

## **PRESS RELEASE: BOOK LAUNCH**

**Thursday, March 28, 2013 at the Mississauga Valley Community Centre**

### ***The Arab World Thought of It: Inventions, Innovations, and Amazing Facts*** **By Saima Hussain**

*A casual remark during a coffee break for volunteers at the Mississauga Central Library led to the launch event of Saima Hussain's new book. During a discussion on recent books, Saima mentioned that a children's book she had written was to be published the following month. It occurred to Bill Crawford, another volunteer, that this would be a great opportunity for the Friends of the Mississauga Library System to sponsor the official launch of a book written by a Mississauga author.*

The directors of the Friends of the Library agreed that encouraging local authors is part of their mandate and approved the sponsorship of the launch for the book. The launch took place recently at the Mississauga Valley Community Centre.

***The Arab World Thought of It*** uses colourful photos and well-researched information to provide an overview of contributions made in the fields of medicine, architecture, food, engineering, and education. This book opens a unique window into Arab culture. Scalpel, sherbet, planetariums, and three-course meals are only some of the inventions and innovations that have been passed down through the millennia from the peoples of Arab lands.

The book is an excellent starting point for the exploration of a thriving culture. The fully-illustrated book includes maps, a timeline, an index, and a list of further reading. It is designed for children aged 9-11 (Grades 4-6). Adults will also find the book very informative.

Guest of Honour Omar Alghabra, former MP (Mississauga-Erindale) said that while he has an Arab background, he was amazed by many things he learned about Arab history by reading Saima's book. He congratulated Saima for being the author of such a well-researched book on the amazing inventions and innovations by Arabs. He noted that he had a lot in common with Saima as like her he also grew up in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Rick Wilks, the book's publisher and director-owner of Annick Press also congratulated Saima for producing such a well-written and informative book. He noted that the book mentioned many inventions that would elicit what he described as the "Oh Wow" response. Rick thanked the Friends of the Library for sponsoring the launch and praised the great work that the many Friends organizations accomplish in our communities. He described the series of books published by Annick press in which Saima's book is the sixth. The books, he said, outline the "amazing innovations, inventions and accomplishments" of a number of world cultures. Rick felt that North Americans have a lot to learn about the accomplishments of these cultures.

Saima thanked all the guests for attending the launch. She also thanked the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Library for hosting the launch of her book. She made special mention of Bill Crawford and said he was really the driving force behind the event. Saima said that for her the book really was a labour of love as she enjoyed a very happy and secure childhood in an Arab country. She hoped that her book would offer audiences in North America a different perspective of Arab culture, one which looks beyond the news headlines and television images.

Refreshments offered at the event included coffee, which according to Saima's book was popularized by Arabs, and the popular Arabic dessert known as Baklava. Many of those attending took advantage of the opportunity to have their copy of the book signed by the author.

Forms for a children's contest were distributed to the launch guests. The forms, containing questions on information contained in the book, were brought home for children to be answered. Five winners will each receive a copy of one of the five previous books in the We Thought of It series published by Annick Press.

SAIMA HUSSAIN is a Mississauga resident and writer. She was born in Pakistan and grew up in Saudi Arabia. She holds an Honours B.A. in English and History from the University of Toronto and M.A. from Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. Saima has worked as a journalist in Pakistan for five years and currently writes for The Shoe Project at Toronto's Bata Shoe Museum.

The Friends of the Mississauga Library System is a volunteer organization with a mission to provide financial and material support to augment the services of the Mississauga Library System. That mission encompasses support for literacy as a fundamental skill required to take full advantage of library services, and support for library-related educational activities in library-related educational activities in recognition that quality library service is dependent on a well-trained library staff. In fulfillment of that Mission, the Friends have been regular sponsors of the Peel Literacy Conference, the Mississauga Spelling Bee, the Local Authors Night and have subsidized the research and production of a series of local history books by Kathleen Hicks.

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# EVENT PHOTOS

