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Muslim students raising cash for Gulf refugees

by Faisal Kutty

During the seven-month long occupation of Kuwait, thousands of war refugees flooded into Jordan and Iran.

As the battle aspect of war has virtually monopolized the news broadcasts, very few people are aware of the refugee problem.

The Muslim Student Federation (MSF) of York University is trying to bring attention and some badly needed financial assistance to the innocent victims in the region.

MSF Vice-President Shakeel Anwar said, "we are trying to bring some publicity to the plight of the refugees and to raise a few dollars in the process to make their situation a little more bearable."

According to Nauhah Kalmoni, treasurer of the MSF, the organization has raised approxi-

mately \$1100 for the victims as of February 25. He added that most of the money has been raised from members and those who attend the Friday congregational prayers held by the federation in the Scott Religious Centre.

The MSF is an organization with a mandate to represent and voice concerns and opinions of Muslim students on campus.

The majority of MSF members are of non-Arab origin. Nevertheless, the organization has been directly and deeply affected by the conflict in the Gulf due to the predominance of Muslims in the region.

Aside from raising funds through donations, the group is also working on bringing out a button with the message "Islam is Peace." They hope to sell these buttons both on and off campus.

"I think the buttons are a great idea," said Mirza Iqbal, a math student at Glendon campus and a member of the MSF. "It will raise some money for the refugees and also help to combat the western stereotypical view of Islam as a violent religion."

Over reading week the female members of the group also organized a fast-a-thon. Each person taking part in the fast-a-thon had enlisted sponsors who were obliged to contribute a specified amount of money once the fast was completed.

Eiman Khalifa, the organizer of the event, said that it was a tremendous success both in terms of participation and sponsorship.

More than a dozen female students participated in the fast from sunrise to sunset on Feb.

18 which brought the group \$500 closer to their target of \$2,000.

According to Anwar, all the money raised by the organization will be channelled to the Middle East through the Gulf War Victims Fund set up by Human Concern International. The Ottawa-based charitable organization has a network of regional offices and contacts throughout the area to ensure the delivery of emergency supplies and services.

The MSF hopes that the awareness their activities bring to the plight of the refugees will encourage other groups and individuals to take an active role in this matter.

Anyone who would like to contribute to the refugee fund is asked to contact Ameena or Maryam at the York Federation of Students (YFS) office or to get in touch with the MSF.

Health services axed

by Patrick Follens

York's Health Services are being disbanded and replaced by a private clinic at York Lanes.

In addition to the clinic at York Lanes, a first-aid station will be opened in Central Square, primarily for public health education and for minor emergencies.

According to Provost Beth Hopkins, the new facility "will offer expanded services that we desperately need," including an eye doctor and dentist.

Hopkins also pointed out that "the existing services existed primarily for referrals," as well as fulfilling the purpose of an emergency ward that, due to space and equipment limitations, were far from adequate; unable to set bones or take x-rays.

Dr. James Wheler, director of Health Services, however, feels these reasons are not at the root of the move, particularly in regards to the privatization.

"I think the only way in which [the privatization] makes sense is in the economical sense," said Wheler. "I have concerns about the quality of care."

In light of the limitations on space and facilities, Wheler said that while the present location was satisfactory at its inception, it was deemed as "interim," and unfortunately became permanent.

"We couldn't believe that they would phase out a health service," said Pat Valle, a nurse at the existing facility in Vanier College.

"The majority of people are absolutely flabbergasted," Valle said.

"There aren't many people that know about it, nor was it made widely known."

"It's quite an old concept to have your own [health] services on campus, especially in an urban centre," Hopkins said. She also noted that attempts had been made on Health Services and successfully blocked "before York Lanes was ever heard of."

According to Hopkins, the necessity of on-campus health services had come into question in the past, particularly in light of the proximity of Finch West Hospital. It was eventually decided that "we would keep Health Services until something was available close by," Hopkins said, "hence the decision to move the service to York Lanes."

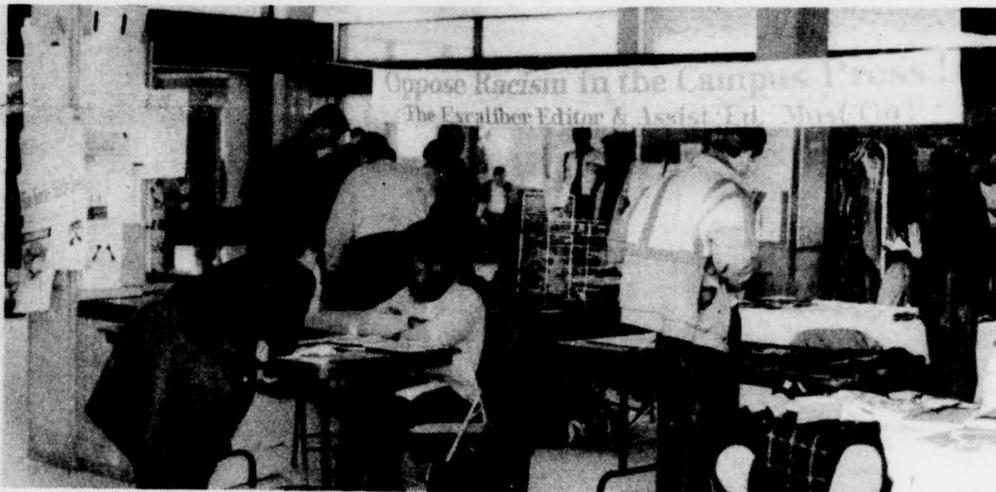
Dr. Wheler, however, feels that in order for the new clinic to support itself, it will have to be operated "like a factory."

"The students are going to get a bit of a short stick," Wheler said. "They'll be getting five minute appointments."

Bill Farr, vp (finance and administration), felt that the move, if anything, would be an improvement, and that the priority of the clinic would remain in the student body's best interest.

"Doctor coverage wouldn't be changing as I understand it," Farr said, adding, "I suspect that Dr. Wheler is naturally disappointed."

While the doctors currently on staff are contracted until May 30, the remainder of the Health Services staff will remain after the move.



York students are being encouraged to sign a petition against the editors of *Excalibur* at a stand set up in the West Bear Pit. The petition, created by several groups on

campus, has gathered over 800 signatures. It asks for the removal of the editors because of an offensive article that appeared in *Excalibur* during Black History month.

A. CLIVE COHEN

Excal readers angered by editors

by Brent Poland

A group of York students are upset at *Excalibur*.

An ad-hoc committee of various student groups including the African Students Association (ASA) and Caribbean Students Association (CSA) have set up a table in Central Square with a petition demanding the resignation of the editor and assistant editor of *Excalibur*.

Members of the York community were angered by a Feb. 4 feature article during Black History month entitled "Black History: The Struggle for Identity." According to members from the different groups, the feature contained "racial stereotyping and broad, unsupported generalizations about the black community."

A letter attached to the petition also cites an editorial cartoon that was pulled off the stands last term because it was deemed to be racially offensive.

The petition states that the apology written for the cartoon did not adequately address the issue or the

victimized party and was nothing more than "flowery words."

The committee also claims that the editor was considering publishing more articles by the same writer and thereby "personally threatened to publish slanderous remarks about other members of the black student community."

"The editors need to realize the black community is an integral part of York. We deserve the respect and dignity that any other students at York receive," said Diamond Tobin-West, ASA president.

The committee is concerned about the two occurrences and is urging the York community to demand the resignation/removal of the two editors.

Cindy Lewis, president of the CSA said, "there was a negligence on the part of the editors in letting these two racially-slanderous pieces get through."

Lewis said that although it was unfortunate a petition had to be made against a paper which had initially supported an anti-racism stance, the committee wanted to raise the awareness of racism and

discrimination that existed within York institutions, particularly this year's *Excalibur*.

"Some racist forces are coming forward to dress themselves in anti-racist clothing in order to liquidate this important movement [anti-racist] while continuing to spread racism," reads the petition.

"The article is not only degrading but a direct insult by dividing the black community into two or three categories," Tobin-West said. "The editors do not realize or understand the degree or level of racism that the article portrayed. This is why the article and the editors are racist."

Other York students seem to support the petition.

"I have not read the article so I cannot say first hand. But if people believe the article is racist then perhaps it warrants the resignation/dismissal of the editors," said third-year arts student Biagio DiClemente.

"It's pretty condescending. There are no facts to support the article," said Brooke Cooper, a student who had signed the petition.

Attention!
Excalibur staff
Excalibur Editorial Election
has been postponed. Details
at staff meeting Wednesday
March 6 at 4 pm. Please attend
if you want to vote.