

Muslim mosque opens its doors to public

CTV Kitchener

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A month ago vandals spray-painted racial slurs onto the exterior walls of the Guelph Muslim Society Community Centre. Police labelled it a hate crime.

"We'd never felt any sort of hate crime so to see that happen was kind of a shock", says Muslim Society member Noorie Nash.

On Saturday, the Muslim Society opened its doors to more than 300 people, keen to learn Muslim and Islamic traditions. For instance, men and women pray in separate rooms. It's also customary for Muslims to pray five times per day. There were also demonstrations on Arabic writing and how the hijab is worn.

PHOTOS



Guelph mosque pictured on April 6, 2013



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Throughout the day, people of different faiths joined in prayer at the mosque.

Guelph Member of Parliament, Frank Valeriote, attended the event. "It's an opportunity for the community as a whole to understand the Islamic community and Muslim faith."

Members of the Muslim Society say they're acutely aware of how they're perceived both locally and globally. They say extremists have put a negative stereotype on the entire faith community. "It is hard to deal with because it's just painting everybody with the same paintbrush", says Nash.

Guelph Member of Provincial Parliament and Education Minister, Liz Sandals, says there's even a direct correlation between terrorist activity and bullying.

Omar Chaudry was the event's ambassador. He says education will stop discrimination. "In Shalah, it means God willing. One day we'll get there."

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