WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE

By Leen Shumman and Isabella Arroyo,
both aged 17, Youth Fellows at AAFSC

With the current climate of hatred and Islamophobia in the United States, Muslims from New York come together to say We Are Not Invisible! In the media, average Muslims are not visually represented and instead, we are dominated by images of anger and violence. We are viewed as if we are some distant mysterious population without a face.

This project is a face-to-face experience. It is a form of resistance against the anti-Muslim imagery painted by people with power. The public is misinformed by these people who have little understanding of how diverse and complex we are. We are a population that refuses to be ignored especially when we already are dynamic members of our communities. We come from different countries, and are different ethnicities and races. We are beautiful, vulnerable, and strong. Islam is a wonderful religion that possesses a widely diverse and unique community. Muslims look all types of ways beyond your imagination! This project is about taking up space and rejecting Islamophobic bigotry that has become a norm.

Muslim Lives Matter. We are here. We are not invisible.
ANTI-ISLAMOPHOBIA YOUTH CAMPAIGN & WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE

Led by the young women of AAFSC, the Anti-Islamophobia Youth Campaign focuses on the use of media for community outreach and public awareness. It examines the intersectionality of gender, race and religion and works to publicly confront the current Islamophobic and xenophobic backlash on Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian immigrant communities. The campaign will include a traveling photo exhibit, short films, educational brochures and comic books created by the girls.

Leen and Isabella are the photographers and curators of the photo exhibit called “We Are Not Invisible!” This exhibit seeks to bring visibility to the average Muslims of New York City, a population which is largely invisible or misrepresented in the eyes of the mainstream. These photos, close-up shots taken of AAFSC’s diverse community of Muslim-Americans, will be three by five feet large and begin by being displayed on AAFSC’s windows at our high-traffic office location in Cobble Hill, creating a truly “face-to-face” experience. As Leen comes from within the AMEMSA communities, and Isabella brings an outsider’s perspective, we expect their unique shared vision to guide “We Are Not Invisible!”

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Leen Shumman is a Jordanian / Palestinian American with a strong interest in social activism, especially in her community. She has recently found a new way to express her opinions through media, and is working to become a force of change in her environment. She hopes to become a human rights attorney.

Isabella Arroyo was born and raised in Brooklyn. She is a senior at Khalil Gibran International Academy High School, where you’ll find her playing chess, coding, doing yoga, and practicing Arabic. Isabella spends her free time taking courses through College Now and Baruch STEP Academy, volunteering at the 9/11 Memorial Museum and Plaza, and working on science research papers alongside her mentor.
We empower new immigrants with the tools they need to successfully acclimate to the world around them and become active participants in their communities.
DEAR FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

It is thanks to you that, for more than 23 years, we have continued to rise as a leader in serving the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) immigrant populations of New York City—and to the City itself. We truly owe our enduring success to a committed board of directors, our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, friends and family, and the wonderful communities we serve.

Your crucial support is even more significant amidst these troubling times of heightened Islamophobia and xenophobia: the political climate is filled with words of animosity that divide, our children are bullied, and hate crimes are at their highest point since 9/11. At the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC), we choose to respond to this disheartening atmosphere with the work we pride ourselves in—lending a hand to our neighbors in need and ultimately striving to build more peaceful, unified and vibrant communities.

We choose to forge ahead:

Continuing to uphold our commitment to trauma-informed care, AAFSC is working on becoming certified as a Behavioral Center of Excellence by the National Council of Behavioral Health in 2016.

Our Anti-Violence Program expanded to a new borough, as we recently established a partnership with the Staten Island Family Justice Center to provide support and services to the underserved community in Staten Island.

Our increasing focus on women’s and girls’ empowerment now includes AYWA!, our Audacious Young Women of Action initiative, to provide our girls with leadership opportunities and give them a platform to develop and implement an Anti-Islamophobia Youth Campaign.

Our innovative work has not gone unnoticed. This year, AAFSC was recognized for reducing social isolation within AMEMSA communities and helping new immigrants successfully acclimate to New York City. We were invited to speak at the Carter Center in Atlanta and at the International Federation of Settlements’ conference in Berlin. International journalists through the State Department and members of the U.N. Committee on Migration visited the Center to learn more about our settlement house model.

The next chapter for AAFSC will focus on opening a universal pre-k and launching a senior center in Queens. Additionally, we are striving to start-up a culturally and linguistically competent Child Trauma Program in collaboration with local clinical partners. We are proud of the work we have done, and we are excited for what the future holds. We know that we will emerge out of this current challenging climate even stronger than before; the vast fortitude and resilience of our communities both teach and motivate us.

Again, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to all of you for being a part of our committed, passionate and beautifully diverse family. Without your support, we could not provide these critical programs to the Arab and South Asian immigrant communities of New York City. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Lena Alhusseini, Executive Director
Joseph Botros, Board Chair
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year AAFSC was established as the first and largest Arabic-speaking social service agency in New York</th>
<th>Languages spoken by our staff</th>
<th>Number of AAFSC offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff employed by AAFSC; 35 full-time staff along with 11 part-time</th>
<th>Percent of our staff are female; 39% are Arab American and 35% are South Asian</th>
<th>Number of lives impacted by AAFSC each year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>
WHO ARE THE AMEMSA COMMUNITIES?

AAFSC uses the term AMEMSA to describe the communities we serve. AMEMSA stands for Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian. While we recognize these communities are diverse culturally, linguistically and religiously, the term has arisen and gained traction from shared experiences of prejudice and oppression among these peoples.

Who are the AMEMSA communities of New York City?

973%

Increase in Bangladeshi population between 1990 – 2010. Pakistani population increased by 210%, and Indian population increased by 103%.

4TH

Arabic is the 4th most widely spoken language among English Language Learners in New York City.

32%

Of Indians, 45% of Pakistanis, and 58% of Bangladeshis are not proficient in English.

58,000

Number of recent Arab immigrants living in NYC in 2011, with 41% living in Brooklyn.

66%

Of New York City’s South Asian residents live in Queens.

33%

Increase in the Arab immigrant community between 2007 and 2011, making them one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the city.

28%

Of Pakistanis and 29% of Bangladeshis live in poverty in New York City.
AYWA!

AAFSC has begun our new Audacious Young Women of Action (AYWA!) Initiative. AYWA!, which means yes in Arabic, is a cross-programmatic approach to empowering the young women of New York City’s AMEMSA immigrant communities, and strengthening their ability to address and overcome the structural inequity and intersectional forms of oppression they face on a daily basis. Inspired by the work of our Youth Fellows Leen and Isabella, AYWA! will both confront and challenge the current environment of Islamophobia and take on traditional patriarchal expectations.

It will provide the opportunities, spaces, and platforms to strengthen AMEMSA girls’ awareness, knowledge, confidence, self-esteem and skills to progress in New York City and expand their capacity to determine the course of their futures. AYWA! will consist of a Counsel of young women leading the initiative, an Anti-Islamophobia Youth Campaign, the “I Need to Be Heard!” participatory media project, Girls Club at AAFSC, AYWA! sessions at Khalil Gibran International Academy, and individual counseling open-hours.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Due to the increasing demand from clients, in the fall of 2015, AAFSC kicked off the inaugural year of our new financial literacy program, Financial Revitalization through Economic Empowerment (FREE). It provides financial literacy instruction and economic planning services for survivors of domestic violence attempting to rebuild their lives independently, younger women who are seeking preventive measures to identify economic exploitation, and low-income individuals preparing to enter into the labor market and require assistance in navigating the U.S. financial system.

FREE had a highly successful first semester; we witnessed immediate and direct impact upon our students. As a result of our course, 82% of the students have used what they learned in the course in their own lives, 90% of the students will take additional steps towards their goals, and 82% of the participants felt they got closer to their personal goals. We are taking steps to integrate job readiness into the program.
Already established in the Brooklyn and Queens Family Justice Centers, AAFSC’s Anti-Violence Program expanded its imperative services to a new borough. AAFSC is now a member of the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), and will move on-site intervention services to the new Family Justice Center on Staten Island when it opens in summer 2016. The New York City Family Justice Centers are a program of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence.

They provide free, confidential services to all, regardless of sexual orientation, income, or immigration status. Staten Island’s AMEMSA communities are growing rapidly; NYC Office of Immigration Affairs cites that the population of Arab immigrants has doubled in Staten Island since 2000. Moreover, the Asian American Federation has reported that among all the boroughs, Staten Island is home to the largest Sri Lankan population and that Pakistanis and Indians make up the top five largest Asian groups living in Staten Island.

Our clients must cope with the emotional trauma associated with flight, migration, and resettlement in an unfamiliar country, along with the everyday challenges that many low-income individuals across New York City face. Furthermore, in January 2016, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania reported that discrimination functions as a risk factor for significant levels of clinical depression in Muslims, and also found that being called offensive names has the strongest effect in developing depression. The current environment of Islamophobia has exacerbated the everyday threats to our communities’ mental health. In recognition of this, AAFSC has invested heavily in ongoing trauma-informed care training for all staff members.

Two of our staff members received Mental Health First Aid training, and we plan on training more staff in the coming months. To further pursue our commitment to mental health, AAFSC signed up for Relias Learning Training System, giving us access to over 300 online trainings. This year, after completing the Behavioral Health program, AAFSC will be certified as a Behavioral Center of Excellence by the National Council of Behavioral Health.
AAFSC is an active and proud member of the United Neighborhood Houses of New York (UNH), a collective of 38 settlement house organizations that promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. The settlement house movement began in London in 1883, and quickly caught on in the United States. The most well known settlement house in the US, Hull House of Chicago, was established by Jane Adams, a prominent reformer of the Progressive Era. Women’s leadership is a rich tradition of the settlement house movement and it continues to this day, as reflected in AAFSC’s own leadership team.

AAFSC upholds the four core principles of the settlement house model that UNH lays out in their publication Overcoming the Odds: The Settlement House Advantage:

- We are **embedded** in the communities we serve
- Our multi-generational services and programs offer **multiple points of entry** for members of the community
- We value **reciprocity** and recognize the strengths and contributions of all participants
- We **build community** by fostering connections, promoting social justice and furthering civic engagement

These principles generate three definitive outcomes for settlement house participants:

- A **sense of possibility** and hope for the future
- A **sense of efficacy** and the confidence needed to succeed
- A **sense of belonging**, fitting into, and adding value to their community
AAFSC supports members of the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) immigrant communities of New York City as they adjust to their new home. We are a settlement house and member of United Neighborhood Houses and the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, meaning our programs are comprehensive and intergenerational. We provide linguistically and culturally-competent social service programs through a trauma-informed lens, ensuring that our clients have access to the resources they need to build strong and healthy homes and families.
The family is the core of neighborhoods, communities, boroughs and, ultimately, cities. To build a more vibrant, healthier New York City, it is essential to focus on strengthening and improving the well-being of children and families. Our largest program at AAFSC, the Preventive Program, is contracted by New York City’s Administration of Children’s Services to work with 180 AMEMSA families, at any one time, where there have been allegations of child abuse and neglect, and to support them in their struggle to overcome these issues.

The Preventive Program aims to strengthen families through early intervention, referrals, counseling and parenting classes. We offer a strength-based approach that involves families setting goals, defining outcomes, and planning personalized services that lead to improved relationships, more effective problem solving skills and better coping mechanisms. Our linguistically and ethnically diverse staff of social workers empower women, children and families to build happy, healthy homes together.

99.5% Of children in our Preventive Services Program stayed in their homes and out of foster care.

96% Rating received in cultural competence on NYC Children’s Services PAMS Scorecard
AAFSC is a staunch believer that no woman, man, child or family should be subjected to the life-shattering trauma of violence. We work tirelessly to educate youth and adults in hopes of building awareness and stopping violence before it starts. We relentlessly strive to empower victims and survivors, so that they are able to rebuild their lives and embrace futures of hope and safety. AAFSC has become a leader in providing linguistically and culturally competent services to Arab and South Asian survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence, and stalking. We offer crisis intervention, individual counseling, support groups and court accompaniments to survivors. We also conduct community outreach, educational workshops, and professional development trainings. This fall, we will launch a healthy relationships curriculum for teens that is based on Islamic framework and scripture, developed in partnership with Peaceful Families Project. AAFSC has an on-site partnership with the Brooklyn and Queens Family Justice Centers, and will be expanding to the brand-new Staten Island Family Justice Center.

OVER 400

Women and Girls received support from AAFSC’s Anti-Violence Program last year
The ability to communicate in English has a great effect on the capacity of recent immigrants to comfortably adjust to life in their adopted city and country. AAFSC’s Adult Education and Literacy Program offers instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), American civics and citizenship, and Basic English in the Native Language (BENL). Through these classes, both co-ed and women’s only, students build a diverse and rich community as peers. They are encouraged to share their varied experiences and perspectives, gaining valuable learning opportunities from one another. Last year, we registered over 500 adult learners, and our students had a 100% pass rate on the U.S. Citizenship Exam. We continue to have daily, dedicated volunteers, many of whom are from New York Cares. We also thoroughly enjoy visits from our Reading Buddies, pairing 4th graders with adult students in a collaborative reading and cultural exchange. This year, we established a financial literacy program, Financial Revitalization through Economic Empowerment (FREE). Even after the first semester, it has already proven to have a positive impact on the lives of those enrolled, bolstering their economic self-efficacy and enhancing their economic self-sufficiency.
AAFSC started its Legal Services Program in the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Originally created to help Arab-Americans who were the victims of unjust detention post 9/11, the program has evolved into a multi-faceted unit with family-based immigration and naturalization being our primary focus. We prioritize family reunification. Our Legal Program helps recent immigrants navigate the labyrinthine U.S. Justice System, which can be challenging for anyone, but is exacerbated for many of AAFSC’s clients who have limited English literacy and may be uncomfortable approaching mainstream legal resources. In 2015, our focus turned to assisting many members of our community acquire Temporary Protected Status (TPS), when eligible nationals are allowed to continue residing in the United States due to armed conflict or natural disaster in their home country.

Last year, Yemen was designated, and Syria re-designated, as TPS. With the assistance of our part-time lawyer, as well as our Legal Program Coordinator, we are able to guide clients through the naturalization application process, and offer translation and interpretation services.
AAFSC works hard to build strong and healthy communities. We help low-income individuals and families across New York City to enroll in free or low-cost health insurance and find culturally-competent providers. In 2014, AAFSC became one of the few Arabic-speaking Health Navigator sites for the Affordable Care Act in all of New York State. Since then, we have expanded the program and added a second Arabic-speaking Health Navigator. AAFSC is dedicated to advocating for increased services and resources for our underserved and overlooked communities.

AAFSC is an active member of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families’ Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity). This past year, our efforts were recognized on a city-wide level, as we received support from Access Health NYC Initiative, a campaign that targets individuals and families who are uninsured, newly insured, speak English as a second language, with disabilities, LGBTQ, formerly incarcerated or homeless—overall, New Yorkers that experience barriers to health care access and information.

1,004

Individuals signed up for health insurance; 91% were low income.
AAFSC’s Youth Program is truly the heart of the organization. We have provided afterschool services to Arab and immigrant youth for over twenty years. Our Youth Program encourages students, ages 7-18, to excel academically, prepare for college, express themselves creatively, develop positive leadership skills, and participate in the community. The Youth Program offers a climate of inclusion and a safe space, particularly in this distressing climate of Islamophobia, to engage students with extracurricular activities, discuss local issues important to them, and ruminate about their identities and challenges of navigating multiple cultures.

We run a robust Afterschool Program that offers homework help; tutoring, and ESL lessons; 99% of our students successfully transition to the next grade level. To enrich our Youth Program’s many extracurricular activities, we partnered with a number of diverse organizations throughout the city including the Art Therapy Outreach Center, LitWorld, Project Envision, Cents Ability, New York Cares’ Art Explorers, and the New School’s Engage Media Lab. Our participatory media program, “I Need to Be Heard!” has been highly successful; two of our youth’s films were even chosen for the Feet in 2 Worlds Film Festival. For our high-school students, we offer Girls and Boys Clubs where they can discuss meaningful topics such as healthy relationships, peer pressure, and discrimination. We also provide a College Access Program, which assists in interview and SAT prep, essay writing, scholarships, and the overall application process. Last year, ESL students in this program saw a 140 point average increase in their SAT scores. This year has also seen an increase in our students’ involvement with city and state advocacy efforts.
AAFSC is the lead community partner, and one of the pioneering architects, of Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA). KGIA is the first public school in New York City to focus on Arabic language and culture. AAFSC has worked closely with KGIA to empower our interconnected communities, from joint food drives and service projects to providing general wrap-around services, like our Afterschool Program, to students and their families. AAFSC also advocates on behalf of KGIA at the New York City Council level. As one of three public International Baccalaureate High-Schools in Brooklyn, KGIA’s mission is to develop, maintain, and graduate life-long learners who have a deep understanding of different cultural perspectives, a love of learning and a desire for excellence with integrity. With a diverse student body that has tripled since its establishment in 2011, KGIA is growing as a high-caliber educational institution. In 2016, KGIA will graduate its first class of students; we look forward to seeing how they rise as a future generation of global leaders.

**KHALIL GIBRAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**

**KGIA ENROLLMENT**

(No. of students)

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<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>234</td>
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JOSEPH BOTROS, BOARD CHAIR
CHRISTINE MOORE VASSALLO, SECRETARY
ASSAD JEBARA, TREASURER
RITA GAIL JOHNSON
TONY KUTAYLI
DAVID POLLAK
ERIC WARD

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LENA ALHUSSEINI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AMBREEN QURESHI, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HIZAM WAHIB, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS / LEGAL SERVICES COORDINATOR
J.C. SALYER, STAFF ATTORNEY
YOLANDA TART, PROGRAM DIRECTOR PREVENTIVE SERVICES, BROOKLYN
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DANNY SALIM, ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM MANAGER
NIDAL ALLOUBANE, ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM MANAGER
MAHA ATTIEH, HEALTH PROGRAM MANAGER
COLIN DEMATTEIS, YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR, BROOKLYN
ZAIN KHAN, YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR, QUEENS

AAFSC WISHES TO THANK PREVIOUS MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THEIR GUIDANCE AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE AGENCY
MOHAMMAD AAMA • SUSAN BYNUM • MARY JEBARA
## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets

#### Revenues, Gains, and Other Support

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>FY2014</th>
<th>FY2013</th>
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<td>Government Grants</td>
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<td>Foundation Grants and Support</td>
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<td>Contributions - Corporate and Individual</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Program fees and Other Revenues</td>
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<td>Special Event Revenues</td>
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<td>71,766</td>
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<td><strong>Total Unrestricted Support</strong></td>
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<td>2,820,158</td>
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#### Functional Expenses

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<th>FY2013</th>
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<td>Sponsored Programs</td>
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<td>2,250,705</td>
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<td>Other Supported Programs</td>
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<td>190,985</td>
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<td><strong>Total Program Services</strong></td>
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<td>2,441,690</td>
<td>1,848,380</td>
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<td>Supporting Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and Administrative</td>
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<td>88,389</td>
<td>74,264</td>
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<td>Fund Raising</td>
<td>127,835</td>
<td>76,356</td>
<td>20,323</td>
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<td><strong>Total Supporting Services</strong></td>
<td>214,623</td>
<td>164,725</td>
<td>94,587</td>
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**Total Functional Expenses**

2,890,260

2,606,415

1,942,967

**Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets**

107,115

213,743

30,539

### Changes in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets

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<td>Increase in Net Assets</td>
<td>107,115</td>
<td>213,743</td>
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</table>

**Net Assets at Beginning of Year**

488,987

275,244

244,705

**Net Assets at End of Year**

596,102

488,987

275,244
## BALANCE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>FY2014</th>
<th>FY2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and accounts receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses and deposits</td>
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<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture and Fixtures</td>
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<td>(42,122)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
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<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>596,102</td>
<td>488,987</td>
<td>275,244</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$725,422</td>
<td>717,873</td>
<td>466,671</td>
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### MAJOR PARTNERS, COLLABORATORS, AND COALITIONS

#### Partners and Collaborators
- Art Therapy Outreach Center
- Cents Ability
- Global Mental Health Lab, Teachers College
- Human Services Council
- Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy, Trauma Studies Center
- LitWorld
- National Council for Behavioral Health
- Peaceful Families Project
- Project ENVISION
- Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team
- Tahirih Justice Center, Forced Marriage Initiative
- The New School – Engage Media Lab

#### Coalitions
- Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
- Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity, Project CHARGE
- Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
- International Federation of Settlement Houses
- National Network of Arab American Communities
- National Alliance for Families and Children
- New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault
- New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy
- New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition
- New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- United Neighborhood Houses

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About AAFSC

The Arab-American Family Support Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-sectarian organization that provides culturally and linguistically sensitive services to immigrant communities throughout New York City.

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