

Islamic Academy of New England

A Brief Guide to Your Children's Teachers, 2009-2010



The Islamic Academy of New England is honored to offer such a talented and high-qualified group of educators to the community. They are energetic, passionate, and consider the school a family. This adds to a positive and warm Islamic environment. Most of our teachers either have their graduate degree or are currently seeking a graduate degree. They come from a diverse background of professional disciplines and each teacher offers unique experiences to our students. In addition, nearly every teacher is either a licensed educator in Massachusetts or is in the application process for licensure.

Islamic Academy of New England

Sr. Nur'Izzah Khalil, B.A. **Acting Principal**

Sr. Nur earned her Bachelor of Art degrees in English and Psychology, from the University of Calgary, Canada. Upon graduation, she taught for 2 years at a public elementary school in Singapore before being recruited by the government to be an Assistant Registrar at the Registry of Companies and Businesses whereat she assumed additional responsibilities as a Public Prosecutor at the Subordinate Courts. Sr. Nur later ventured into advertising and became a Media Director with a renowned British consulting company specializing in In-flight media. Marriage brought her to Massachusetts and, alhamdulillah, she returned to her first passion, teaching, and immediately became part of the IANE-ANA family. Sr. Nur loves sports and the outdoors and is ever thankful to Allah s.w.t. for this rare opportunity to make a difference to help contribute and shape the minds of our precious Muslim youth. Sr Nur is presently pursuing her Masters in Educational Leadership degree and can be reached at nsgkhalil@gmail.com.

Sr. Dalal AIDajani, B.S. **Administrative Assistant**

Sr. Dalal graduated from University of Jordan with a bachelor degree in civil engineering. She taught in an Islamic school in London, UK, for three years. Subsequently she participated in a Saturday Islamic school for two years in Cambridge, MA. Currently, she holds an administrative position at IANE. Outside work, she leads a Girls Scout troop and she is skilled in arts and crafts projects. Sr Dalal can be reached at dalalaldajani@gmail.com.

Sr. Aminah K. Muhammad, A.S. **Administrative Assistant**

Sr. Aminah serves many roles at both ANA and IANE. She has her Associate's degree from Northeastern University. She has extensive experience, working in Islamic schools since 1984 in both Massachusetts and Mississippi. Sr. Aminah has been with Al-Noor Academy since 2000 and in 2006, started fulltime at IANE. Nevertheless, she can be found at both schools, serving as a lifeline between parents, students, and teachers. Her favorite activities include working with children, reading, and sewing – when she has the time to sew! Her email is aminahk@msn.com.

Br. Justin Valanzola, B.S., MEd

Social Studies and Guidance Counselor (Islamic Academy of New England and Al-Noor Academy)

Br. Justin is the social studies teacher for Al-Noor Academy, Guidance Counselor for the Islamic Academy of New England, and College Admissions Counselor. He is a native of Mansfield, MA. His background is in philosophy/history, religious studies, and education. Br. Justin has a Bachelor of Science and Masters in Education with a concentration in Special/Exceptional Education from the University of Maryland, College Park – ranked top 10 graduate schools in the country. He is licensed as an educator in both Maryland and Massachusetts. He taught at public schools and previously had a homeschooling/education consulting business in Maryland. He has experience with the Muslim Students' Association as an Executive Committee Member, Assistant to the Muslim Chaplain, a current member of the Council for Exceptional Children, and loves skiing! He can be contacted at jeav33@yahoo.com.

Sister Hoda Elsharkawi, B.A.**Religion Teacher**

Has a BA Mass Communication & Journalism (1996) .University of Zagazig, Egypt .Has Completed 11 courses in these areas: Islamic Creed, Qur'an Exegesis, Sciences of the Quran, Fundamentals of Islamic Jurisprudence and Hadith Sciences at Islamic Islamic American Open University ,Virginia .She was the Head of the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) Outreach Department (1999-2002) .She is now Teaching classes and leading a support group for new Muslim women; teaching Islam 101 to interfaith audiences; lead interfaith programs for adults and children; participant in church dialog programs; lecture on Islam and Muslims. She is married and has 3 Children who attend Al-Noor Academy and IANE.

You can reach sister Hoda at hoda.elsharkawi@gmail.com

Sr. Rachida Benkaci**Quran & Arabic Teacher**

With over five years of experience teaching Arabic language at the Islamic Academy of New England, Sr. Rachida is certainly not an unfamiliar face amongst the staff this year. Armed with extensive knowledge in Arabic language and literature, she has been a driving force behind the Arabic department at IANE in the past and has contributed tremendously to instilling the love of the holy language of the Quran in the hearts and minds of our students for many years. We welcome Sr. Rachida back this year with open arms and a prayer that she may continue with her dedicated service to the school with the same zeal that has been her trademark so that our students go on to learn and excel in the Arabic language, insha'Allah. Sr Rachida can be reached at rachidabenkaci@aol.com.

Sr. Safia Eldesuky, B.A.**Arabic Teacher**

Sr. Safia graduated from Alexandria University from the Arabic language Department. She gave sister's halaqa and worked in a private high school in Egypt for 3 years. After coming to America, she taught at IANE and ANA for many years. She wrote her first book about Hijab, called *Sweetness of Hijab*. After finishing the book, she went back to teach at IANE. Sr Safia can be reached at szelnaml@bhcc.edu.

Sr. Amirah Amawi-Serhan, BSc.**Pre-School (K-1) Teacher Assistant**

Sr. Amirah received her BS degree in Biology from Bridge Water State College, MA in the spring of 2003. Additionally, Sr. Amirah received several other certificates as an orthodontist and dental assistant from Cuyahoga Community College, OH. Prior to joining IANE, Sr. Amirah worked as a Consultant at BioAssets Corp, at Natick MA. She started as a volunteer and subsequently as a part time substitute Science and Math teacher for 4th and 5th grades in 2007.

Currently Sr. Amirah is enjoying here time with our future students teaching the K-1 class. Sr. Amirah can be reached at Haj200@aol.com.

Sr. Hebaallah Hasan, B.A.**Lead Pre-School & Kindergarten (K-2) Teacher**

Sr. Heba is the Lead Teacher for our two Kindergarten (K1 & K2) classes. She has a Bachelor's degree in Classical Languages and Literature from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt and majored in Greek and Latin. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Education and majoring in Early Childhood. Sr. Heba is a certified pre-school teacher from the Department of Early Education and Care. She has enjoyed working with our beautiful four-year-old children for over eight years and is presently in her fourth year of teaching at IANE. Sr Heba can be reached at heba.hasan@yahoo.com.

Sr Rana Elbeih, BSc**Pre-School (K-2), Teacher Assistant**

Sr. Rana has an associate degree in Liberal Arts from Massasoit Community College, and a bachelor degree in Science from University of Massachusetts, Boston. For two years, Sr Rana worked at a child care in Stoughton as a teacher assistant with preschoolers. Last year she taught Arabic and Qur'an at Quincy Saturday school. Sr. Rana can be reached at ranronbeih@yahoo.com

**Sr. Souheir Mond, Assoc.Degree
Kindergarten (K-3) Teacher**

Souheir Mond grew up in Damascus, Syria. She studied French literature at Damascus University, and has Early Childhood Teacher Certification. She lived with her husband and family in Saudi Arabia for four years, Oman for two years, and in the United Arab Emirates for three years. While in the Emirates, she worked in the library at the American University of Sharjah. Mrs. Mond relocated to Massachusetts in 2002 and began working at the Islamic Academy of New England that year as a kindergarten assistant. Mrs. Mond has continued working at the IANE for the past five years and served as the primary kindergarten teacher for the past four years. Mrs. Mond celebrates the miracle of being able to watch her students grow and learn during the year they are with her. She enjoys the privilege of being able to see them read and write their first words. Mrs. Mond also has three of her own children, ages 14, 12, and 9. Sr Souheir can be reached at souheirzon@yahoo.com. Her husband, Br Robert Mond, was Al-Noor Academy's former Principal.

**Sr. Sara Awad, B.S.
First Grade Teacher**

Sr. Sara graduated from the University of Massachusetts-Boston with an honorary degree in English Literature. While this is her first year teaching at IANE, she has had over four years of experience working with children at various educational centers and after-school programs within the Boston area. Insha'Allah, she plans to continue her studies and earn her Masters' Degree next year, as well as work towards certification. When not busy with school or work, Sr. Sara loves shopping and traveling to Lebanon. Sr. Sara can be reached at sarsura04@yahoo.com

**Sr Aisha Manzoor, BA
First Grade, Teacher Assistant**

Sister Aisha Manzoor graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor in Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence from Bradford, UK. She taught at an Islamic school in New York for 2 years, grades K-3. She also taught at a madrasah ages 10-19 for one year in New York. Marriage brought her to Rhode Island where she has been living for the past 3 years. Aisha is very active in the Muslim community in Rhode Island. She teaches Sunday School at her local masjid and she also holds muslim convert classes for sisters weekly. This is Sister Aisha's second year with ANA/IANE. She loves the environment and atmosphere here and her 2 kids are currently enrolled at IANE as well! Sr Aisha can be reached at manzooro@hotmail.com

**Sr. Sarah Boyle, B.S., B.A.
Second Grade Teacher, Lead Teacher**

Sr. Sarah is the second grade teacher at IANE. She is from Maryland, where she attended the University of Maryland, College Park. She graduated from the UMD in 2004 with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Elementary Education (with an emphasis in Mathematics) and a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Art History. She plans to continue her Masters' Degree in Massachusetts after the start of the school year. Sr. Sarah has spent the last three years teaching in the public schools in Maryland. She is certified in elementary education in Maryland and licensed in elementary education in Massachusetts. She has experience teaching second and third grades. She has the former President of the Muslim Women of Maryland (a sister organization to the MSA) and very active in the Muslim Students Association. Sr. Sarah can be reached at saraheboyle@gmail.com.

**Miss Jacki Zarella, BEd
Third Grade Homeroom Teacher**

Miss Jacki recently graduated from Bridgewater State College with degrees in Early Childhood Education and Psychology. She has experience teaching at the Duxbury Public schools and she has been working with children outside of school for many years through childcare, camps and teaching piano. Miss Jacki has a passion to teach as well as to learn and is continuing her education again at Bridgewater State for a Masters degree in Special Education. Miss Jacki can be reached via email at JZarella@bridgew.edu.

**Mrs. Heather Barrakad, BA
Fourth Grade Homeroom Teacher, 4th-5th ELA and Social Studies Teacher**

Mrs. Barrakad received her bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Science and Physical Education from the University of Rhode Island. She also has successfully completed 5 graduate courses in Elementary Education at Roger Williams University. She has taught for the last 6 years in the Cranston Public Schools. She has had the great opportunity to be trained in the Scott Foresman's Reading Street Program and Math Investigation Program and has experience teaching the Six Traits of Writing from first through fifth grade. Mrs. Barrakad can be reached at hthmason@yahoo.com.

Zakkiyya Razaq, B.S., MBA**Fourth/Fifth Grade Math and Science Teacher**

Sister Zakkiyya attended undergraduate school at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and the University of Phoenix where she completed her Bachelors of Science Degree in E-Business. Immediately after obtaining the B.S. she went on to complete her Masters Degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix's Braintree campus. She owned a successful home daycare in Kansas not far from where she grew up in St. Louis Missouri for four years until marriage brought her to Massachusetts where she currently works at ING as a retirement financial consultant. Sister Zakkiyya has always been passionate about putting her skills and hard work to use within the Islamic Community which has led to her recruitment at IANE as the fourth and fifth grade math and science teacher. She has created a website for the math and science students and parents. Feel free to check it out at <http://www.uncoursesystems.com/school/webpage.aspx?id=579121&xpage> She can be reached at zrazaaq@yahoo.com

Br. Zineddine Benkaci**School Maintenance**

Br. Zineddine is another familiar face amongst the staff at IANE and ANA this year. Br. Zine has been in charge of the janitorial services at both schools for many years now. Not only have his services been invaluable in maintaining the buildings at both Mansfield and Sharon, this father of three's daily presence at the school has always been a source of comfort and joy for all the staff at the school where everyone has embraced him as part of their family and has depended on his helping hand time and time again. Alhumdulillah, Br. Zine will be continuing his service to the school again this year and we welcome him back with great warmth and joy.