

(Cromwell, CT 11/21/09) – The CAIR-Connecticut Annual Banquet held at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell on Saturday, November 21, 2009 Connecticut was attended by more than 300 guests from the Muslim and Interfaith communities across the State of Connecticut.

Guests enjoyed excellent talks analyzing the state of Muslims in America and our challenges moving forward from well known dignitaries including Imam Mahdi Bray, Imam Johari Abdul-Malik, and Sheikh Abu Ammaar Yasir Qadhi. The event was MC'd by Sister Colleen Keyes ex-Dean of Academic Affairs, Tunxis Community College. Br. Corey Saylor, Government Affairs Director, CAIR National and Br. Razi Hashmi, Executive Director, CAIR-OK presented national and chapter perspectives on Civil Rights initiatives.

This was followed by a rousing presentation by our own Br. Mongi Dhaoudi, Executive Director, CAIR-CT. Br. Mongi emphasized that our local efforts were fully aligned to CAIR work at the national and chapter level across the country and together we stand as a vibrant organization committed to serving Muslims in America. Defending civil rights and empowering Muslims is the cornerstone of our existence. Recognizing that empowerment starts with education, CAIR-CT recognized three Islamic Schools in the State- the Salma Farid Academy, the Medina Academy and the Al-Yaqeen Academy. The Chapter also honored Sr. Matiniah Yahya with an Enterprise Award and Imam Abdul Karim Hassan with a Leadership Award for their sustained commitment and contributions in community development and civil rights, respectively.

The undisputed highlight of the banquet was the Comedy Show to cap off the event by the world renowned entertainer Azhar Usman. “Jimmy Jones- what kind of Muslim name is that...?” With that jibe started an hour of hilarious, nonstop comedy extravaganza all courtesy of none other than the One and Only Azhar Usman! As the audience were literally rolling on the floor the program had to come to an end at 10 P.M. but only because we had to vacate the premises. However, the young people including hordes of MSA college student hung around long after the event was over to spend some quality time meeting with Azhar and bonding amongst them.

CAIR, America's largest Islamic civil liberties and advocacy group, has over 30 offices and chapters nationwide and in Canada. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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CONTACT: Mongi Dhaouadi, 860-514-8038, E-mail: mdhaouadi@aol.com