



BUILDING SOMETHING ETERNAL

**Heritage Gardens Cemetery
& Building Upgrades**

**Fundraising Appeal
2022-23**



AZ-ZAHRAA ISLAMIC CENTRE

“Why should you not spend in the way of God, while to God belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...Who is it that will lend God a good loan, that He may multiply it for him and there may be a noble reward for him? The day you will see the faithful, men and women, with their *light* moving swiftly in front of them and on their right. There is good news for you today...”

(Holy Qur’an, 57:10-12)

How bright will your light be?

Imam Ali Zaynul ‘Ābidīn (a) would pray for the *light* as described in the Holy Qur’an (57: 10-12): “O God, what You have made flow on our tongues from the *light* of communication and the explanation of Your proofs, make it a *light* for us in our graves and when we are raised, and in our life and in our death. Make it a source of honor for us; let it be a cause of safety for us from what we fear of this world and the Hereafter.”

Our light in the Hereafter depends on the choices we make and from our actions in this world. It’s up to us to decide how bright we want this light to be.

As early as 1967, our founding members had a vision: to build a strong and vibrant Shia Ithna’Asheri Muslim community in the West where everyone could practice their faith in safety, in the comfort of old and new friendships . With limited resources, they donated their hard-earned money towards this cause. May their efforts brighten their light in life and in the Hereafter.

The Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre’s Board of Directors and Trustees are committed to the vision.

This year, our community spent \$1.5 million on urgently needed building upgrades and repairs, and \$3.45 million towards the purchase of 527 burial plots at Heritage Gardens Cemetery to meet the future burial needs of our growing community.

Please help us meet our \$1.2 million shortfall by making a donation today. Your support will be a source of light and safety for you and your family — in this world, and in the Hereafter.



Financial Summary

Heritage Gardens Cemetery

	No. Plots	Amount
Plots purchased: Heritage Gardens Cemetery (\$6,550 ea)	527	\$3,450,000
Revenue from sale: Vedder View Gardens Cemetery	996	(\$2,480,300)
Donation: from Donor Group	158	(\$290,910)
Net Shortfall to Fundraise	369	\$678,790

Building Upgrades & Repairs

	Amount
Total Cost of building upgrades & repairs	\$1,500,000
Contribution: Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy	(\$500,000)
Donation: from Donor Group	(\$500,000)
Net Shortfall to Fundraise	\$500,000
TOTAL SHORTFALL	\$1,178,000

Support our community

Named after Lady Fatimah (a), the Lady of Light, the Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre is a place of spiritual enlightenment, healing, and growth. As members of this Centre, each one of us is the custodian and caretaker of her place of gathering and worship. We all share the responsibility of maintaining this Centre so that all those who attend can continue to benefit from her light, including our families.

That is why we are asking each member (age 21+), in your household, to help Az-Zahraa meet its \$1.2 million shortfall by making a donation of \$3,000. Make a one time donation, or give monthly:

Donation payment options (per member age 21+)	Monthly amount	Annual amount	Total Donation
1 year: 12 monthly or one-time payment* <i>*preferred option is one time payment in order to pay our vendors so the community does not have to use its creditline and pay interest.</i>	\$250	\$3,000	\$3,000
3 years: 36 monthly or 3 annual payments	\$84	\$1,000	\$3,000
5 years: 60 monthly or 5 annual payments	\$50	\$600	\$3,000

- **DONATE YOUR KHUMS:** Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre has obtained Ijaaza from Agha Sistani (ra) to use 50% of khums collected for towards the cost of burial plots and building upgrades.
- 60% of your donation will fund the burial plots at Heritage Gardens Cemetery, and 40% will fund the upgrades and repairs of the Az-Zahraa building & premises.
- A tax-deductible receipt will be issued for the full amount of your donation and/or Khums.



Heritage Gardens Cemetery: Sponsor a Burial Plot

The Lower Mainland is grappling with a looming burial space crisis.

As the Lower Mainland's population continues to grow and available land becomes increasingly scarce, cemeteries are grappling with a looming burial space crisis that is made worse by land-use restrictions and property price increases.

"As our population is aging, more and more people are dealing with end-of-life decisions, and so there is growing demand for cemetery space." said Brant How, Senior Adviser, Cemetery BC. Canadian communities including Muslim, Jewish and Indigenous communities will often opt for the traditional burial practice.

"Over the last 25 years, prices of burial plots have increased by as much as 30 times. Ocean View Cemetery (Burnaby), is probably the most expensive cemetery in Canada: starting price for a burial plot is more than \$70,000." How said.

Erik Lees, owner of a leading cemetery planning firm in Vancouver noted: "Politicians still do not want to talk about or even think about cemetery space...we are very quickly running out of space to inter our friends and family."

Source: *Business in Vancouver*, October 18, 2022

Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre: we are addressing the problem, today.

Our Challenges:

The Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre owns 454 burial plots at Forest Lawn Cemetery; 137 of these graves are occupied. At the rate our community is growing, our burial plots at Forest Lawn will not meet our community's future needs.

Our current membership includes about 310 members aged 50+, and 340 members under age 50. Based on these demographics, our graves at Forest Lawn will likely be occupied in 20 years.

10 years ago, Az-Zahraa purchased 1,050 burial plots at Vedder View Gardens Cemetery (Chilliwack, BC). 17 graves are currently occupied (2 by our members). The long distance and travel time makes this location difficult to access.

With the looming burial space crisis in the Lower Mainland, it is unlikely that more affordable cemeteries will be built in close proximity, if at all.

Our Solution:

At our Annual General Meeting held on May 14, 2022, members unanimously voted in favour of Az-Zahraa purchasing 527 burial plots (double occupancy of 1,054 graves) at Heritage Gardens Cemetery (South Surrey, BC). In August 2022, we successfully purchased these plots.

To help fund this purchase, Az-Zahraa sold 996 plots at Vedder View Cemetery. With proceeds from the sale and the generosity of a donor group, our new shortfall to fundraise is \$678,690.

Feel the Impact:

We averted a grave crisis - Burying a Muslim in a Muslim cemetery is an obligation on the family of the deceased as well as the Muslim community. By purchasing burial plots at Heritage Gardens, we have ensured that we have enough burial plots to meet our future needs.

We paid a remarkable price - We purchased the plots at Heritage Gardens at a great price of \$6,550 per double occupancy plot. As well, the burial cost here is \$1,000 less than at Vedder View and \$1,750 less than at Forest Lawn.

Less travel time means more visits - Visiting the graves of our Marhumeen brings them comfort. Imam al-Sadiq was asked: "Should we visit the deceased?" He replied: "Yes. They know about you when you visit, they feel happy and find comfort in your visits." Travel time from Az-Zahraa to Heritage Gardens is 30 minutes. You will have peace-of-mind knowing that when you pass, your family and community will be able to visit and pray over your grave frequently.



Help us today: Sponsor a burial plot.

When Imam Husayn (a) reached Karbala, he gathered the local people and bought the land from them. He then gifted this land back to them and requested: "On the 10th day of this month you will see our bodies lying on the plain with our heads severed. I ask you to kindly bury us. And when our devotees come to visit our graves, hold them in honour as your guests and point out to them the places of our burial."

Like Imam Husayn (a), your donation will ensure all members of the Az-Zahraa Centre (in good standing at the time of their passing), will be guaranteed a grave site at either Forest Lawn or Heritage Gardens. With our remaining plots, at Heritage or Vedder View, non-members who wish to be buried here may also have the option to do so.

In some books, Muhammad ibn Sinan narrates from Muffaddal who said: "If a person recites, Sura al-Qadr seven times beside the grave of a Muslim, the Almighty will send an angel to that grave who will worship the Almighty. The rewards of this worship will be written for the one in the grave and for the person who came to visit the Muslim. When this Muslim is resurrected, he will not have to face any fears, for the Almighty will remove all fears from him through the angel who was devoted to his grave. He will enter Jannah in the company of that angel."

Your donation is a source of many blessings.

Donate today and build something eternal.



Building Upgrades & Repairs: Donate to improve safety & security for all

Improving Safety & Security at Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre.

Our Challenges:

Since we first opened our doors, our community has grown in size, and so have the number and scope of activities we are holding. This is a sign of an active and vibrant community.

Last spring, we completed a building inspection and identified a number of areas of concern that have an impact on the safety and security of all those who attend the Centre.

“Our Centre is now 20 years old. The wear and tear on our building is a reflection of just how much our Centre is being used on a daily and weekly basis. We are at a critical point where if we don’t replace our leaking roof, or repave the sinking asphalt in the parking lot, or update our fire safety equipment, and so on, we could face dire consequences down the road.”
Jaffer Nathu, Director of Maintenance.

Our Solution:

In May 2022, we began the long and arduous task of prioritizing and completing urgent building upgrades and repairs at Az-Zahraa.

Anticipating that our Centre would turn into a construction site, much of the upgrades and repairs started as soon as the school and madrasah closed for summer break.

List of Building Upgrades & Repairs	Estimated Cost
Replace leaking Roof	\$750,000
Repair & paint damage walls	\$90,000
Complete landscaping of garden	\$75,000
Replace carpets with vinyl in classrooms	\$75,000
Parking lot repairs: asphalt & curbs	\$45,000
Update fire safety systems & equipment	\$35,000
Upgrade IT equipment & software	\$40,000
Repair heating, ventilation & AC system	\$35,000
Signage throughout Centre	\$30,000
Repairs: fountain, plumbing, & other	\$30,000
Install window coverings in classrooms	\$25,000
Add storage throughout Centre	\$25,000
Lighting & electrical repairs & upgrade	\$25,000
Replace furniture - classrooms & other	\$25,000
Kitchen upgrade - cleaning & appliances	\$20,000
Front gate - motor replacement	\$20,000
Add exterior storage & irrigation repair	\$15,000
Installation of alarm system on fire doors	\$10,000
Ghush room equipment upgrade	\$10,000
Repair water pump in fountain	\$10,000
Contingency for unexpected repairs	\$110,000
Total cost of capital upgrades <i>*above costs are an estimate only; actual cost will be determined as work is completed.</i>	\$1,500,000

Feel the Impact:

The spirit of our community lies in the hearts of:

- 245+ students of Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy
- 210+ students of madrasah
- 120+ people/week who play sports in our gym
- 100+ youth (our future leaders)
- 100+ seniors, and
- 700+ community members who call the Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre their place of worship and an extension of their home.

- **“Remember, We made the House a place of assembly for mankind and a place of safety.”**
(Sūratul Baqarah, 2:125)

The House of God is meant to be a place where human beings seek refuge and solace, both physically and spiritually. Visiting it gives us peace, and gathering here strengthens us as a community of the 12th Imam (aj). As long as our building and premises are safe and well-maintained, people will continue to attend and benefit.



- **“Be careful of your duty to the Almighty with respect to His people as well as His places; for verily you will be answerable even for the places you frequented.”** Imam Ali (a)

As a faith community, we are responsible for taking care of each other and the larger community. By doing so, we are aligning our values and purpose with those of our 12th Imam (af). An active and vibrant Centre nurtures these connections so that we can serve our Imam (aj) to advance his cause.

Your donation is supporting the mission of our 12th Imam (aj).





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For more information, contact Sr. Kaniz Bhimani (604-808-7912) or Sr. Shahin Virji (604-644-9957)

To Donate:

- By Phone, call Br. Najmul Jaffer (604-499-1740) or Sr. Tahera Rashid (604-786-0166)
- By E-Transfer, to treasurer@az-zahraa.org
- Online: www.az-zahraa.org
- Online: www.CanadaHelps.org (charity name: Shia Muslim Community of British Columbia)
- By Mail - Cheques (payable to SMCBC) – if mailing, please mail to above address

* **Khums:** Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre has obtained Ijaaza from Agha Sistani (ra) to use 50% of khums collected towards the cost of burial plots and building upgrades. When you donate your full khums to us, we will forward the Sehme Sadaat portion to Agha Sistani (ra).

OUR COMMUNITY VISION:

Driven by the mission of the 12th Imam (aj), we strive to be a God-serving community in our hearts, actions, and relationships.