

IC In The News: Huffington Post Op-Ed "Bringing Relief to Drought-Stricken Africa"

Recently, Zain Memon, Senior at New York University and ICNYU Student Leader, wrote an op-ed published by the Huffington Post entitled NYU Fast-A-Thon: Bringing Relief to Drought-Stricken Africa. To read the entire article in full, please [click here](#).

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Zain Memon

NYU Fast-a-Thon: Bringing Relief to Drought-Stricken Africa

On Sept. 20, around 270 New York University students and community members gathered together at the Kimmel Center's Rosenthal Pavillion for the 10th Annual Fast-A-Thon: Fast for Water fundraising dinner with a collective goal to raise enough money to build three wells in East Africa, namely in countries such as: Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. This annual event is hosted by NYU's Islamic Students Association to boost awareness about Islamic traditions and raise money for a specific charity. This year's event was unlike past years in that it catered to a more diversified crowd and boasted a large outreach capacity. With 23 co-sponsors and 75 volunteers for the event, it was known from the very beginning, that new records would be established when the night was over.

At 6:30 p.m., crowds of students, professionals, and community members quickly made their way towards their seats. The massive, large scale Facebook promotions and positive word of mouth had served well to advertise the campaign and event. Within minutes, every seat in the room was occupied by individuals pledging to make a difference. As chairs of Fast-A-thon, I, along with a dedicated enthusiast, Fatima Kamran, spent a majority of our time this summer deciding on food and decorations, brainstorming ideas for large scale promotional efforts leading up to the event, and negotiating with several co-sponsors, guest speakers, and performers for the event. Attracting a crowd is perhaps more difficult than conveying a message. We had accomplished both. The best part however, was that the night was still young and the program was yet to begin.

The current situation in East Africa was an important issue to be addressed on a university level because it required global support from all individuals, regardless of their social, cultural or religious background. Millions of people across East Africa are still suffering from the effects of the worst drought in 60 years. With malnutrition, a chronic problem in the region, more than 13 million people have been affected and approximately 50 thousand people have died. Areas such as Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia are among the countries most severely impacted. Without having water to drink, people can't live. Without water for their livestock, they can't eat or earn a living. Throughout the second half of 2011, famine spread through southern Somalia, taking its highest toll on children. These children that could have spent their time in school were spending their time searching for water.....to continue reading, please [click here](#)