



MWVF TURNS 15!

FIFTEEN YEARS.

Fifteen years of learning what it takes to care for our communities. Not just in crisis—but in the everyday work of healing, belonging, and faith. As we reflect on our theme: **Rasikh - What We Carry Forward**, we share some of the beautiful highlights of our journey!





2011

**IT STARTED WITH A NEED.
AND A COMMITMENT.**

We began as the “Muslim Wellness & Recovery Initiative” (MWRI). Launched by Dr. Kameelah, this was the first city-wide, Muslim-focused and led initiative at the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS); centering the needs and concerns of the nearly 300,000 Muslims who call Philly home.





2012

A FIRST THAT OPENED DOORS: MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

MWF became the **first** Muslim organization in the country to offer Muslim Mental Health First Aid trainings—helping bring practical tools into community spaces.





From 2012-2014, we traveled to masjid, college campuses and community organizations; facilitating twelve (12) youth and adult trainings in ten (10) different cities with nearly 275 Muslims completing the entire course to become certified Mental Health First Aiders.





Muslim Wellness
FOUNDATION

Faith, Identity & Well-Being
EXPLORING THE
PSYCHOLOGY
of
BLACK
MUSLIMS

2013—
2015

**THE HEALERS COLLECTIVE. BMPC.
WE BEGIN TO GATHER, ON PURPOSE.**

MWF catalyzed community-wide conversations about identity, faith and health—while creating spaces for leadership development and deeper dialogue across generations.





The story of BMPC begins in December 2014 with the first Muslim-led #BlackLivesMatter protest in the United States, co-organized by MWF.

Stop Using
OUR Bodies 4
Target Practice

Dr. Safiyya Shabazz
How To Eat To Live: Understanding
the Link Between Food & Mood



BMPC established on Juneteenth 2015:
the only conference in the country to
center the experiences of Black Muslims
on race, religion, trauma and healing.

Dr. Raymond Brock-Murray
Strengthening the Self-Esteem,
Image and Identity of Black Muslims



A photograph of four young Black Muslims, two women and two men, standing outdoors. They are all wearing black t-shirts with the text 'very Black. very Muslim.' printed in red. The man in the center has his arm around the woman to his right. The woman on the far left is wearing glasses and a grey headscarf. The woman next to her is wearing a grey headscarf. The man in the center is wearing a black t-shirt. The woman on the far right is wearing a purple headscarf. The background is a blurred natural setting.

2016— 2019

WE CHOSE BELONGING.

This was a defining season of truth-telling and community building. MWF sparked national dialogue about belonging, dignity, and wellness—especially through **#BlackMuslimFamily**—and expanded the infrastructure for care through the **Imam Roundtable**, and the **Deeply Rooted Emerging Leaders Fellowship (DREL)**.





The Imam Roundtable began in 2017 as an historic gathering of 35 Imams and spiritual leaders of Black Muslim institutions from across the country. These Imams represented a total of about 12,000 constituents in congregations in nearly 30 American cities. This forum included such notable leaders as Imam Siraj Wahhaj of Brooklyn NY, and Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid (may Allah be pleased with him).



2020

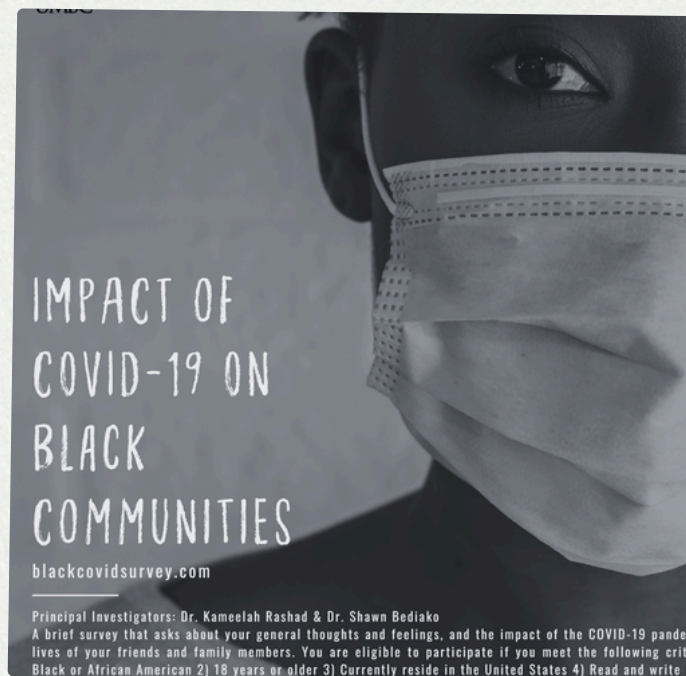
WHEN CRISIS HIT, WE ORGANIZED.

During the pandemic, MWF co-founded the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition with Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative—mobilizing a national interdisciplinary team and a coalition of organizations to share accurate information and support community needs.





On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. Twelve (12) days later MWF and MuslimARC launched the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition to organize and advocate within Black Muslim communities across the United States.



We mobilized a 40 person interdisciplinary organizing team ranging in age from 18 - 65+, formed a coalition of 50 organizations; hosted three (3) radio programs, eight (8) informational webinars, with over 850 registered participants and published Q&As to respond to the over 600 questions submitted regarding COVID symptoms and transmission. We also conducted the first national Black COVID survey with 900+ respondents.



2021— 2025

LEARNING THAT SERVES THE UMMAH.

MWF re-branded and established a new division in 2021 - the **Omar ibn Said Institute for Black Muslim Studies & Research**. We partnered on national and international research initiatives to better understand community realities & histories—strengthening dialogue, engagement, and pathways toward collective well-being.





We visit Coppe Mangay in Fouta Toro Senegal in 2022 & 2025. Chief Abdoul Bihe Ba of Coppe Mangay, Coppe is Omar's birth village and Chief Abdoul Ba is a descendant of Omar's brother.
PC: Laylah Amatullah Barrayn



NEW
LOGO!

In partnership with ISPU, conducted the first study of attitudes and experiences of Black Christians in the US about American Muslims; offered 'Days of Learning' to tackle privilege, bias and deepen understanding.





2026

RASIKH: WHAT WE CARRY FORWARD.

Rasikh means rooted in knowledge and faith.
What we carry forward is care that is spiritually grounded, community-based, and liberatory. Our healing framework is called the **SelebeYoon Paradigm**; centering **remembrance** (honoring the past) **reconnection** (bridging the present) and **reclamation** (shaping the future).

Join Us!





IF THIS WORK
HAS MOVED
YOU —
HELP US
CARRY IT
FORWARD.

We invite you to support the work of the **Muslim Wellness Foundation** and the **Omar ibn Said Institute for Black Muslim Studies & Research** through our **MWF15 Anniversary campaign:** bit.ly/MWF15campaign.



OMAR IBN SAID
INSTITUTE

OMAR IBN SAID INSTITUTE

FOR BLACK MUSLIM STUDIES & RESEARCH

WHO WAS OMAR IBN SAID?



Omar ibn Said (c. 1770–1863) was a West African Muslim scholar, writer, and enslaved African whose life offers a powerful bridge for the study of Black Muslim history, faith, identity, and memory. Born in the village of Coppe Mangay in Fouta Toro, present-day Senegal, Omar belonged to a world shaped by Islamic learning, Pulaar-speaking communities, West African intellectual traditions, and deep spiritual formation. Before his capture, he spent more than twenty-five years engaged in Islamic study, including theology, law, Arabic grammar, and Qur’anic learning. His life reminds us that enslaved Africans did not arrive in the Americas as people without history, knowledge, language, or faith.

Kidnapped and forcibly transported through the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, Omar was sold in Charleston, South Carolina, fled and was later re-captured in Fayetteville, North Carolina where he spent the majority of his life enslaved by the Owen family. Omar is best known for his Arabic writings, especially his 1831 autobiography, written twenty-one years after he was purchased and enslaved by James Owen. Preserved today at the Library of Congress, this text is the only known enslaved narrative written in Arabic in the United States. Across his lifetime, Omar wrote multiple Arabic manuscripts that reflect sustained spiritual practice, intellectual discipline, and resilience under conditions of coercion, captivity, and surveillance. His writings offer rare insight into the interior life of an enslaved African Muslim scholar navigating a world determined to deliberately and grossly distort his identities.

Omar’s experience connects multiple geographies central to Black Atlantic history: Fouta Toro, Charleston, Fayetteville, Bladen County, and Wilmington. It also connects multiple fields of inquiry: African diaspora studies, Islamic studies, Black religious history, slavery studies, archival studies, psychology, and memory work. For this reason, Omar ibn Said serves as both bridge and anchor. He bridges West Africa and the United States, Islam and the Black freedom struggle, archival memory and living community, scholarly inquiry and spiritual inheritance. He anchors the study of Black Muslim life by making visible a longer history of African Muslim presence in the Americas—one that predates contemporary debates about Islam, race, migration, and belonging. His life challenges the false assumption that Black Muslim identity is marginal to American history. Instead, Omar’s story reveals Black Muslim faith, scholarship, and endurance as foundational to the religious and intellectual history of the United States.

Muslim Wellness Foundation established the Omar ibn Said Institute for Black Muslim Studies & Research in 2021 to deepen this work through healing-centered research, ethical storytelling, and community accountability.



OMAR IBN SAID INSTITUTE

OUR MISSION

The Said Institute advances the **healing, wellness, and flourishing of Black Muslim communities** through research, education, and cultural preservation. Rooted in the legacy of Omar Ibn Said and the spiritual traditions of the African diaspora, the Institute **cultivates spaces for remembrance, reconnection, and reclamation**—bridging scholarship, storytelling, and community care across generations and geographies.

OUR VISION

A world in which Black Muslim **histories, voices, and ways of knowing** are honored as sacred sources of wisdom and healing. A future where **Black Muslims thrive** in communities grounded in dignity, truth, and collective well-being.

IG: Said_Institute

FB: OmarIbnSaidInstitute

REMEMBERING OUR **PAST**, RECONNECTING OUR **PRESENT**, RECLAIMING OUR **FUTURE**.

The **Omar Ibn Said Institute for Black Muslim Studies & Research** is a division of the **Muslim Wellness Foundation** (MWF), established in 2021 to deepen and expand MWF's 15-year legacy of promoting healing, mental health, and collective well-being in American Muslim communities. Named in honor of Omar Ibn Said, a West African Muslim scholar whose intellect and faith endured through enslavement in North Carolina, the **Institute stands as a living tribute to Black Muslim resilience, scholarship, and spiritual lineage**. It serves as a home for research, education, and creative practice that centers Black Muslim healing, history, leadership, and narrative sovereignty. Through initiatives such as the annual **Black Muslim Psychology Conference**, the **Deeply Rooted Emerging Leaders Fellowship**, and the **Imam Roundtable**, the Institute fosters intergenerational connection and transnational collaboration—from the United States to West Africa. Guided by three interwoven pillars of work, the Institute embodies a transformative approach:

Remembrance: Honoring the Past

We recover, preserve, and uplift the histories of Black Muslims whose contributions have been obscured or forgotten. Through archival research, oral history, and storytelling, we ensure that their legacies are not only remembered but recognized as foundational to the story of Islam in America.

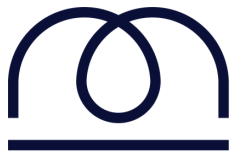
Reconnection: Bridging the Present

We cultivate spaces for dialogue, learning, and care that connect individuals, generations, and communities across the diaspora. This includes programs such as the Black Muslim Psychology Conference, the Deeply Rooted Emerging Leaders Fellowship, and the Imam Roundtable, which nurture intergenerational mentorship, spiritual growth, and collective resilience.

Reclamation: Shaping the Future

We envision and design new models of healing, leadership, and scholarship rooted in Black Muslim ways of knowing. Through research collaborations, cultural exchange, and creative practice, we reclaim agency over our narratives and chart pathways toward thriving, justice, and self-determination.

Together with MWF, the Omar Ibn Said Institute advances a shared vision: to remember, reconnect, and reclaim the stories that sustain us—and to build communities of care where Black Muslims can truly flourish.



MUSLIM WELLNESS FOUNDATION

ABOUT MUSLIM WELLNESS FOUNDATION

Muslim Wellness Foundation (MWF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing healing, emotional well-being, and collective care in American Muslim communities through dialogue, education, training, research, and community-centered practice.

Over the past fifteen years, MWF has helped shift conversations about mental health, trauma, addiction, racial justice, and faith from narrow frameworks of stigma toward a broader healing-centered model rooted in dignity, cultural relevance, and collective well-being.

In 2021, MWF established the Omar ibn Said Institute for Black Muslim Studies & Research as a division of the organization. Named in honor of Omar ibn Said (1770-1863), a West African Muslim scholar whose intellect and faith endured through enslavement in North Carolina, the Said Institute extends MWF's healing-centered mission into research, archival recovery, public scholarship, cultural preservation, and narrative justice. The Institute advances Black Muslim histories, voices, and ways of knowing as sacred sources of wisdom, resilience, and healing. Its work is organized around remembrance, reconnection, and reclamation: honoring the past, bridging the present, and shaping futures rooted in truth, dignity, and self-determination.

As MWF marks its 15th anniversary in 2026, its guiding theme is **Rasikh: What We Carry Forward**. Rasikh speaks to rootedness in knowledge, faith, and moral clarity. It names MWF's ongoing commitment to care that is spiritually grounded, community-based, and liberatory. Through its SelebeYoon paradigm, MWF continues to develop healing-centered models of research, education, leadership, and community engagement that attend to the links between oppression and wellness while also affirming joy, resilience, creativity, and belonging.

Today, Muslim Wellness Foundation stands as a leading voice in wellness, healing justice, and community-based knowledge production. Across its programs, research initiatives, and public scholarship, MWF remains committed to building communities of care where American Muslims—especially Black Muslims and other historically marginalized communities—can heal, grow, thrive, and carry forward the stories, practices, and relationships that sustain us.

MUSLIM WELLNESS FOUNDATION

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