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The Muslim Educational Trust hosts a panel discussion to promote understanding between people of different faiths.

Muslim-American Backlash 15 Years Later

Community promotes understanding

BY ERIC TEGETHOFF

American-Muslim communities still face a backlash on the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. Hate crimes against Muslims in the U.S. have risen, according to the FBI, even as hate crimes against other communities have decreased.

Sahar Bassyouni, board member of the Muslim Educational Trust in Portland, said Muslims are just one of many minority groups that have dealt with discrimination in the course of the country's history.

"We need to unlearn lots of stereotypes that we have," she said. "We have to be very conscious of how we view people who come from different backgrounds. My hope as an American-Muslim mother is for my kids to be seen as equal to anybody else."

Bassyouni added she hasn't personally run into discrimination in Portland, but her daughter has.

A study of prime-time news by Media Tenor found that Islam was mentioned more than any other religion, and that the coverage was overwhelmingly negative. Bassyouni agreed the media has a tendency to reinforce stereotypes.

er religion, and that the coverage was overwhelmingly negative. Bassyouni agreed the media has a tendency to reinforce stereotypes.

"I get really upset when I hear that any crime that's committed by a Muslim is immediately tied in with Islam, and 'radical Islam' and 'Islamic terrorism,' and all of these terms that unfortunately have been crafted post-9/11," she added.

She thinks it's important to counteract some of the negative media attention, in part, by people reaching out and getting to know the American-Muslims in their community.

"If you have a Muslim neighbor, if you have a Muslim coworker, if your child goes to school with a Muslim student, I would encourage you to get to know us, because once you do, nothing that the media will say will matter, because you will have experience firsthand," she explained.

On the second Saturday of every month, the Muslim Educational Trust holds a public forum at its location in Tigard to encourage dialog between people and faiths.

Eric Tegethoff is a reporter with the Oregon News Service.

Red Cross Donors Needed

Sickle Cell highlights diversity needs

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month and the American Red Cross is urging eligible donors to give blood to help ensure a stable and diverse blood supply for patients in need.

Blood donors may be helping patients like 11-year-old Martin Mwita who has sickle cell disease. His body doesn't produce enough healthy red cells to carry adequate oxygen through his body, so he relies on monthly transfusions to stabilize his health.

A diverse blood supply is important to ensure the needs of all patients are met. Red blood cells carry

markers that determine one's blood type, and some blood types are unique to certain racial and ethnic groups. Because blood from donors of the same ethnic background as the recipient is less likely to cause complications, the Red Cross must maintain a diverse blood supply to meet these diverse patient needs.

Whether blood is needed for a chronic condition such as sickle cell disease, a surgical procedure or a large-scale emergency, it's the blood already on the shelves that helps save lives. Donors of all blood types are needed.

To make an appointment to give blood, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcross-blood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).