

# First bazaar since start of pandemic brings joy to Winnipeg Muslim community

Manitoba Islamic Association plans to hold more, including one before Ramadan

CBC News · Posted: Feb 20, 2022 12:00 PM CT | Last Updated: February 20



*Sajida Ghalib, owner of 7K Collection, sells jewellery imported from Pakistan at the Winter Community Bazaar on Feb. 19, 2022. (CBC)*

Members of Winnipeg's Muslim community came together to buy and sell items and see each other in person for the first time in more than two years.

The Manitoba Islamic Association held the first Community Winter Bazaar since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic Saturday night.

"It's really good business today, and everyone's so happy to see each other and meet each other, and we're having food and dresses, jewellery. It's a really good day today," said Sajida Ghalib, owner of 7K Collection.

She was among more than two dozen businesses who set up tables at the Waverley Grand Mosque.

From the first hour it opened, customers packed the space, something that would not have been possible until COVID-19 health restrictions eased earlier this week.

"Lots of them were suffering during COVID, some of them actually stopped working or they closed," said Raed Hamdan, managing director of the Manitoba Islamic Association.

"Some of them are back into business again, so we hope for the best for them."

Ghalib, who sells jewellery imported from Pakistan, says costs have risen significantly during the pandemic, and events like the bazaar are important to businesses like hers.

"Especially me because I'm not working. I have a very small customer, client service. So this kind of a bazaar is really good for us home business women," she said.

Sahar Aljundi, owner of L'Art de Damas, sells items for Ramadan, such as Qur'ans and lights, as well as hijabs, which she says can be hard to find in local stores.

"It's so exciting," Aljundi said.

"It feels like Ramadan is actually coming and it's so nice to see everybody's faces after so long because usually everything's online. It's very nice, it's very welcoming."

The Islamic association usually holds a bazaar every year before Ramadan, Hamdan said.

This year, there will be more, including another one before the start of Ramadan in April.

"We're supporting the small businesses in the community, most of them either work from home or they have their own small shops," he said.

"We're trying to support them more and more. So such events are really good for them, just to get together, to get to know each other's products and they can sell as well."