**US Muslim Family Offers Neighbours Help during the Cold Weather!**

**It's not always the black and white picture, there's a grey area too. Find out how this Muslim family is setting new trends...**

*Current Affairs*

*Rida Ghaffar*

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You might not have even imagined to find such a news escalating in the first place, right? Of course, handing out letters to the people of a neighbourhood for the sake of offering services for humanitarian causes is indeed a thing done by someone out of comfort zone.

As the temperature fell to subzero last week, a **Chicago** Muslim family is delivering hand-written letters to their neighbors, offering them help during the cold snap. This was reported by the [Chicago Tribune](https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/morton-grove/news/ct-mgc-outreach-letters-neighbors-tl-0207-story.html?fbclid=IwAR23AIJXeHIDvfbgCPnxZujpc-HmeKRcL2BD9REjvpiS2MC64p2YcQ_TIxs). The letters written by Sabeel Ahmed and his wife, Asma Naheed, read:

*“As temperatures dip way below zero, neighbors are the ones to help each other.”*

The family of five delivered copies of hand-written letters to 40 homes in their neighborhood, offering to help in picking up groceries or medications, or clearing away snow. Ahmed explained:

*“It was just a neighborly initiative to motivate the neighbors so more of them can hopefully connect with each other and get a sense of community.”*

The neighbors have praised the gesture as “heartwarming.” Maureen Hartnett, one of the neighbours found the letter to be very reassuring, saying:

*“I grew up in the city, and that’s how my block was — everybody knew they could stop at the door. [Seeing the letter] made me feel good that my family lives in a community where everybody is still like that.”*

Another person in the neighbourhood, Alexander Slagg of Morton Grove, said he didn’t receive the Ahmeds’ letter. Although he did learn about it Wednesday at work and shared his views:

*“It was kind of cool to see that kind of outreach going on in our community.”*

Ahmed said he hopes the simple letters and offers of help, both, will inspire others to do exactly the same. He also added:

*“At the end of the day, we are all Americans, we are all humans, so let’s look out for other people too.”*

Though there are no official estimates, the US is home to an estimated Muslim minority of six to eight million. An earlier Gallup poll found that the majority of Americans Muslims are loyal to their country and optimistic about their future in the United States.

A great initiative taken by our fellow [US Muslim](https://www.islamicfinder.org/iqra/four-charged-by-us-police-in-plot-to-attack-muslim-community/) citizen, isn’t it? In this fast paced world full of selfish motives, who lends a hand like this and breaks barriers? Obviously not even a few, let alone a lot. Let’s pray to Allah (SWT) to hope for more measures like these taken and that a sense of unity be developed amongst the people of a similar neighborhood. Be it US, [UK](https://www.islamicfinder.org/iqra/a-muslim-entrepreneur-helps-the-homeless-in-uk/), Europe or any part of the world.

Morton Grove family delivers hand-written letters offering neighbors help during cold snap

About 40 residents in a Morton Grove neighborhood received a letter from their neighbors, the Ahmed family, offering to lend a helping hand during the Jan. 29-31 cold snap. (Sabeel Ahmed)

[**Jennifer Johnson**](https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-jennifer-johnson-staff.html#nt=byline)**Contact Reporter**Pioneer Press

A Morton Grove family is using the week’s subzero temperatures not as an excuse to stay inside, but as a reason to venture out and connect with their neighbors.

Sabeel Ahmed and his wife, Asma Naheed, spent late Tuesday afternoon delivering copies of hand-written letters to 40 homes in their neighborhood. The letters offered the family’s help in picking up groceries or medications during the cold snap, or clearing away snow.

“As temperatures dip way below zero, neighbors are the ones to help each other,” the letters said.

The family of five also invited their neighbors to stop by their home “for hot tea and samosa,” and daughter Zainab created a video of the outreach campaign, which was shared on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0UMKm59fnk).

“It was just a neighborly initiative to motivate the neighbors so more of them can hopefully connect with each other and get a sense of community,” Ahmed explained.

The initiative is also a way to show others the positive aspects of the family’s Muslim faith, Ahmed acknowledged.

“Helping neighbors is a big part of the faith,” he said. “But there is also a fear about Islam and Muslims. We don’t want people to judge Islam or any other faith just based on the news …. There are so many commonalities we have as humans, as Americans and as people of faith.”

Ahmed’s work life mirrors his neighborhood outreach. He is executive director of GainPeace, an Oakbrook Terrace-based organization aimed at educating the public about Islam and inviting people to call or email representatives with questions they have about the faith.

“Even though this was a personal initiative to help neighbors, it is connected to the bigger work I do, which is to dispel misconceptions people have about Islam and Muslims,” Ahmed said.

Morton Grove resident Sabeel Ahmed holds a copy of a letter he and his wife, Asma Naheed, delivered to neighbors in the community on Jan. 29, offering to help those who could not leave their homes during dangerously cold temperatures. (Sabeel Ahmed)

Neighbor Maureen Hartnett said she found the Ahmeds’ gesture “heartwarming” and reflective of an earlier era in her own life.

“I thought, ‘Wow, this is kind of old-fashioned, how we used to be,’ ” she said. “I grew up in the city, and that’s how my block was — everybody knew they could stop at the door. [Seeing the letter] made me feel good that my family lives in a community where everybody is still like that.”

The letter was also reassuring, Hartnett said.

“I like to know people are around and that people care,” she said.

Alexander Slagg, of Morton Grove, didn’t receive the Ahmeds’ letter at his home, but he did learn about it Wednesday at work.

“It was kind of cool to see that kind of outreach going on in our community,” he said. “Morton Grove is a pretty diverse area and because of that diversity, it’s difficult to create a sense of community. A lot of times people are involved in their own little bubbles. It was refreshing that someone was doing outreach without an agenda and reaching out to neighbors. It helps people feel connected to where they live.”

Ahmed said he hopes the simple letters and offers of help will inspire others to do the same, even beyond his Morton Grove neighborhood.

“At the end of the day, we are all Americans, we are all humans, so let’s look out for other people too,” he said.

As of Wednesday afternoon, no one had taken the Ahmeds up on their offer to pick up groceries or shovel snow, but Ahmed said he was ready if they do.

“I took two days off work,” he said. “If anybody needs help, I’m available.”,

 Question: What did you do or going to do??

***jjohnson@chicagotribune.com***

***Twitter: @Jen\_Tribune***