



# Civilizations Exchange & Cooperation Foundation

July 26, 2011

**Re: Ramadan in American Public Schools**

Dear Teachers & Members of the Administration:

It is my pleasure to write to you on behalf of *Civilizations Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (CECF)*. We are the official support and resource organization for the YES exchange students, who are sponsored by the United States Department of State to spend an academic year in America. CECF responds to their cultural and religious needs and questions, as well as those of the host families and members of the hosting organizations throughout the year.

We are also pleased to share with you some information about Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims around the world. Fasting in Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam and a vital part of it, however, the month of Ramadan also encourages a comprehensive program for spiritual renewal and strengthening the relation with Almighty God "Allah" and members of society, at large.

In 2011, Ramadan is scheduled to take place from approximately August 1<sup>st</sup> through August 30<sup>th</sup> and during this time students, who choose to fast, will be abstaining from all food and drink, including water, from dawn to sunset each day. They might experience fatigue or a lower level of energy than usual.

All acts of kindness and consideration offered by members of the school administration, teachers, and the student body will mean a great deal to the exchange students and will leave a positive impact on them. They are not only coming to learn about the educational system in America, but also to immerse themselves in the American culture and to live the great American values of freedom of religion and respect for religious and cultural diversity.

Fasting students will welcome the option to go to the library or other suitable locations, where they could quietly pray, instead of having to sit in the cafeteria during lunch while everyone is eating.

When it comes to P.E. classes and sports, it will be greatly appreciated, if their fasting is taken under consideration. They might approach you to seek permission to temporarily reduce the amount of physical activity required of them during these 30 days.

I, as well as other CECF staff, am available to answer any questions that you or your staff may have. We can be contacted at 410-944-6077, [cecf1@aol.com](mailto:cecf1@aol.com) or through our web-site [www.cecf-net.org](http://www.cecf-net.org). Some information that CECF prepares for host families to help them better understand the practices during Ramadan is also provided with this letter.

Again, they will be grateful for your understanding and will value any concessions you might offer.

Thank you and all the best,

Imam Mohamad Bashir Arafat  
President, CECF  
Cultural & Religious Advisor, YES Program