**This Toronto Mosque successfully engages Disabled Muslim Volunteers!**

**Find out what this Canadian Masjid is upto…**

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Have you ever thought of the experiences disabled people miss out in their life out of fate? Just stop and think for a second, to have a major hindrance in any of your abilities, be it physical or a mental disorder. Feels painful and disturbing, right? Let’s see what the **Canadian Muslims** are facing and how these issues are catered.

Living with **Down syndrom**e, a 22 year old girl regularly attends the **Jaffari Community Centre** (JCC), a mosque and community center, which houses the As-Sadiq Islamic School where she volunteers. She has hardly ever felt powerless, occupying her time by volunteering at As-Sadiq Islamic School with the grade 3 teacher and her students, as reported by [Muslim Link](https://muslimlink.ca/in-focus/the-benefits-of-including-muslims-with-disabilities-in-our-mosques-lessons-from-the-jaffari-community-centre) on Monday, December 31.

Since many years, the Islamic center has played an integral role in her life, serving as a social and spiritual hub for her and her family. For those of you not aware of Down syndrome, here’s a brief description. Down syndrome is a genetic condition caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21. Individuals with Down syndrome often have common physical traits like upward slanted eyes, a flattened nose and facial profile, and smaller limbs and body frame. Living with Down syndrome has never held this young girl back from being an active community member and doing what she enjoys. The 22-year old recent high-school graduate said:

*“I want to give back to the community.”*

Yet, engaging with masses while living with a physical or intellectual disability can be extremely daunting. A mother, whose daughter lives with **Autism Spectrum Disorder**(ASD), shared some challenges.

*“Whenever I decide to attend any event, I have to plan ahead to make sure that I anticipate all kinds of situations that can happen…I sit close to the exits, try to be distant from little kids, and try to see if there is anything in the environment that can trigger…”*

According to the Canadian Down Syndrome Society of Canada, about 45,000 Canadians live with Down syndrome. In contrast, the Public Health Agency of Canada reported in March 2018 that approximately 1 in 66 Canadians live with ASD. These represent only two disabilities amongst many that constitute Canadian Muslim families today.

Promoting inclusion and accommodating the needs of families with special needs, the Islamic center formed the Special Needs Support Network (SNSN) committee of volunteers. Speaking of the work that the SNSN is doing to meet the needs of these individual, a parent commented:

*“It’s so great to see our community helping and advocating for these kids, youth, and adults.”*

The SNSN also hosts regular events that families with special needs enjoy together including bowling, pottery painting, or even a day of shopping and lunch. **Zainab Fazal**, an applied behaviour analyst and professor at Seneca College, who is also one of the founding members of the SNSN, says:

*“simply opening our mosque doors to all Muslims is not enough. It is necessary for all Muslim communities to understand the different needs that individuals with a special need may have and as much as possible, cater to those needs so that they too can benefit as the rest of the community does.”*

It feels great to know how the Muslim Community is striving for a better living for the individuals who fight for experiencing what an ordinary person does. These individuals hindered of various capabilities go through many challenges and it is our right as Muslims to help them in every way we can. After all, our religion teaches us humility and vouches for the concept of brotherhood. Surely, Islam is a faith that makes helping others and society a core principle. Spread this message and let others know of the long way Muslim community has come today!

See also: [Duas for thanking Allah (SWT)](https://www.islamicfinder.org/duas/masnoon/for-thanking-allah-swt/)