

When I moved to Rochester, NY, I was welcomed by the volunteers and members of the Turkish Cultural Center of Rochester. Moving to a new place, and knowing virtually no one in my new city, made me feel like a kindred spirit with some of the Turkish immigrants that soon became my friends.

One friend, Esra, had moved to the United States from Turkey and made Rochester her home. When she welcomed me to Rochester, she showed me all the opportunities that Rochester had to offer and all that she had grown here. Esra showed me Salaam Magazine. When Esra, an active mother to five, started Salaam Magazine, it was mostly by and for the children associated with the Turkish Cultural Center of Rochester as an Eid gift.

She let me leaf through the magazine's pages and read the capturing comics and heartwarming stories, careful to emphasize that children curated each page. The magazine envisioned what the children working on Salaam Magazine wanted to see in the stories they read, and it embodied a place where they could explore their faith alongside science and math. She was eager for the magazine to grow beyond the small city of Rochester, but she said that she needed help.

Esra approached me and asked if I would be willing to look over Salaam Magazine before the spring issue. After spending the evening in the library, I sent my questions and some revisions. What started as a read-through grew to a more active editing role after her primary English-speaking editor had to step away. I began to review the articles before they made the magazine's pages in the next issue.

In one meeting with Esra, I heard her vision for Salaam Magazine. Meeting at a tea shop near a bookstore, I listened as she told me how she longed to have Salaam Magazine on the shelves of a bookstore and available on Amazon. However, she capped her dream as she told me that she was afraid the current issue would be the last of Salaam Magazine because the business side was not profitable enough to continue. I encouraged her to keep working on the magazine as it became a valuable tool for the children writing to express themselves and for the children reading to see themselves on the page.

With the encouragement, Salaam Magazine continued and became the first Islamic children's magazine in the United States. To try and help further, I bought a subscription to Salaam Magazine for family friends in Kansas City, MO, hoping that the subscription would grow organically from there with the exposure of the magazine in the Kansas City area. Salaam Magazine continues to produce quarterly magazines and has grown to serve more areas than the small city of Rochester.

As Salaam Magazine continues to grow, I have helped edit and craft messages for the new website, along with editing articles and comics for each issue of the magazine. Salaam Magazine has even grown so much that a team was able to attend the Muslim American Society and Islamic Circle of North America Convention (MAS-ICNA).

Working to make Esra's dreams come true has been a profound experience. By editing Salaam Magazine and helping with the website, I contributed to the richness of diversifying the

market and ensuring that children could read stories where characters shared beliefs and looked like them. Helping my friend means that I am also helping bring stories to life that encourage children to learn more about their cultures and faith. Salaam Magazine has taught me much about different cultures and religions. However, I did not expect Salaam Magazine to so adequately demonstrate the way children come to life when they read stories that they can see themselves in.