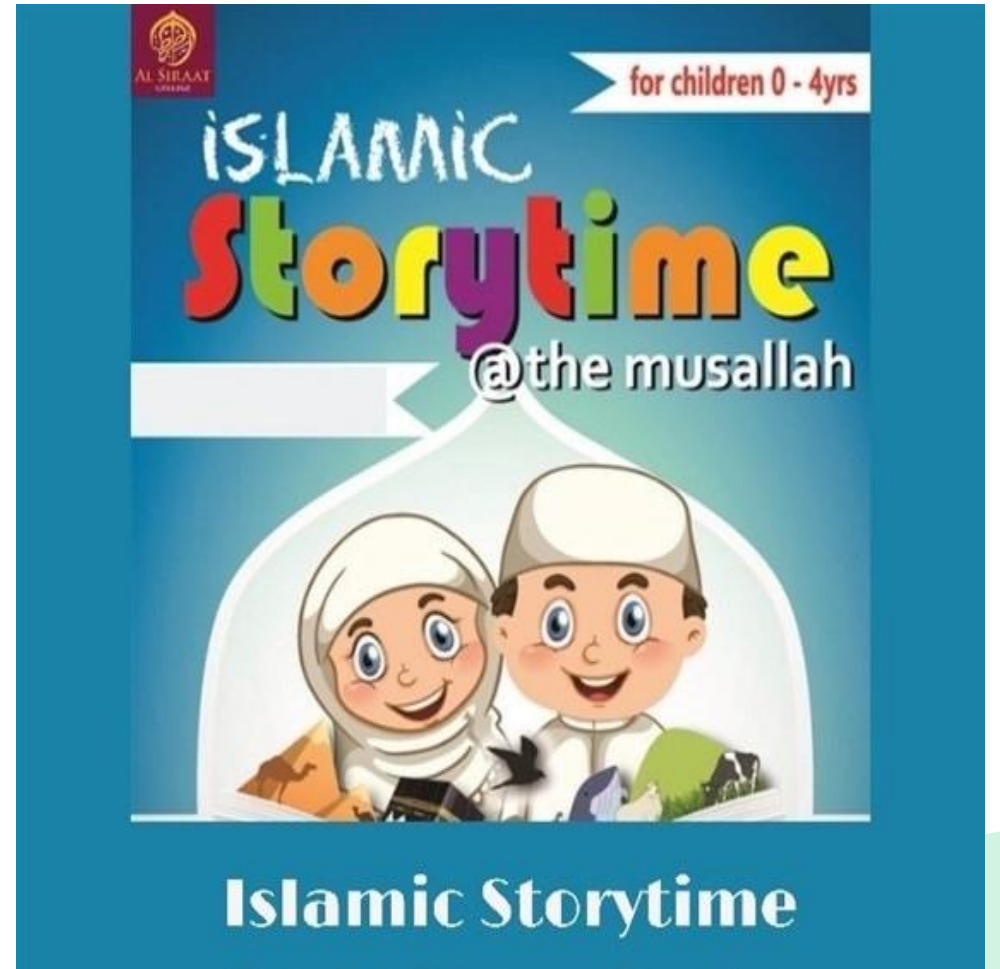


WELLNESS THROUGH CONNECTION

Gulhan Yoldas 2023





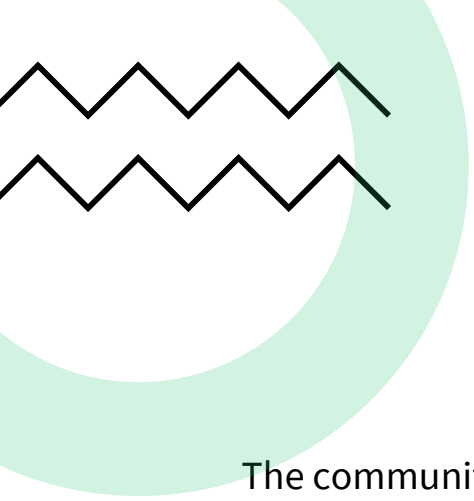
Agenda

- Wellness through Connection
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Demographic
- Islamic Storytime – A Grassroots Initiative
- Wellness Benefits
 - 1. Social Connection
 - 2. Bonding with Children
 - 3. Stress Reduction
 - 4. Increase Knowledge & Skills
 - 5. Connected Community
- Changing Demographics - Current & forecast
- Moving forward

WELLNESS THROUGH CONNECTION

- What is Wellness?
- Why is wellness important?
- Notable studies that highlight the significant impact of social connections on overall wellness;
 - Harvard Study of Adult Development
 - Social Relationships and Mortality Risk
 - The Alameda County Study
 - Positive Affect and Social Connectedness
 - Well-Being and Social Connections
 - Covid lockdown impacts on wellness?





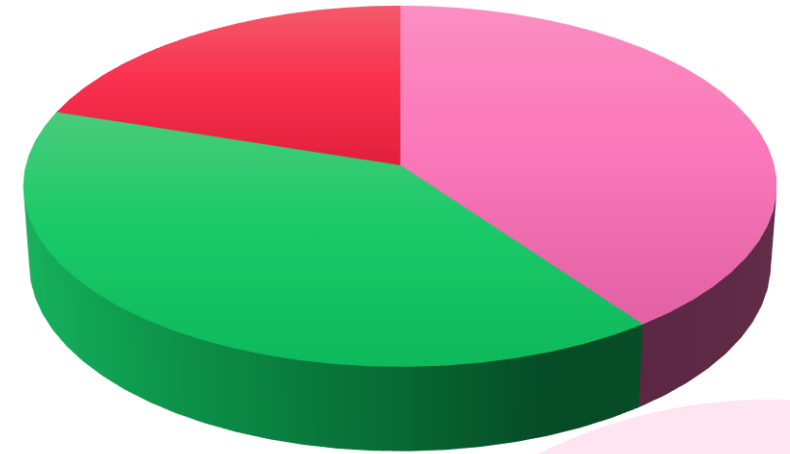
ASC Community Engagement Strategy

The community engagement strategy is largely based around connection and wellness of the school community but has ripple effects throughout the municipality.

Three main elements to community engagement strategy at Al Siraat College

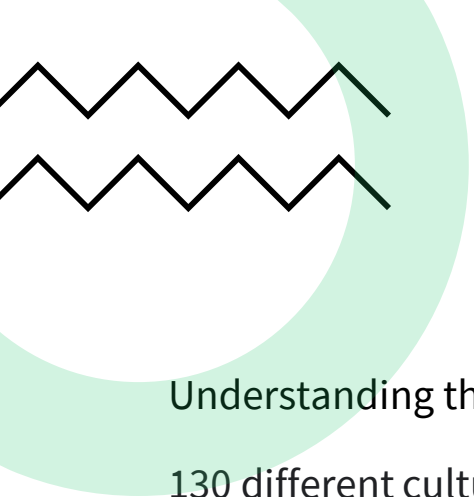
1. Connect our students and our school community with one another in meaningful ways.
2. Connect our community with the broader community towards mutually beneficial outcomes
3. Develop our students as ambassadors of our values

Community Engagement Strategy



- Internal Community Connection
- Student Ambassadors
- External Community Connection





Community Demographic

Understanding the demographic

130 different cultural backgrounds - Highly diverse municipality

54 different cultural backgrounds on campus

Large number of young families and growing population is forecast to be mostly young families, fringe region offering more affordable housing

The City of Whittlesea Estimated Resident Population for 2022 is 236,764

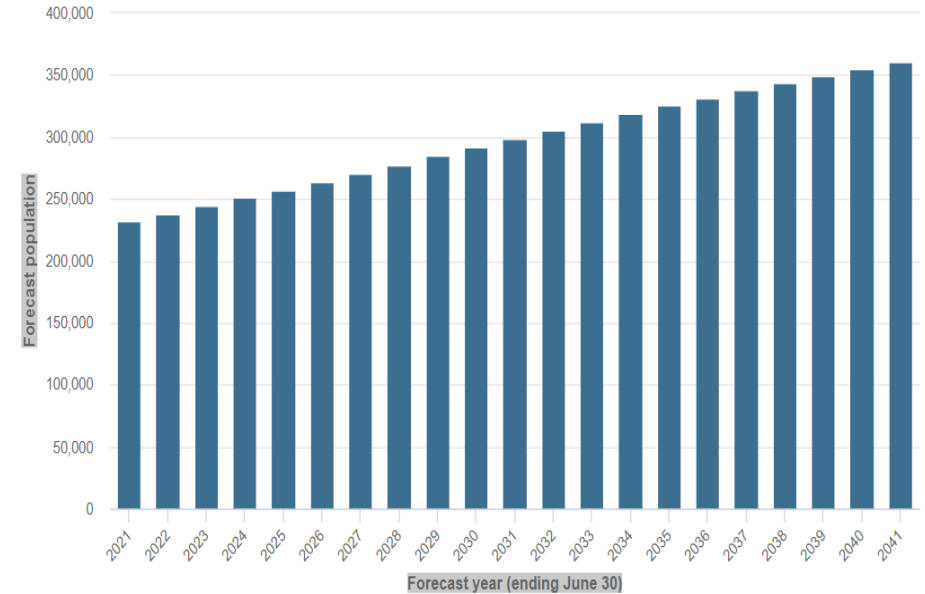
Between 2021 and 2041, the population for the City of Whittlesea is forecast to increase by 128,883 persons (**55.60% growth**), at an average annual change of 2.24%.

Almost 10% of the population in the City of Whittlesea identify as Muslim and follow the Islamic Faith

Forecast population

export

City of Whittlesea



Source: Population and household forecasts, 2021 to 2041, prepared by id (informed decisions), January 2023.





Islamic Storytime A Grassroots Initiative

- Islamic Storytime was originally pioneered in 2017 to connect the youngest members of our community with the *masjid* and with one another.
- This popular community engagement initiative provides a platform for young children aged 0 to 4 years old to have a smooth transition to "big school," in an environment reflective of Islamic tradition and values.
- This offers many wellness benefits to children and parents, particularly mums and, subsequently, the whole family.
- Most of the children participating grow up to become students at Al Siraat College in subsequent years, offering a continuation of narrative for families.
- Involvement of the Parents & Friends community was from the very earliest days, including the design of the original poster.



Wellness Benefits

1. Social connection:

Islamic Storytime gives mothers an opportunity to connect with other parents and build a sense of community.

Social support can help reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall mental health.



Session 1: 19th July 2023

- Introduction
- Extended play time
- Extended nursery rhymes
- Book on theme for the term (From Library)
- Fruit time

Things to remember:

- Advise parents to bring a piece of fruit for fruit time from next week.

Session 2: 26th July 2023

- Topic: *Cleanliness*
- Sing “This is the way we brush our teeth” nursery rhyme, adding “This is the way we make wudu, before we pray.”
- Book about cleanliness
- Activity: Real life practice of Wudu (steps of Wudu)

Session 3: 2nd August 2023

- Topic: *Sunnah on wearing clothes*
- Say Bismillah
- Start with the right side and then the left.
- Be neat (no ripped clothes, clean, etc.)
- Book from the library
- Activity: Real life practice of putting on jackets and shoes as per the Sunnah

Session 4: 9th August 2023

- Topic: *Eating*
- Start with Bismillah
- Eat with your right hand
- Eat ~~what's~~ closest to you
- Take one at a time
- Book on Eating
- Activity: Fruit time together on the table

Things to prepare:

- o Trestle tables x 2
- o Make sure to have enough chairs
- o Plates/bowls/tongs
- Advise the parents for children to come in their pyjamas for next week's session. Bring a soft toy and a blanket for show n tell.

Wellness Benefits

2. Bonding with children:

Islamic Storytime provides an opportunity for mothers to bond with their children through shared activities such as singing nasheeds, reading stories promoting Islamic values, and free-play. This can help strengthen the parent-child relationship and promote positive emotional development in children.

Islamic Storytime 2023: Term 1, Ramadan & Eid

#	Date	Theme	Activity	Book
1	22/02	Intro to Islamic Storytime	Decorate name tags (Gulhan to provide name tags).	Library (General)
2	01/03	Introduction to Ramadan	Ramadan images for the children to stick up on the whiteboard around a large label with the term's theme 'Ramadan'. Images to include dates, Quran, masjid, no food, no drink, tasbeeh, salah, dua hands, sadaqah, iftar, suhoor, Eid, 30 days, gifts, dhikr.	Library (Ramadan)
3	08/03	Sadaqah/Charity (Giving)	Date Boxes: children to decorate small boxes and fill with dates (5 or 7). Children encouraged to gift box to their extended family/loved ones/neighbours. Boxes & decorations be sourced from Kmart or \$2 shops. Possibly request Nur (DNA) to provide 'Ramadan Mubarak' stickers. Sarvath/Rihanna to provide dates.	Library (Charity/giving)
4	15/03	Eid	Eid Mubarak card: children to decorate and seal cards to be opened on Eid day. Cards/Envelopes/decorations to be ordered from Kmart or \$2 shops. Give mothers and children the option to come to the session dressed in their Eid clothes. Decorate Room (Sarvath/Rihanna to source simple decorations).	Library (Eid)
5	22/03	End of Term Party (Mothers BYO plate of food to share)	Party Games: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Point to the picture game. - Number game (if time permits). - Pass the toy game, like pass the parcel (if time permits). 	N/A

Wellness Benefits

3. Stress reduction: Engaging in enjoyable and low-pressure activities such as Islamic Storytime can help mothers reduce stress and promote relaxation. This has a positive ripple effect for the whole family.

4. Increased knowledge and skills: the program provide mothers with knowledge and skills related to child development and Peaceful Parenting. This can increase confidence in parenting abilities and reduce feelings of anxiety.

CONNECTED COMMUNITY



- Islamic Storytime program is the flagship program from which several other programs and events were developed, establishing a platform for women in our community to connect in meaningful ways.
- Positive parenting programs with Kathryn Jones & How to prepare Healthy Lunchboxes workshops with Derya Kucukali
- Mums & Bubs excursions
- Ladies Qur'an Program
- Islamic Storytime Eid Celebrations, lantern making Mini Festivals.
- Neighbour Day, Healthy Lunches,
- Women's Golf, Badminton, Pilates, Swimming etc
- Most proudly supported and funded by City of Whittlesea Council





Moving Forward

Islamic Storytime program is incredibly popular and we never have enough space or resources to accommodate everyone

Registration process is necessary each term and we try to make sure everyone in the community has an opportunity to attend at least a few sessions each year.

Program Survey is completed by parents each semester to offer feedback on ways we can improve and what we're doing well.

Local council offers us space to run Islamic Storytime program at local libraries

For any schools, including government schools in high Muslim demographic regions, or other Islamic schools, we're always available to support in establishing their own weekly, on-campus Islamic Storytime program for mums with small children aged 0 to 4 years old.

3. How did you hear about the Islamic storytime program at Al Siraat College

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

ASC website / newsletter	17
Social media	1
Word of mouth (friends, family ...	2
Other	0



4. How many times did your child participate in the Islamic storytime program?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

1 or 2 times	0
3 - 5 times	6
1 Term	3
More than 1 school term	9
Other	2



5. On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied were you with the Islamic storytime program?

[More Details](#)

1 (Not at all satisfied)	0
2 (Somewhat satisfied)	1
3 (Neutral)	0
4 (Very satisfied)	6
5 (Extremely satisfied)	13





THANK YOU

Gulhan Yoldas
gulhan@alsiraat.vic.edu.au