers of San Diego
- Horn of Africa
- Imagine Brave Spaces
- Impact Media
- Islamic Center of San Diego
- Karen Organization of San Diego
- License to Freedom
- National Network for Arab American Communities
- Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans
- San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition
- San Diego Wellness Collaborative
- San Ysidro Health Center
- Southern Sudanese Community Center
- The AjA Project
- The Global Action Research Center
- United Women of East African Support Team
- U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights
- Youth Organize California
- Youth Will

Since 2020, we have been a proud member of the San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition (SDRCC).

With 9 other ethnic community based organizations, we coordinate services and initiatives around health, housing, economic development, & youth leadership.

A special thank you to Amina Sheik Mohamed of the UCSD Refugee Health Unit and Valerie Nash of Nash & Associates.



Funders

- California Humanities
- California Mental Health Services Authority
- Center for Arab American Philanthropy
- County of San Diego - Office of Equity & Racial Justice
- Elevate Youth California
- Emergent Fund
- Grossmont Healthcare District
- Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC)
- Proteus Fund - Rise Together Fund
- San Diego Gas & Electric
- Sierra Health Foundation
- Solidaire Network
- The California Endowment
- The Conrad Prebys Foundation
- The San Diego Foundation
- Third Wave Fund
- Women's Foundation California

We cultivate meaningful partnerships that drive collective action.



Majdal at the mic & in the media!



We aim to shape
discourse on our
communities.

Majdal staff were invited to
speak at various events:

- Catalyst “Activating Power” Conference
- UCSD Ethnic Studies
- Live Well East County

We were featured
in 10+ articles &
news segments:

- San Diego Tribune
- ABC10 News
- KPBS
- East County Magazine
- California Humanities





GET INVOLVED

Volunteer with us!
majdalcenter.org/get-involved



CONTACT US

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(619) 891-8081



DONATE

Make a contribution online or
by mailed check:
majdalcenter.org/donate

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Pasadena, CA 91189-2894



FOLLOW ALONG

Follow us on [Instagram](#) &
[Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for
regular updates!

[@majdalcenter](#)



VISIT OUR CENTER

We're open Monday to Thursday!
329 E. Main St.
El Cajon, CA



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