

Food

From page A1

see commonalities between their religion and Islam, and fasting is a practice that really crosses many religions. They're learning more about their own tradition just as they're learning about the Muslim tradition."

Fast With Us is a community-service driven effort designed to increase the visibility of the Muslim community and provide an opportunity for people of other faiths to work alongside their Muslim brethren, said McLeese, a member of Green Street Church. During the holy Islamic period of Ramadan, the three mosques — or masjids as they are sometimes called — are collecting food for Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina. Members of Interfaith Winston-Salem are lending their support to the project through additional donations of food and financial support for the food bank's Backpack Program.

The project was intentionally staged during Ramadan, which extends from sometime around July 20 - Aug. 19, according to the Islamic Lunar Calendar. During this time, Muslims are encouraged to fast and turn a greater focus on charity.

"The purpose of fasting is firstly to learn

self restraint and obedience to the commands, the directives, the work that God has asked us to do," explained Imam Irshad Hasan, leader of Masjid Al-Muminun. "... It helps me to become more spiritual. I become more sensitized to the consciousness that there is a Creator that has bestowed and blessed us with so many bounties, and I try to be very grateful for that during the month of Ramadan by being more generous and more sensitized to the plight of those who are less fortunate than myself."

McLeese and his wife Sybil are also fasting in an effort to gain a greater understanding of this pillar of the Muslim faith.

"I feel refreshed, and you wouldn't think that would be the case," reported the grandfather of four. "It's just something that happens to you."

Masjid Al-Muminun, the smallest masjid in the effort, has shown enthusiastic support. The congregation of roughly 30 families has already filled three waist-high boxes for Second Harvest. Hasan, who has led the masjid for nearly two decades, said he wasn't surprised. The congregation already supports Department of Social Services clients with monthly food gifts and participates in myriad other community-driven efforts, he said.

"This is kind of a giving community. Once you alert them of a need and explain to them

what the need is for, they respond very generously," the city native said. "That's part of our religious obligation is to address the needs of the poor and those who are less fortunate than we are."

Hasan says his congregation has set a goal of filling 20 Second Harvest boxes. The masjid plans to stay involved with Interfaith Winston-Salem beyond the Fast with Us effort, he added.

McLeese hopes to make Fast with Us a part organization's annual calendar. He believes the work of the organization could change the city for the better in the years to come.

"I really do believe it can be something very valuable to our community. If we can get people meeting and understanding each other, then I think there will be fewer problems that we have in this community," he declared. "Faith should not be a divider, faith should be a uniter. If we can move in that direction, I think we will have accomplished something."

For more information about Interfaith Winston-Salem, visit www.if-ws.org or email McLeese1@yahoo.com.



Imam Hasan shows off some of the congregation's generous donations.

CATCH THE DASH NEXT HOMESTAND

THU. AUG. 2, 2012
THIRSTY THURSDAY
\$3 BEER SPECIALS

FRI. AUG. 3, 2012
POST GAME FIREWORKS

SAT. AUG. 4, 2012
DOMINO'S FRIENDS & FAMILY
SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

SUN. AUG. 5, 2012
KIDS RUN THE BASES

WINSTON-SALEM DASH
336.744.2287 | WSDASH.com

ATTENTION:

Are You on Medicare with Diabetes?

If you have diabetes and are on Medicare you might be eligible to have all of your diabetic supplies delivered directly to your door.

Call now to see if you qualify for a new talking meter and free home delivery of your diabetic supplies.

Call Diabetes Care Club today at
866-470-9628

diabetes
care club

WINSTON-SALEM OPEN

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

TENNIS SERVED SOUTHERN STYLE ALL WEEK LONG

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 19-25, 2012

FOR TICKETS
WinstonSalemOpen.com
or (336) 758-6409