alif institute

2016 Annual Report

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear Alif Institute Members and Supporters,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported Alif Institute in 2016. Because of your help, Alif Institute continued to thrive and grow in all aspects.

As always, Alif continued to offer and improve our ongoing scheduled activities, including: the annualAtlanta Arab Festival, the Arabic Language Program, Enrichment Classes, monthly movie screenings and discussions, and monthly feature events. In addition, this year Alif Institute achieved a higher profile, sponsoring three major events at important Atlanta landmarks: Palestinian Comedy Night at the Woodruff Arts Center, A Thousand and One Journeys at the Atlanta History Center, and award-winning Palestinian author, Ibtisam Barakat, at the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Alif Institute stands tall against negative stereotypes of Arabs and Arab Americans by presenting a strong, positive message of love, art and culture. We strive to promote the true values of Arab cultures through educating about the magnificent things that the rich Arab culture embodies. As we celebrate our diversity, we remain united in our goal to Keep Arab Culture Alive.

When you go through this annual report, you will learn what a great job Alif Institute does managing finances and making the most out of your donations, despite not employing one single full-time staff member. All this is made possible with the incredible help of our volunteers.

There is an Arabic proverb that says "One hand alone cannot clap." At Alif, we put both our hands together to Shine the Light of Arab Cultures and raise a new generation of proud Arab Americans who are taking their rightful place alongside their fellow young Americans, creating a brighter future for everyone. The dream is big and a lot of work is still needed. We hope you will share your light with us.

Sincerely yours,
Rami Arfoosh, MD
Chair of the Board
Alif Institute

In 2016, Alif Institute and our supporters KEPT ARAB CULTURE ALIVE by providing engaging, entertaining, and educational programs. These programs pass down the best aspects of Arab cultures to the next generation, reduce negative stereotypes, and elevate the profile of Arab Americans.
We could not accomplish this important work without:

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OUR MISSION

Foster the understanding and appreciation of Arab cultures.

OUR VISION

A world united by the power of culture, art and education.

Culture

Alif Institute brought Arab-American culture to new and more high-profile places! In addition to our normal venues, we branched out to the Center for Civil and Human Rights, the Woodruff Arts Center, and the Atlanta History Center. Showcasing Arab cultures in these famous Atlanta landmarks helps us reach even wider audiences and amplify our ability to convey the beauty of Arab cultures.

HIGH PROFILE EVENTS

Comedy Night "Being Palestinian Makes Me Smile" at the *Woodruff Arts Center*

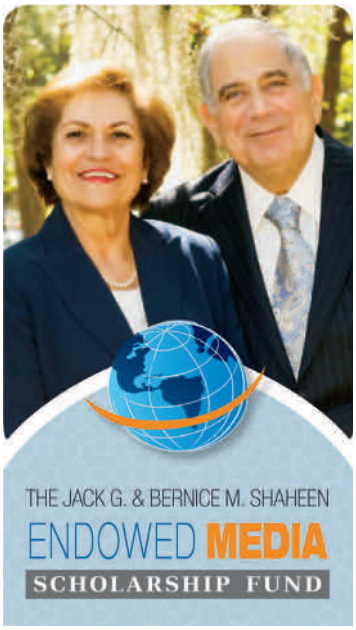
A Thousand and One Journeys Screening at the *Atlanta History Center*

In 2016, Alif engaged new audiences, raising the profile of Arab cultures with three major events at notable Atlanta venues. In August, Alif featured Amer Zahr, Said Durrah, Mona Aburmishan and Mike Easmeil at the Woodruff Arts Center for a night of Palestinian comedy, followed by director/producer, Abe Kasbo, at the Atlanta History Center for the Atlanta premiere of his documentary about Arab Americans. In November, we hosted award-winning poet, Ibtisam Barakat, for an event at the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Award-winning Palestinian author Ibtisam Barakat at the *Center for Civil and Human Rights*

SHINING THE LIGHT OF ARAB CULTURES

A beautiful illustration of Alif's impact is Salim Essaid's presentation of his short documentaries for our April 2016 Documentary & Discussion. Mr. Essaid, an Alif Arabic student, was working at CNN International when we asked him to present some of his work at our monthly Documentary & Discussion night.



Jack G. & Bernice M. Shaheen Endowled Media Scholarship Fund

The event attracted a good number of attendants who became deeply engaged in discussion with Mr. Essaid, especially about the image of Arab Americans in the national and global media. The audience agreed that it was crucial for young Arab Americans like him to go into journalism so that they could add their perspective and correct the many misconceptions about Arabs and Arab Americans.

During the discussion, an audience member mentioned Dr. Jack Shaheen, a professor, author and media analyst, whose life has been devoted to studying the depictions of Arabs in American media. Dr. Shaheen has been a very enthusiastic supporter of Alif Institute, having exhibited his work at Alif and gave the keynote speech at our 2015 Annual Gala. Mr. Essaid casually commented that he happened to be a recipient of the scholarship that Dr. Shaheen established for Arab Americans to study journalism!

It was such a beautiful moment when we realized that Dr. Shaheen's foundation is helping Arab Americans take their place as an integral part of professional journalism, that they are effective at telling the story of Arab Americans and the Arab world, and that we are amplifying this message.

Salim Essaid is one of many success stories. We are laying the foundation for the next generation of Arab-American leaders to take their rightful place as part of our diverse American society. We are reaching out to Americans from all traditions and cultures. National and global events have created a highly-polarized environment where education about different cultures is more urgently needed than ever. Times of change and uncertainty present many opportunities. Now is the time to raise our profile, use our voices, and preserve our heritage.

Salim Essaid Presenting his Documentary at *Alif Institute*

Culture

ANNUAL ATLANTA ARAB FESTIVAL

The 11th Annual Atlanta Arab Festival (AAF) hosted over 5,000 attendees from around the metro area and the region. For the first time, Discover Dekalb (Dekalb County Visitor's Bureau) featured the AAF on 40 digital billboards around the metro area. Our generous sponsors and volunteers gave us the support to continue improving our activities, entertainment and festival amenities. The festival features the best of Arab cultures through performances, food, vendors, and, of course, dabkeh! Each year gets better and this year was no exception!

The 2016 Atlanta Arab Festival at *Alif Institute*

CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Alif Institute routinely receives invitations to represent Arab cultures at international cultural festivals around Atlanta, including Fernbank Museum and the Atlanta Dogwood Festival. Going out into the community is a highly valuable outreach activity. As our 2016 - 2017 Fellow, Sheen Atwa, observed, "It really was incredible how many people were engaging with me to learn more about Arabic and how many English and Spanish words find their roots in Arabic... They were surprised when I started writing their names, because Arabic is written from right-to- left."

Writing names in Arabic at the *Dogwood Festival*

Traditional Folk Dance Performance at the *Atlanta Arab Festival 2016*

World Music Day at the *Fernbank Museum*

KNIT & STITCH CLUB

Pouch dolls sewn by the Alif Knit & Stitch Club at *Alif Institute*

"When I joined the Knit & Stitch Club, I found a group of ladies who were very funny, kind, and welcoming. My friend, who was born and raised in the South and has no Arab background, joined Knit & Stitch also. Although she does not speak the language, she understands the language of these lovely ladies. It reminds me of a quilting bee. We eat, laugh and we talk and discuss "everything" under the sun. We make beautiful things from dolls, to sweaters, to bags, to the most esoteric things from whatever materials we have available. We make them for ourselves, to sell to help support Alif, and to donate to charities. Knit and Stitch is very special to us." - Liz Talamas

MONTHLY FEATURE EVENTS

Each month, Alif Institute features aspects of Arab cultures or specific Arab countries as a way to show the diversity and richness of the Arab world. As usual, this year we explored some cultural customs of religious holidays with our annual Ramadan Iftar and A Taste of Christmas in the Arab World events.

During Family Game Night, different generations bonded while playing barjees, backgammon, cards, and other fun games. Another event celebrated Tarab (Arabic music) with live performances from local musicians and performers.

Poetry Night attracted poetry buffs and reignited their passion for Arabic poems. And, this year we featured the culture of Tunisia in an evening filled with the sights, sounds, and tastes of this beautiful Arab nation.

A Taste of Christmas in the Arab World

Ramadan Iftar

Education

The Arabic Language Program at Alif Institute continues to grow and improve upon its well-established foundation. The addition of a part-time outreach staff person will help us take this important program to the next level and reach even more students.

ARABIC LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Alif's language program is powered by high-level instructors and a tailor-made curriculum. Courses and individual tutoring are offered for all ages at several levels of proficiency. The curriculum focuses on language skills and the integration of language and culture. Alif also offers cultural activities such as complimentary lessons in traditional Arabic arts. The language program is even stronger as it works alongside the Alif Parent Group, which has dedicated its time to make Alif a fun destination for all of their children. These parents organize and host special events, as well as publish their own quarterly newsletter.

Ms. Carla's Classroom (5yo)
at *Alif Institute*

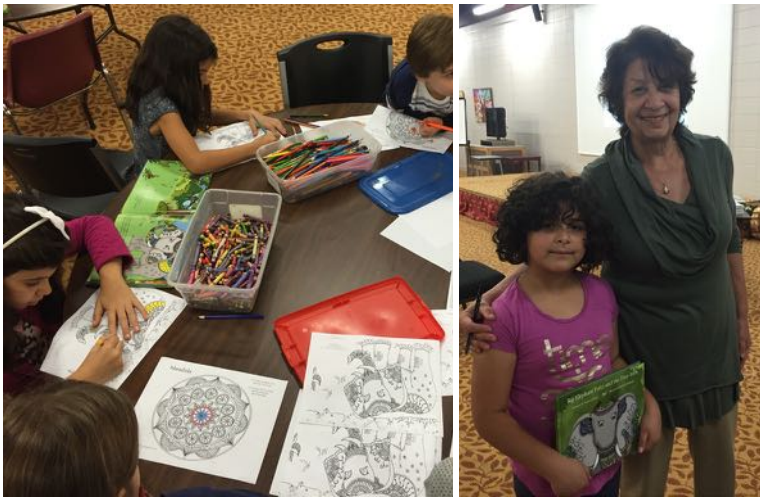
SCHOOL VISITS & TRAVELING EXHIBITS

Traveling Exhibit *Windows to the Arab World*
at *Alif Institute*

Alif Institute is always honored to accept requests from schools, government and civic organizations to present information about Arab cultures. Our traveling exhibit *Windows to the Arab World* includes an interactive presentation and activities that are fun for everyone. Alif Fellow, Sheen Atwa, brought one of the towers from the exhibit to Georgia State University Perimeter College during International Education Week. He educated students about many interesting facets of Arabic culture and language, such as English words borrowed from Arabic, and different Arabic dialects.

" Amazing place! An asset to the community and a place filled with love, passion and positivity."
- Ramy Daoud

BOOKS & AUTHORS



Nayera Salam Presenting to the Children of Alif at *Alif Institute*

Alif Institute loves to welcome writers! Local children's author, Nayera Salam presented twice at Alif Institute this year. A favorite with the kids, her events are always interactive, fun, and teach good lessons for young minds. For the second summer, we hosted Dr. Mohana Raja-Kumar, who presented a workshop for aspiring writers. And, for the first time, we co-sponsored an event at the Center for Civil and Human Rights as we welcomed award-winning Palestinian author, Ibtisam Barakat, to present her new book, Balcony on the Moon.

ALIF SUMMER CAMP

For the second year, Alif Institute offered a two-week, Arabic summer camp. Staff and Arabic student counselors, Elise Harwell and Alya Khoury, led campers in fun crafts and activities. Campers were also treated to guest speakers, Dr. Laura Badwan, artist Teresa Abboud, and author Nayera Salam. Field trips to our friends at Tiny Towne and Fernbank Museum rounded out the experience. Alif Summer Camp is a great way for students to have fun while keeping their Arabic skills fresh and deepening their connection to Arab cultures. Oh, and did we mention it was FUN?

Alif Summer Camp 2016 at *Alif Institute*

Community

Outreach to the community is at the heart of Alif's mission to educate about Arab cultures. Whether inviting the community to Alif for the Atlanta Arab Festival or regular programs, representing Arab cultures at the Dogwood and other festivals, or presenting our traveling exhibit to schools and organizations, participating annually in the National Arab American Service Day, we are so happy to make new friends and visit old ones.

ALIF GALA & AAHA AWARDS

Each year, members, friends and supporters of Alif Institute gather to raise funds in support of our mission. Elegant and entertaining, the Annual Gala is also an inspirational evening celebrating the year's accomplishments, raising the profile of the Arab-American community, and honoring those whose good work reminds each of us to excel in our own lives and give back to the community.

Alif Institute's 7th Annual Gala

The Annual Gala, our most important fundraising event of the year, continues to build momentum. With the hard work of the Gala Committee, Alif Board Member and volunteer auctioneer, Mr. Hassan Elkhalil, the generosity of participants, and the trust and support of our sponsors, we surpassed the previous goal of $85,000!

Alif's Arab American High Achiever (AAHA) Awards thank our honorees for their important achievements and contributions. In 2016, AAHA Awards were presented to Dr. H. Jean Khoury, Mayor Edward "Ted" Terry, and U-Beyond. A new category of awards was introduced this year to honor those who have faithfully helped Alif Institute further our mission. We gratefully recognized the significant contributions of Mr. Haitham Haddad and Mr. Arafat Imam in elevating the profile of Arab Americans in metro Atlanta.

Renowned scholar and author, Dr. George Saliba, delivered the keynote address, reflecting on the gifts Islamic science and Arab culture produced, advancing society in significant ways.

ALIF IN THE COMMUNITY

Alif Institute takes great pride in being a part of the metro-Atlanta community. In addition to connecting people with resources about Arabs and Arab-American culture, our members also participate in service projects throughout the year. This year, we gathered donations of food, toys, and other necessities for International Rescue Committee. As part of National Arab American Service Day (May 17, 2016), we participated in beautifying the Chamblee Park and our Knit & Stitch Club created beautiful baby sweaters for Partnership Against Domestic Violence (PADV).

Knit & Stitch Ladies Donating Baby Sweaters to the *PADV*

STRENGTHENING THE BOND BETWEEN ATLANTA'S ARAB-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

Alif team supports Palestine Children's Relief Fund at the *PCRF Trivia Night*

Alif has become the nexus for all things Arab-American in Georgia. We host quarterly meetings attended by the numerous, active local Arab-American organizations in an effort to facilitate communication, increase cooperation, and generally support Arab-American causes. The Alif community also attends many events organized by other Arab-American nonprofits. We enjoy watching other organizations succeed and contribute to the diversity and richness of the Arab-American community.

Alifians

Alifians are our students, board, staff, and volunteers. Alif served more students and participants than ever before through sustained growth of our Arabic Language Program and other educational/ cultural programs. Existing Alif staff increased their hours, enabling us to expand our hours of operation. We also added a new staff member to build capacity for the Arabic Language Program and we received a Fellow to expand outreach for our traveling exhibit.

VOLUNTEERS, INTERNS & STAFF

Our Alif family is GROWING! This year we welcomed a new staff member, a new Fellow, and expanded hours for some current staff.

Alif Teachers

Alif Staff

New Position: Jake Aaron

"I am very excited to be on Alif's staff to help expand its Arabic language program! I studied Arabic at Columbia University, having spent a semester in Jordan as well as time in Lebanon and Egypt. I began volunteering at Alif after moving down to Atlanta in 2013, and am now on board to reach out to other community organizations—schools, other cultural non-profits, private companies— as well as diversify our course offerings for young adult and adult students. If I'm not here chatting in Arabic, I'm making music around Atlanta."

National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC) Fellow: Sheen Atwa

"I was honored to be selected for this prestigious fellowship, but more so elated to have the chance to contribute to the Alif Institute. It is truly inspiring to work around so many dedicated and accomplished people in order to promote Arab cultures. In the short time I have been with Alif, I have gained a renewed pride in who I am as an Arab American and an understanding of the importance of the work we do here. Alif will always be home."

TRAININGS FOR STAFF & INSTRUCTORS

Alif Teachers Attend Teaching Workshop
Led by *Dr. Mahmoud Albatal*

Alif understands that staff and teacher training is a crucial investment which directly impacts the quality of our programs.
In March, Arabic Instructors attended the Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG) Conference and Teaching and Learning Second Languages as a Process of Discovery at Emory University.
In August, Alif hosted Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal for a full-day training for Arabic language teachers.
In November, two Alif staff members attended a two-day NNAAC training in Orlando, taking advantage of valuable networking opportunities and connecting wide range Arab-American nonprofits from around the United States.

EXPANDING, PLANNING & STRATEGIZING

This year, Alif focused on advancing three major projects.

Our first Advisory Council, started in February 2016, is comprised of past Board members and engaged supporters. The board meets regularly and is a valued source of ideas and active support. This passionate group brings the kind of wisdom, experience, and skills that will nurture and inspire our development in the years to come.

Thanks to NNAAC grants, Alif hired skilled consultants to develop a Marketing Plan and initiate a Strategic Plan.

Kids Enjoying the New Playground
at *Alif Institute*

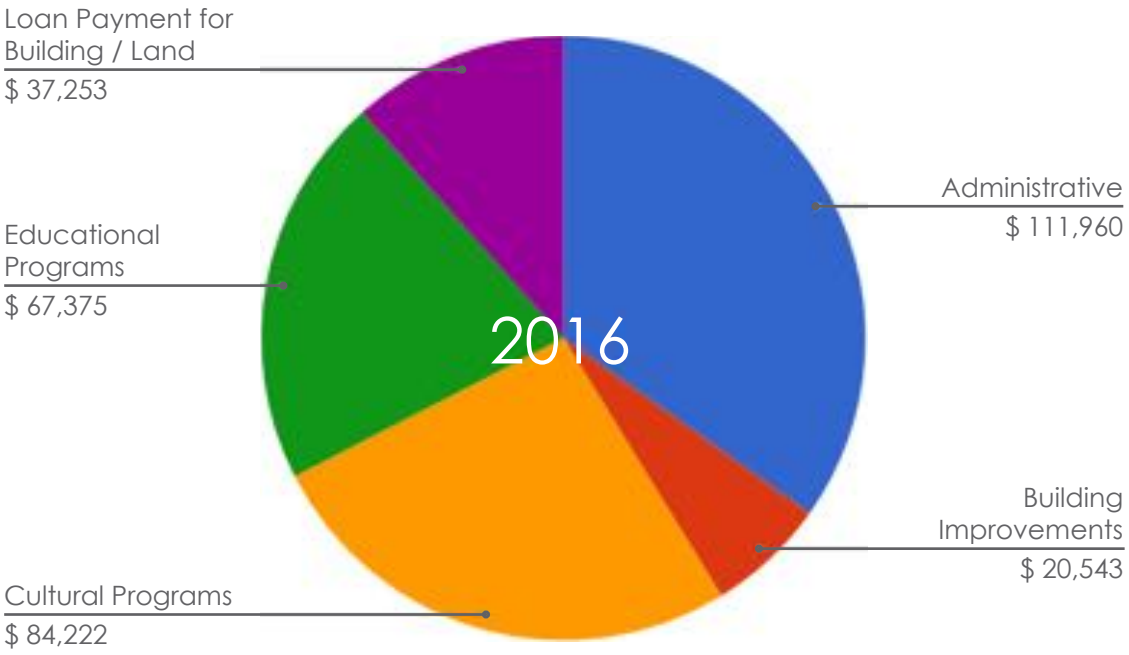
Using funds raised last year, we continued our ongoing building renovations by painting and repairing the exterior walls and adding new classrooms, a conference room, and a brand-new playground.

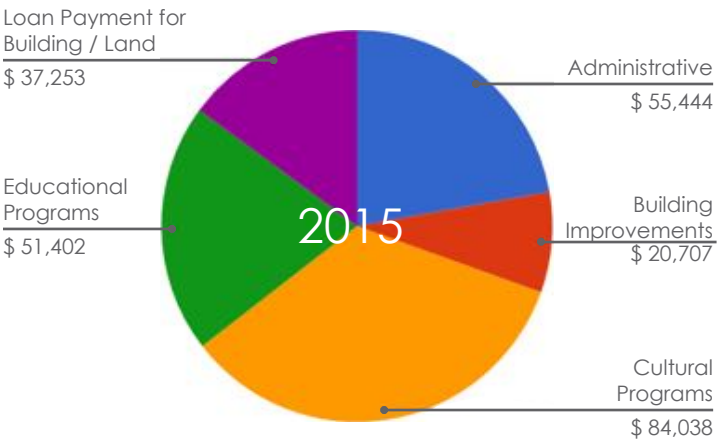
Finance

This year, Alif fundraising and revenue-generating efforts surpassed expectations. In particular, our Annual Gala and Atlanta Arab Festival reached new levels of effectiveness and our Arabic Language Program continues to maintain momentum. With increased staff hours, we continue to professionalize our financial processes, translating into maximum impact.

Building & Land (as Appraised by Dekalb County)	$1,325,000.00
Note Payable Long Term (as of December 31, 2016)	$298,000.00

EXPENSES





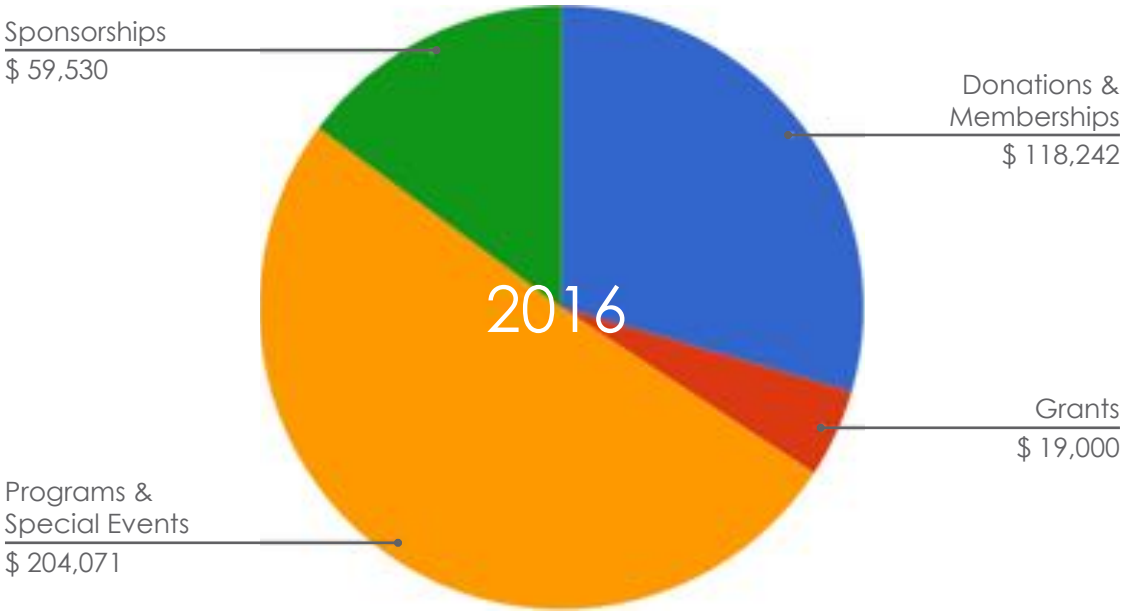
	2016	2015
Administrative	$111,960	$55,444
Building Improvements	$20,543	$20,707
Cultural Programs	$84,222	$85,038
Educational Programs	$67,375	$51,502
Loan Payment for Building / Land	$37,253	$37,253
Grand Total	**$321,352**	**$249,845**

MAJOR ALIF PROGRAMS

	Arabic Language Program	Atlanta Arab Festival	Annual Gala
Program Expenses	-$12,575.58	-$28,693.01	-$26,284.39
Teacher Salaries	-$40,179.73	-	-
Revenue	$123,274.78	$64,491.23	$110,350.00
Grand Total	**$70,519.47**	**$35,798.22**	**$84,065.61**

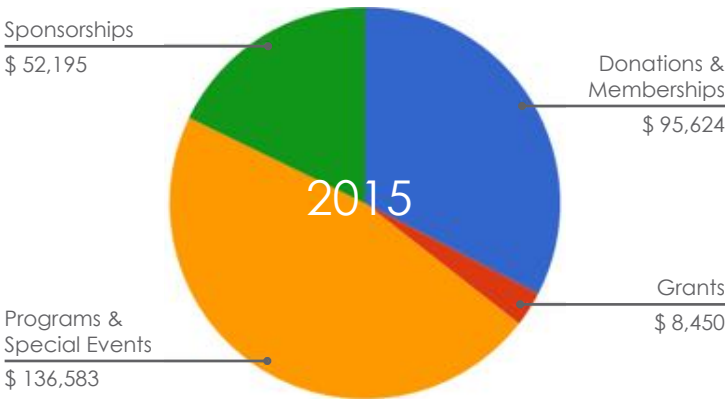
*These numbers do not include the salaries of Alif staff or any overhead expenses. They represent the revenues and expenses directly related to each program.

REVENUE



	2016	2015
Donations & Memberships	$118,242	$95,624
Grants	$19,000	$8,450
Programs & Special Events	$204,071	$136,583
Sponsorships	$59,530	$52,195
Grand Total	**$ 400,843**	**$ 292,852**

*Alif Institute is allocating the additional income for building improvements and land development in 2017 and later.



Supporters

Our donors and volunteers are simply the best. Each time we present an opportunity to donate time and resources, they deliver with pleasure. Our supporters constantly inspire us to make the best use of our resources and deliver the best possible programs.

OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO OUR
2016 DONORS

$ 10,000 +
Drs. Ahmad Khaldi & Laura Badwan
Araim Foundation (HANA Foundation), Mrs. Nawal Araim, Mr. Aous Araim
Mr. Lou Sobh

$ 5,000 - $ 9,900
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
Drs. Rami and Rasha Arfoosh
Center for Arab American Philanthropy (CAAP)
Dekalb Convention & Visitor's Bureau
Mr. & Mrs. Wassim Hojeij
Mr. Shouky Shaheen
Corporate Plaza, Mr. Bassem Toukan, Mr. Zaid Toukan

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Mr. Nayef Abuaisheh
Mr. & Mrs. Anwar Sharif
U-Beyond Mentorship
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$ 250 - $ 499
Aladdin's Restaurant, Mr. Imad Nassereddine
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Rev. Fahed Abuakel & Dr. Mary Zumot
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Mr. Ali Abu Hazim
Ms. Carolyn Alexander
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Ms. Mona Hassan
Mr. Joe Carbone and Ms. Tria Krutzer
Mr. Joe Hudson, CPA
ICNA Relief USA Programs
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Victoria Wilf
Ms. Georgette Yousif
Mr. & Mrs. Abdul Hamid & Suha Zureick

DONATIONS IN MEMORY
OF LOVED ONES

In memory of Mr. Aziz Issa
Mr. & Mrs. Hisham & Nawal Araim

In memory of Mrs. Lina El-Kharrat
Mr. Jama l El-Hibri
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Hanna & Angela Khoury
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna

In memory of Dr. Mubadda Suidan
Rev. Fahed Abuakel & Dr. Mary Zumot
Araim Foundation (HANA Foundation)
Dr. & Mrs. Nadim & Mona Haddad
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Hanna & Angela Khoury
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna
Drs. Yssa & Jinan Sadddine
Ms. Tala M. Suidan

In memory of Dr. Saleh Zaki
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna

In memory of Mrs. Miryam Hadeed
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Hanna & Angela Khoury
Mr. Dimitri Shreckengost

In memory of Mrs. Mounawar Dannawi Hajjeh
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Hanna & Angela Khoury

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. William & Shirley Shreckengost
Mr. Dimitri Shreckengost

DONATIONS IN HONOR
OF LOVED ONES

In honor of Mrs. Ghada Muhanna's Birthday
Dr. & Mrs. Abdallah & Gerri Najjar

In honor of the Najjars' Anniversary
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna

In honor of Gerri Najjar's Birthday
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna

In honor of Jean Leon's Birthday:
Mr. & Mrs. Issa & Helen Ackall
Mr. & Mrs. Antoine & Frances Ayoub
Mr. Firas Baraki
Dr. & Mrs. Tawfig & Anne Chihade
Drs. Yazan & Rima Houssami
Dr. & Mrs. Hanna & Angela Khoury
Mr. & Mrs. Alex & Beverly Komery
Mr. Jean Leon
Dr. & Mrs. Shajih & Ghada Muhanna

"These folks do a wide variety of things to bring Arab culture to life in ways that you'll never see on the evening news. Cultural opportunities abound: language classes, screenings of documentaries and foreign films, speaker and exhibits for art exhibits, spoken word, food & festivals… You'd be surprised what you're missing."
- Mickey Desai

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TRIBUTE TO DR. MUBADDA SUIDAN, 1934 - 2016

Dr. Suidan was born in Haifa, Palestine. He was raised there until 1948 when the family moved to Beirut, Lebanon. He studied Civil Engineering at the American University of Beirut, and later earned his PhD from the University of Illinois. In 1982, he and his wife Aida moved to Atlanta, Georgia with their three children.

Dr. Suidan was one of the founders of the Arab-American Fund of Georgia (AAFG), the parent organization of Alif Institute. He was a strong believer in the power of education. For many years, and as a nonprofit educational organization, AAFG provided financial and material support to schools and institutions for the purpose of educating about the culture and history of the people of the Arab world.

Dr. Suidan was a great supporter of the concept of establishing the Alif Institute, an educational center with a focus on the Arab culture. He was honored by Alif Institute in 2008 for his dedicated services.

Before his passing, he was serving on the advisory council of Alif Institute.

We will forever be grateful to his dedication and outstanding support of Alif Institute's educational mission.

"I had the pleasure of attending the Atlanta Arab Festival at the Alif Institute. I was really in awe of the display of various Arab sub-cultures. The mini museum showcased typical items in Arab households, some Muslim inventions, the history of Arab Americans, and a wall showing a plethora of Muslim-majority countries and their heritage. I enjoyed learning about and viewing the amazing Islamic architecture and calligraphy. I was enlightened when I learned that Arab Americans played a vital role in shaping American history very early on. Unfortunately, this is not something we learn in school. The people I met were some of the most intelligent, polite, and well-mannered individuals. They are really passionate about showing their history and culture in a positive light. I was impressed at the strength of this community and all the philanthropic work the various organizations do. Humanitarianism is a big part of Islam and they represent it so beautifully."

- NR

Alif Institute
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770.936.8770 | www.alifinstitute.org | info@alifinstitute.org

"I believe there is nothing quite like Alif anywhere else in the country, as it provides educational activities such as teaching the Arabic language for children and adults, social gatherings and an annual festival, cooking and dancing classes, dinner & movie nights, and much, much more"
- Susan Anderson