

MENTORS FOR ACADEMIC AND PEER SUPPORT

Education is a virtue highly emphasized in Islam. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once said "Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to paradise." However, in our society, it is often harder for people of color and low socioeconomic groups to get the same education as someone from a privileged background.

MAPS (Mentors for Academic and Peer Support) is a student run community service organization at UCLA focused on providing peer tutoring and mentorship to inspire students to pursue higher education. Nada Elquosey, a 2nd year anthropology major, shares the impact MAPS has had on her view of service and Islam: "It is easy to forget that Allah rewards for the simplest acts of service and



"Alhamdulillah being a part of MAPS has allowed me to service many people outside of what I would think my scope or capacity is."



In particular, Elquosey enjoys sharing knowledge with students and talking to them about their everyday lives. She reflects on how gratifying it is to see the impact she and her fellow volunteers have on the kids: "We had a student come in every Thursday, eager to edit his essay, week after week. He came in with his idea, then with his first draft, then with his final draft until one day, he came in with absolutely no work that we could attend to. When we asked him exactly what we could help him with that week, he replied that he really didn't have any work to do. He simply came to MAPS

because he enjoyed spending time with the volunteers. He enjoyed praying alongside us, asking random questions about college and simply being in our presence."

MOSQUES AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is one of the most prevalent organized crimes in the world. Mosques Against Trafficking (M.A.T.) is a service organization based in San Diego that aims to combat human trafficking through education, outreach, and connections with survivor support organizations. Yusef Miller, the founder of M.A.T, says that through M.A.T he hopes to inspire the next generation to work towards creating a more just and positive society in the name of Allah. He also believes that it is a blessing to be able to serve Allah through helping others and allows him to show non-Muslims that



"Islam is truly about spreading compassion throughout one's community and giving back to others."



Pointing out the flaws and injustices in society is no difficult task when stories of mass shootings, police brutality, and the refugee crisis are filling our timelines. If you ever feel cynical about the world, my challenge for you is to think that for every injustice, there is at least one hard working and compassionate person working to resist the negativity to develop sustainable change. Ordinary people can spark change and shed light on the world. When you find a cause sparks a fire in your soul and awakens your inner activist, don't wait for someone else. Go out into the world to serve Allah through your actions.