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SOUTH BRUNSWICK: Islamic Society reaches out

by Davy James, Staff Writer

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As many people in the township struggle to pay their bills and tighten their belts, the Islamic Society of Central Jersey is doing its part to help the less fortunate in the community.

The ISCJ will be holding its United We Serve event Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a free health fair and legal clinic that's open to all residents.

"The Islamic Society has given back to the community in every way possible," said Atiya Aftab, secretary of the board of trustees for the ISCJ. "We hold a free health clinic every Sunday, but we decided to just make a day of it and give back even more."

Ms. Aftab said numerous volunteers have offered their time and multiple rooms will be set up to ensure the privacy of residents. In addition, a variety of experts in varying fields of medicine will be on hand, including an emergency room doctor, internal medicine doctor, plastic surgeon. There also will be skin screenings.

In addition, attorneys in different specialties will be on hand to offer their time for residents.

"We have people who will be prepared to give advice, point people in the right direction and give help to people who need help," Ms. Aftab said. "Some people have simple questions and don't know where to turn. We want to try to help those people who don't have access to this type of opportunity."

The event will feature invited guests from the community and local politicians. Following the clinic, the ISCJ will be holding a ceremony to present donations to a number of local organizations. The ISCJ will be donating \$10,000 to South Brunswick's schools, including a donation of school supplies.

A \$10,000 donation will also be given to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, a \$1,000 donation will be given to the South Brunswick Commission on Women and a \$1,000 donation and food will be given to the South Brunswick Food Pantry.

Ms. Aftab said the donations are representative of this time of year for the ISCJ, as Muslims celebrate the holy month of Ramadan.

"One of the tenets of our religion is to give help to those who need help," she said. "You're not successful if your neighbor is in need. The donations are part of the everyday thought process of Muslims. During the month of Ramadan we have a heightened feeling of awareness to remember those who don't get food during the day, as we break our fast at the end of the day. Some people don't have food waiting for them at the end of the day, so it's imperative to give back at this time of year."

Donations have been raised year-round by the ISCJ to help make the donations throughout the area.

"This is to show everyone that we are a part of the fabric of this township," said ISCJ Board of Overseers member Arif Patel. "We are contributing, proactive and responsible citizens of this community."

The ISCJ is located at 4145 Route 1, near the intersection of Route 522. For more information visit www.iscj.org.

"Helping those in need is something we do all year round," Ms. Aftab said. "This is a great opportunity to pull everything together on one day."

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