



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** John Showalter  
415.692.1512 (o); 415.336.1868 (c)

## **First American Muslim Charities Accredited through Groundbreaking National Program**

*Muslim Advocates Charities Accreditation Program Provides Donors and Public a Valuable Tool in Time for Ramadan Giving Season*

(SAN FRANCISCO) **August 25, 2009**—With growing demand for assurance about the integrity of American Muslim charities, [Muslim Advocates](#) — a national legal educational and advocacy organization — unveiled the first three American Muslim charities to receive accreditation through a recently-launched program. Islamic Networks Group (ING), UMMA Community Clinic, and Inner-City Muslim Action Network are the first three non-profit organizations to successfully complete the **Muslim Charities Accreditation Program (MCAP)**, just in time for Ramadan, a holy month when Muslims focus on charitable giving.

Launched in August 2008, Muslim Advocates' charities accreditation program is the first and only program to provide Muslim charities with legal guidance and one-on-one technical assistance to promote best practices in charity management and compliance with federal laws. Charities have completed a rigorous review by lawyers at Muslim Advocates and received accreditation by the [Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance](#).

“This Ramadan, American Muslim donors can make informed choices in their charity decisions thanks to the Muslim Charities Accreditation Program,” said Farhana Khera, Executive Director of Muslim Advocates, administrators of the program, “These American Muslim charities have met some of the highest standards of excellence in the nonprofit sector, including governance, financial recordkeeping and transparency.”

Since 9-11, prospective donors to American Muslim charities have struggled with a confusing mix of federal laws and regulations governing charitable giving. Moreover, federal scrutiny of American Muslim charities since 9-11, has had a chilling effect on donors' willingness to give. President Obama recently pledged to ease hurdles to charitable giving for American Muslims. At a time of such uncertainty for the American Muslim community, the Muslim Advocates charities program provides donors and the public confidence that their donations are well-managed and effectively used in support of humanitarian needs.

-more-

The first three organizations to earn accreditation through the Muslim Charities Accreditation Program this Ramadan reflect the scope and diversity of American Muslim charitable work in communities across America:

- **Islamic Networks Group (ING)**: Founded in 1993, San Francisco-based Islamic Networks Group (ING) promotes cross-religious and cultural understanding, respect and harmony through increasing religious and cultural literacy and facilitating inter-religious and cultural engagement and dialogue. With an emphasis on speaking at schools, ING engages students to learn a variety of Islamic-related subjects. ING delivers thousands of presentations and panels a year, building bridges among people of all faiths.
- **UMMA Community Clinic (UMMA)**: Opened in 1996, the UMMA Community Clinic is the first independent, free clinic in America started by Muslim physicians. UMMA serves the underserved community in South Los Angeles, providing free/low-cost primary care medical services such as immunizations, physical examinations, gynecology and HIV/AIDS testing. Beyond medical care, the clinic sponsors health fairs, food and clothing distributions, and public health seminars.
- **Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)**: Formed in 1995 by Muslim students, community residents and leaders on Chicago's South Side responding to the pervasive symptoms of inner-city poverty and abandonment, the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is driven by the spiritual ideals of community service, social justice and human compassion. Among its activities, IMAN operates a no-cost community health clinic for a diverse community, organizes community members around such issues as comprehensive immigration reform, criminal justice, and education, and brings thousands of people together in Downtown Chicago to celebrate the arts each year in its annual "Takin' It to the Streets" festival.

"As an independent evaluator of charities, the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance believes that the organizations it has reviewed for the Muslim Charities Accreditation Program operate with a level of transparency and accountability that should give donors confidence in this time of giving," said H. Art Taylor, President & CEO, BBB Wise Giving Alliance. "The Alliance's Twenty Standards of Charity Accountability evaluate each applicant on the basis of how they govern their organization, the ways they spend their money, and their willingness to disclose basic information to the public. Each of these charities has met all 20 standards, which is no small feat."

Since Muslim Advocates announced the Muslim Charities Accreditation Program last Ramadan, community response has been tremendous. More than 150 organizations have sought technical assistance and attended free legal & financial seminars Muslim Advocates hosted in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago. A Houston seminar is planned for mid-October. Participants receive guidance and resource materials from legal and financial professionals. Muslim Advocates also makes available on its website guidance for donors about how to give charity consistent with the law.

###

*Muslim Advocates (www.muslimadvocates.org) is a national legal advocacy and educational organization. Its mission is to promote freedom, justice and equality for all, regardless of faith, by providing leadership through legal advocacy, policy engagement, and civic education, and by serving as a legal resource to promote the full and meaningful participation of Muslims in American public life.*