


## Program addresses domestic violence in Muslim community

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By Communications Staff

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Families dealing with abuse in London's Muslim community will benefit from a new program announced today at The University of Western Ontario by Attorney General Chris Bentley.

An \$80,000 grant to the Muslim Family Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, delivered through collaborative efforts with Western's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), provides immediate crisis assistance and appropriate referrals to services for abused women in the city's growing Muslim community.

According to Statistics Canada, London is home to about 11,500 Muslims but local leaders estimate the number to be closer to 20,000.

The Muslim Family Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration builds on the success of the internationally acclaimed Muslim Family Safety Project, initiated in 2004 by Mohammed Baobaid to reach out to abused women.

The main focus of the project was to establish a mutual understanding between "mainstream" service providers and the London Muslim community to address domestic violence in a culturally competent manner.

"It's a proposal of the community, by the community, for the community. And it's a recognition that we all have a role to play in preventing violence and dealing with these issues," explained Bentley.

"It's about everyone looking out for our each other – for our neighbours and our families and doing whatever we can do."

Barb McQuarrie, CREVAWC Community Director, will take a leadership role in assembling a research team to work with the Muslim Family Resource Centre and is also writing a manual for community mentors, who are being trained at the Centre.

CREVAWC Academic Director Peter Jaffe, with appointments in the Faculty of Education and departments of psychology and psychiatry, has already been working with Baobaid and has been tagged as a research collaborator.

"I'm very pleased that the Ontario government is funding this important project to build the capacity for leadership with London's Muslim community and to raise awareness for victims of domestic violence," said Jaffe.