

First mosque opens in Shelburne

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When Shelburne resident Imam Yehya Soliman founded Muslims of Dufferin, he was looking to create a place for local Muslims to gather and pray ? now he is doing the same opening Shelburne's first mosque.

Located just outside the Town's border along Hwy. 89, Muslims of Shelburne Centre opened their doors to the community at the beginning of April under the leadership of Imam Soliman.

The idea of bringing a mosque to the community, Imam Soliman tells the Free Press, has been the in the works since last year, but was officially organized at the end of March and completed within seven days.

?We wanted to start it before the month of Ramadan, our holy month,? said Imam Soliman.

Speaking about the opening of the mosque, Imam Soliman said, ?It's an honour and pleasure for us. We're looking to spread the peace between one another, to educate people about religions, about cultures, and about Islam.

For the Muslims community in Shelburne and the surrounding area, the closest mosque is the Muslims of Dufferin, located in Orangeville.

Imam Soliman explains that for many in the Muslim community, it means they have to drive long distances to pray.

?We are obligated to pray as a Muslim community, and there is nowhere that we can gather and pray in congregation together except in a mosque, there is no other way unless they pray individually in their house, so this was one of the goals we concentrated on,? said Imam Soliman. ?If we're bringing it to them here, I think it's a very good service for the Muslim community.?

While restrictions related to COVID-19 have seen smaller numbers for religious congregations, the Muslims of Shelburne Centre said they expect the mosque to see around 50 to 60 people at the five prayers held daily. The mosque serves not only the Muslim community in Shelburne but also includes those in Dundalk, Melancthon, Southgate, Mono and Grand Valley.

Imam Soliman adds that while they are serving the Muslim community through worship, they're also looking to help the community as a whole.

Most recently the mosque has hosted an Iftar Drive Thru in celebration of Ramadan, partnered with the Museum of Dufferin (MOD) for a Ramadan series, and donated an English translation of the Quran to the Shelburne Public Library.

?We're trying so many ways to partner with people to say we're not alone, we're all one,? said Soliman.

Meanwhile, Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills spoke with the Free Press about the opening of the first mosque in Shelburne.

?I'm happy for our local Muslim community, that they'll have a place closer to home to worship. Soliman has been a tireless advocate for his community and at this point they've been gathering in Orangeville, so it's nice that our Muslim community is Shelburne will actually have a place closer to home.?

The Muslims of Shelburne Centre holds five prayers per day, and is open 24/7 for daily prayers. More information about the mosque can be found on the Muslims of Shelburne Centre website.

?We are very proud, and happy to be the first mosque to open in Shelburne,? said Imam Soliman.