

***A message from [CAIR - Council on American Islamic Relations](#), shared by a Goodwin House Alexandria resident.***

Sunday evening began the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, a time for Muslims across our country and the world to strengthen their connections with each other and with their Creator.

Through fasting and devoted prayer during Ramadan, we deepen not only our individual spirituality but also the bonds of our beloved community. The ties that bind us are fortified through shared meals, prayer gatherings, and acts of kindness. For 30 nights, we worship together, we pray together, we break fast together, and we build communities of belonging together. Ramadan brings a sense of togetherness that transcends culture and religion.

The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding conducts a poll of Muslim-Americans every year. [A few years ago, they had a very interesting finding about those who attend regular mosque services. Increased attendance at mosques was correlated with increased participation in civic life, voting in elections, and being a more engaged, active citizen.](#)

This is why the communal observance of Ramadan not only strengthens our faith – it also strengthens our democracy. The values of empathy, compassion, and inclusivity promoted during this month build the foundation for a more harmonious and equitable world and guard against extremism. The month of Ramadan is almost like a giant, month-long listening session with our community. The more we are connected to a loving, supportive community, the more attuned we are to each other – to what is good.

This Ramadan, whether you are Muslim or not, join me. Join me in praying – praying for the multifaith, multiracial democracy we are working to build. Join me in listening – listening to our brothers and sisters and learning empathy, patience and kindness. Join me in fasting – fasting from words and actions that cause harm or hurt and push us away from one another.

Join me in the spirit of love and peace.

In faith,

Azka Mahmood (she/her)  
Executive Director, CAIR Georgia.