

MAJDAL

Arab Community Center of San Diego

مركز الجالية العربية في سان ديغو

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego

www.majdalcenter.org

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Cover art and report design by Elias Ayoub

Depicted on the cover are flowers representing some of our community's homelands: the Iraqi rose, the Syrian jasmine, the Palestinian poppy, the Lebanese cedar, the Algerian iris, and the Egyptian lotus.

Published April 2021

A Letter from Two of Our Founders

Dear Community,

Our work together started in 2016 when we began responding to the needs of Syrian families who were resettling in San Diego and struggling to navigate life beyond their homelands. We supported with housing, hosted activities in the park, and tutored students in the library. In 2018, we finally opened the doors to our own space: **Majdal, the Arab Community Center of San Diego.**

Inspired by the work of Palestinian youth organizer Khaled Bakrawi, we recognize that Arab communities here in San Diego are linked by experiences of **war, occupation, and refugeehood.** This is why our means of building resilience and community power beyond our homelands are necessarily connected.

This past year, we witnessed our work of the past four years result in incredible growth. From the opening of our doors in 2018 to the hiring of our first staff members in 2020, our vision of a **local resource and community space** for all of San Diego's Arab residents, refugees, and immigrants is finally coming to fruition.

We are proud of all that we have accomplished and are excited to share the year's highlights with you in this annual report. **As a youth-led, community-based organization, we rely on your continued support to further grow as a Center. Thank you!**

Sincerely,

Hatem Mohtaseb & Nadine Hassoun



Please consider donating online at majdalcenter.org/donate or by mailed check to Islah Reparations Project, c/o Majdal Center, to P.O. Box 714 Santa Cruz CA 95061



Mission

Majdal, the Arab Community Center of San Diego, is a grassroots institution committed to uplifting the Arab community in San Diego. Our mission is to support community members in overcoming any social, economic, and political challenges they may face in pursuit of their goals. We seek to foster an environment rooted in trust and support and to cultivate a communal identity based on a deep understanding of the rich histories and cultures present among us.

Vision

The Center seeks to build a foundation for political power that can achieve a just and 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.

Our Growth in 2020



Despite the challenges of 2020, the year marked substantial growth for the Center! We established leadership bodies and hired staff that substantially grew our capacity and brought greater networks and resources to the Center.

We brought on our first full-time staff member, Ramah Awad, in the role of Community Organizer to coordinate our outreach efforts, campaigns, and programming.

We welcomed a part-time community health worker, Aeshaa Salman, to lead education, awareness, and response efforts to the pandemic.

We formalized a Steering Committee and Board of Directors, tasked with implementing the vision and strategy of the Center.

Our Leaders

Steering Committee and Staff

**Ramah
Awad**



Community Organizer and
Chair of Steering Committee

**Selma
Hassane**



Co-Chair of Steering Committee

**Nadine
Hassoun**



Finance and
Fundraising Coordinator

**Rinad
Taha**



Youth Outreach Coordinator

**Yasmeen
Obeid**



Advocacy Coordinator

**Aeshaa
Salman**



Community Health Worker

ship

Read more
about our
leadership at
majdalcenter.org/our-team

Board of Directors

**Hatem
Mohtaseb**



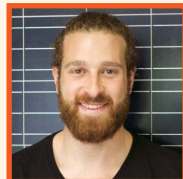
**Asmaa
Khierallah**



Lallia Allali



**Mohammad
Alhasan**



Our leadership is reflective of the varied experiences and sectors present in San Diego's local Arab community: asylum-seekers, refugees, immigrants, Arab-Americans, women, youth, and workers.

We believe that to achieve justice and dignity for our communities, who are otherwise at the margins, they must be at the center of our leadership.

Write down: I am Arab

سجل، انا عربي

2020 Census Campaigning



We were one of the leading local organizations campaigning to get our Arab communities in San Diego registered for the 2020 Census.

We supported **300 families** register for the census through phone banking, canvassing, social media campaigning, and workshops.

Since the Census helps to determine the allocation of public funds and political representation and gives us information about our communities' needs, **the stakes were high for our Arab communities**, many of whom are recent refugees or immigrants and were not included in the last census conducted 10 years ago.

Our efforts were featured on KPBS and KUSI local San Diego news!



The COVID-19 pandemic worsened existing community needs for housing access, food and supplies, and employment. In response, we expanded our public health work and helped community members access rental assistance and essential goods.

Our Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

We partnered with the County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency.

We developed educational resources and hosted workshops in order to raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention and testing.

We interviewed 21 families about the impact of COVID-19 on their wellbeing, socioeconomic status, and education, which contributed to a report by the San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition.

Read the "COVID-19 Refugee Community Impact Report" on our website!



We (Re) Launched our Tutoring and Volunteer Programs!

We recruited
over 20
students
and volunteers
in 2020!

Youth education and leadership is at the heart of our work. Since our beginnings, we have hosted after-school tutoring programs and activities to offer youth resources and a sense of belonging.

In the fall of 2020, we re-launched this work with an online tutoring program where we pair students with volunteer tutors for weekly one-on-one sessions.

Our tutoring program supports refugee and immigrant students with overcoming the challenges of language barriers, new school settings, and remote learning.



"I have a passion for working with youth and believe that this tutoring program helps empower youth in our marginalized communities by increasing their opportunities to engage with, and take ownership of their learning."

- **Farida Erikat**
Volunteer

"As a child of immigrants, I have been exposed to the difficulties of integrating to a new environment. Majdal Center provides resources and services to families like my own...The tutoring program allows students to have one-on-one time with accomplished tutors and educational resources, that they otherwise wouldn't have had access to, and matches us with them based on how we can support with their specific obstacles, whether it be language, math, or science."

- **Munther Baroudi**
Volunteer



In 2021, our goals are to...

Establish a youth leadership committee for Arab students and youth to launch projects and campaigns,

Advocate for greater resource allocation in public schools for Arabic-speaking students,

Expand our community health work and response efforts,

Launch a mentorship program for recent refugee and immigrant youth,

Advocate for local redistricting based on data collected from the 2020 Census.





Help us make our 2021 goals a reality!

Donate online at majdalcenter.org/donate

or by mailed check to
Islah Reparations Project, c/o Majdal Center,
to P.O. Box 714 Santa Cruz CA 95061.

Thank you to our 2020 community partners and funders!

Community Partners

Count Me 2020: Census Outreach Coalition

Islah Reparations Project

Islamic Center of San Diego (ICSD)

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)

San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition (SDRCC)

United Women of East African Support Team (UWEAST)

Funders

California Endowment

County of San Diego - Health and Human Services Agency

The Critical Refugee Studies Collective

San Diego Foundation

United Way





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