



Iraqi ambassador hails local organization

By David Wallace
C & G Staff Writer

FARMINGTON HILLS — The Iraqi ambassador to the United States visited Farmington Hills June 18 to support a local woman's work helping the poor and sick in Iraq.

Samir Sumaida'ie, Iraq's ambassador to the United States since 2006, told an audience of about 300 at Farmington Hills Manor that work similar to Nidhal Garmo's For Victims of War and Poverty is what can restore social cohesion to the war-torn nation.

"The security of society is not achieved by the number of police or the number in the armed forces, or how well they are equipped. It is secured by the level of social responsibility that the average citizen has," said Sumaida'ie.

"What Nidhal has been doing is an example of social responsibility," said Sumaida'ie. "It's exercising, from the ordinary citizen, this feeling of obligation to give back."

Garmo, who owns the Sav-Mor Pharmacy just north of Farmington Hills Manor on Orchard Lake Road, spent her childhood in Iraq before immigrating to the United States in 1980. Those roots influenced her to desire to help.

That led her to found For Victims of War and Poverty, which collects new and used medical equipment, clothes and food to help Iraqis, particularly orphaned children. She has traveled to Iraq six times.

"Iraqi women that lost their children, I want to be their daughter. I want to be (for) the person that lost his brother, his brother and sister. I want to be a mom for all these people that lost their parents," said Garmo.

She works with the longstanding Detroit-based charity World Medical Relief to accomplish her mission.

"World Medical Relief is the organization that made all of this possible," said Garmo.

Sumaida'ie does not think that government can restore stability in Iraq.

"The recovery of Iraq will not be engineered or achieved by the government. We have grown used to saying, 'Why doesn't the government do this? Why doesn't the government do that?' The question which we must ask is 'What can I do? What can we do?' And this is a big change in mental attitude," said Sumaida'ie.

He stressed the work of nongovernmental organizations.

"We are into a new era, where I believe the role of government has to be reduced and the role of the people has to be increased. This is the era of the NGO (non-governmental organization). An era of philanthropic society, philanthropic activities, think tanks, target groups, and generally, it's the principle of freedom of association," said Sumaida'ie.

"I salute any organization, I salute any individual who puts himself or herself out to help, to be positive. Not only to grumble, but to carry a bit of the burden," said Sumaida'ie.

He said that such actions have psychological benefits as well as tangible ones.

"Most people will realize that somebody cares, that they're not forgotten, that they matter, that their lives are precious and help is nearby. This feeling is very uniting and really empowering, and it brings hope. And hope is the guide of ... progress. Without hope, we have paralysis," he said.

He used the gala dinner as an example.

"We're doing this here in Michigan, at a long distance away from Iraq. It sends a good message that our Iraqi brethren and our American friends really care," said Sumaida'ie. "But I would love to see this propagate throughout Iraq. And I'm gratified to say that there are a lot of Iraqis inside Iraq doing just this."

[Prepare to be Shocked](#)

Millions have already taken this amazing test. What's your RealAge? RealAge.com

[Mortgage Rates at 4.50%](#)

\$200,000 home mortgage for \$771/mo. See New Payment. No SSN Required. Mortgage.LeadSteps.com

[Volunteers Abroad Wanted](#)

Live and Work Abroad, 1-12 Weeks. Help the Community - Enroll Today! www.CrossCulturalSolutions.org

[Am I A Good Wife?](#)

Take the Quiz & See if you're a good or bad wife. MyDailyMoment.com

[Artery Clearing Secret](#)

Hugh Downs reports on breakthrough from Nobel Prize Winning Doctor www.bottomlinesecrets.com

"I wish this endeavor and all similar endeavors real success, because it represents the real hope for rebuilding our country," said Sumaida'ie.

Sumaida'ie grew up in Baghdad and finished high school there before leaving in 1960. He received a degree in electrical engineering from Durham University in the United Kingdom in 1965. He returned to Iraq to work before leaving the country in 1973.

Sumaida'ie received an award at the gala dinner, as did two officials of World Medical Relief, Rita Montgomery Grezlik and George V. Samson. Another award went to physician Samir Johna, who is the founder and medical director of the Assyrian Medical Society. Johna reportedly has helped many Iraqi patients. Garmo met him during one of her trips to Iraq to deliver supplies, and he helped two children she met.

The gala's organizers further surprised Garmo and Sumaida'ie with two more awards honoring them.

Garmo has big dreams for her organization. She hopes to open an orphanage.

"I will be their mother, and I can do it," she said.

In talking about her goals, she also said that Iraq lacks facilities to treat cancer, and she would like to open a cancer hospital.

For more information about For Victims of War and Poverty, visit www.fvwp.com.

You can reach Staff Writer David Wallace at dwallace@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1053.



Copyright © 2008 C & G Publishing

Advertiser Times • Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle • Eastsider • Farmington Press • Fraser-Clinton Chronicle •
Grosse Pointe Times • Journal • Macomb Chronicle • Madison-Park News • Rochester Post • Royal Oak Review •
St. Clair Shores Sentinel • Shelby-Utica News • Southfield Sun • Sterling Heights Sentry •
Troy Times • Warren Weekly • West Bloomfield Beacon • Woodward Talk