

HIBA ANSARI

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CLINTON — As one of millions of Muslims in America fasting during Ramadan, 19-year-old Hiba Ansari is looking forward to Aug. 8, when she will feast on her favorite food, samosas, and other cuisine.

“We go to people’s homes. We socialize. Most of us try to take the day off from work,” Hiba said. “This is supposed to be a day where you are celebrating.”

However, Hiba said this month-long observance is about more than just denying oneself food between sunrise and sunset.

“The point of fasting isn’t to starve yourself,” Hiba said. “It’s to quell your carnal desires and try to refuel your soul and to help you develop better habits.”

The holiday is not just centered on abstaining from food, Hiba said. It also is about abstaining from sin, ill actions, smoking — anything that is harmful to a person. She added the observance also brings her closer to God.

This Clinton resident is not new to sharing her religion with others either. A senior at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., Hiba is an active member of the campus Muslim Student Association, affiliated with MSA National.

The association works to develop brother and sisterhood among its members and spread awareness through the college campus. This open-dialogue group meets every week

to offer support to all students, not only Muslims.

“We like to stay active in spontaneous ways,” Hiba said.

The MSA works to educate through fun, non-religious activities. This includes operating a booth at homecoming and hosting movies and dinners. Hiba enjoys all of the association’s efforts.

“I love spreading positive knowledge about Islam to the school. I love informing people and getting people to understand a bit more about Islam and sort of, its impacts in the world; its history,” Hiba said.

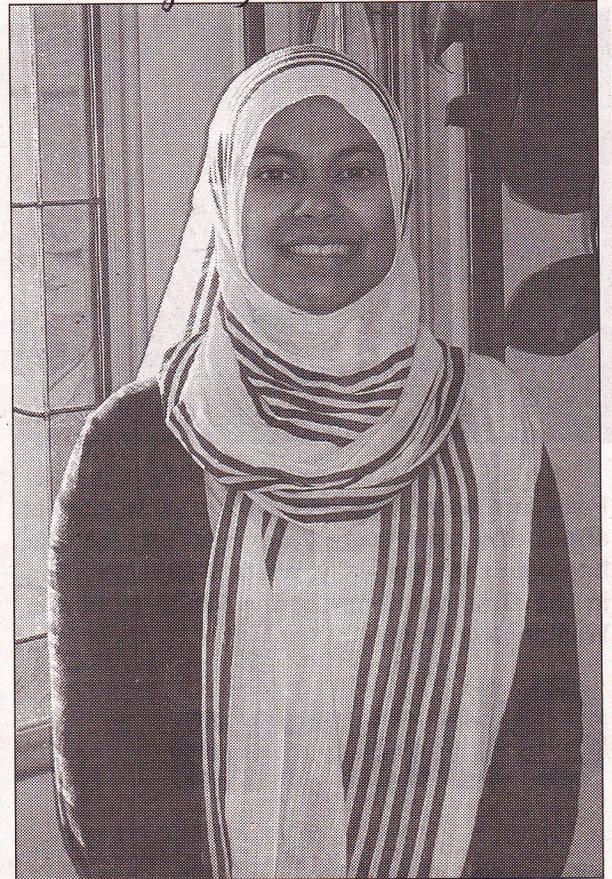
The teen was recently awarded the M. Naziruddin Ali Award for Excellence from the MSA National Scholarship committee. The distinction is given to a student exemplifying academic excellence and a commitment to the development of her local community. The award includes a \$2,000 prize to help pay for her tuition.

Hiba is studying business administration management and minoring in accounting with the hope to work as a business consultant for a large firm where she can make the biggest impact. She is interning this summer as an accountant at John Deere.

Being involved in the Muslim community at Augustana has helped Hiba recognize the true beauty of her religion. While primarily involves with the Muslim community in the Quad Cities, she tries to be active in the Clinton community by attending prayer and other events.

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