



Sami Ahmed

Sami Ahmed's exposure to extreme poverty in his parents' homeland of Ghana inspired his interest in community service. Before college, he served as president of his school's Economics Club, which invested in stocks, donating the returns to the Red Cross for African relief initiatives. Sami graduated as valedictorian of his class and entered Penn's Wharton School. As a freshman at Penn, he helped in the design and implementation of a Disaster Safety Program for more than 1500 Philadelphia middle school students in cooperation with the Red Cross. In his sophomore year, Sami founded an organization called "Jews and Muslims for West Philly" (JAM), which partners with a local non-profit, AchieveAbility, to rebuild and paint houses for single mothers in West Philadelphia. Through their work JAM serves as a conduit for understanding between campus groups and the larger Philadelphia community. Since junior year, Sami has focused on the issue of domestic violence in Philadelphia, concentrating his attention on the West African Muslim community. He has developed plans for the establishment of a domestic violence shelter in the region, specifically geared towards the needs of this population.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Domestic Violence in American Muslim Communities

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This thesis explores the issue of domestic violence in the American Muslim community. Specifically, it discusses field research conducted to gather a set of case studies to examine the nature of domestic violence in Muslim families. The research revealed that patterns of domestic violence do not converge across an entire religious community, despite extensive evidence that demonstrates a very firm stance by Islamic law condemning household violence. Particularly, instances of domestic violence differed significantly between immigrant and indigenous Muslim communities. However, across various Muslim immigrant communities, similarities emerged. Overall, domestic violence tended to pattern itself more closely across particular ethnic groups, rather than across purely religious lines. The thesis recommends a set of action items, including proposed models for establishing domestic violence shelters geared towards Muslim women.