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## Muslim, Jewish groups ally for cause



Melissa Yeo

The Save A Child's Heart International Photography Exhibition, currently on display at the Center for Muslim Life and The Freeman Center for Jewish Life, seeks to raise awareness about the medical needs in Israel.

By [CARMEN AUGUSTINE](#)  
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Betty's mother thought her five-year-old daughter would sooner be dead in her arms than in a hospital in Holon, Israel, undergoing a delicate open-heart operation performed by two pediatric cardiologists—one Muslim and one Jewish.

The young girl was brought to Israel through Save A Child's Heart, an international humanitarian project that gives free service to any child up to age 18 suffering from a severe heart condition regardless of ethnicity.

SACH's International Photography Exhibition is now on display at Duke, jointly housed at the Center for Muslim Life and The Freeman Center for Jewish Life through March 5.

Sophomore Kevin Lieberman, who volunteered at SACH in Israel on a DukeEngage trip last summer, brought the SACH photo exhibit to Duke with the help of Lena Sharma, a sophomore and a member of the Muslim Student Association. Jewish Life at Duke, Muslim Life at Duke, the Muslim Student Association and Rubenstein-Silvers Hillel Student Board co-sponsored a reception for the event Monday night.

Lieberman and Sharma agreed that SACH does very positive work that should be recognized in the Duke community.

"By raising awareness abroad, we can make sure we can save as many children as possible," Lieberman said, explaining his and Sharma's motivation behind bringing the exhibit to campus.

The exhibit is a collection of photos of patients that have been treated through SACH taken by seven volunteer photographers. Some photographs included the mothers of patients, who often travel with their children to Israel when they receive care, sometimes lasting for two months. Other times, the mothers are not available and other family members accompany children to Israel.

"It is very easy to forget the mothers, and I'm very happy they were included in the photos," Lieberman said.

SACH positively affects more people than the children they save.

"With SACH, we can now open doors between the Jewish and Muslim communities," Sharma said.

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Muslim Chaplain Abdullah Antepli said SACH serves as a unifying force between the Muslim and Jewish communities. Tension between the two communities is not a problem at Duke as much as it is on other college campuses, he said.

“[The Muslim and Jewish communities] will continue to partner in doing God’s work on this campus,” Antepli said.

He added that this was neither the first nor the last time the two groups would collaborate. The exhibit’s reception included activities in both the Freeman Center and the Center for Muslim Life.

“It’s a great way to get into each others’ homes,” Lieberman said.

Sharma agreed that the exhibit was beneficial to the communities’ relationship.

“[The exhibit serves] to show there’s not all the tension there seems to be between the Jewish and Muslim communities,” she said.

SACH was established in 1995 and has treated more than 2,100 children from around the world since that time, according to its Web site. SACH has also sent medical teams on 14 teaching missions, where they teach doctors in partner institutions life-saving techniques for pediatric cardiac surgery.

The surgeons associated with SACH do not work for profit, so the cost of saving a child is kept at a relatively low \$10,000. This covers the cost of travel to Israel and other expenses during treatment. It is funded entirely by private donors.