

Australian International Islamic College

White Ribbon Breakfast

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuhu

On Wednesday 22 November the Queensland Government hosted the 2017 White Ribbon Day Breakfast at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Two year 11 students from our school were selected to take part in the ceremony. For those who are not aware, White Ribbon Day is an Australian campaign to prevent violence against women. White Ribbon Day became a national event in 1991 and was initiated by a male-led movement with an aim to raise awareness annually.

The purpose of the ceremony was to bring Queenslanders together to focus on domestic and family violence. The ceremony itself was very enjoyable and educational as it discussed a crucial and prevailing issue. For centuries domestic and family violence was thought to be a personal or family related issue that people didn't speak much about. However, thanks to events like White Ribbon Day, the situation is changing for the better.

The ceremony was conducted by the Well-known news presenter Kay McGrath. The breakfast featured a special choral performance of You're the Voice by Brisbane State High School, a speech by the governor of White Ribbon as well as a panel discussion led by Kay McGrath on the importance of educating youth to lead change and act with responsibility, respect and maturity.

We the participants found that by taking part in this event we have gained a broader and better understanding of domestic and family violence and the increasing number of lives it is affecting. We believe that DV is prevalent in every community including our local Muslim community. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that this existing problem is addressed and awareness is raised everywhere. The first step to end it is to raise awareness and understand that domestic or family violence is not a personal problem but a social problem that affects the whole community as well as the nation. So much money is being invested every year to prevent DV in Australia.

Too many Australian women live with fear and violence. Staggering statistics show that one woman is killed every week by a former or current partner. The impact of this violence on women can be physical, sexual, psychological and emotional. From the program we also learnt that through togetherness and eagerness to stand up against this problem there can be a bigger chance for a brighter future with no violence whatsoever.

We thank the school for giving us the opportunity to expand our knowledge on the subject and to explore the effects of DV on the lives of everyday Australians. We hope that in the near future more students will be involved and be able to participate. We need to start having conversations about this issue within our community. We need discussions within our homes and within our schools and classrooms, because the more we talk about it the more awareness it brings which will drive the change to end domestic and family violence.

Remember, it could be your mother, wife, sister, daughter, friend, aunty or colleague who could be affected. Stopping this violence is everyone's responsibility. Let us Stand up and speak out.

Waálaikum Salaam Warahmatullahi Wabrakatuhu.

Umucaltum Hassan and Fatema Noor yr11