

## **Bio: Dr. Hania Al-Shahrouri, Al Salam Mosque Member**

**Dr. Hania Al-Shahrouri**, is a member of the Al Salam mosque in Fort Smith. After the vandalism at the mosque in October 2016, she has started speaking to local audiences about Islam. She is a kidney specialist from Jordan.

As a Muslim woman in the U.S., Hania says she has gotten used to people staring at her because of her head covering. She feels that wearing the Muslim head covering, known as a *hijab*, in the United States is as much an act of bravery as it is an act of faith.

When people stare at her, Hania Al-Shahrouri tells herself that it's because they think she's pretty, or because they like the color of her *hijab*. At the same time, she is concerned that her children (including her 13-year-old daughter) may not have the self-confidence needed in such situations.

Hania does what she can to protect them. She uses her status as a doctor and her wealth; she drives a Mercedes-Benz sport utility vehicle and carries an expensive hand bag. She doesn't like that she has to do these things, but she knows that money often commands respect. In some ways, the Muslims who are better off are spared the bigotry that many poorer Muslims face.

Hania Al-Shahrouri loves the United States. There may be bigotry, but she believes the system to be fair. She illustrates this by talking about a time she entered a kidney transplant ward in 2004 with her medical team. A patient's wife ranted and raved that Dr. Al-Shahrouri would kill her husband "like they killed us on 9/11." The doctor in charge of the medical team, warned the woman that if she wouldn't let Dr. Al-Shahrouri treat her husband, no one else would. The medical team walked out of the patient's room.

Discuss the following:

- What are your thoughts and feelings about Dr. Al-Shahrouri's experiences?
- Why does she say that wearing a hijab is as much as an act of bravery as it is an act of faith?
- How do you think Dr. Al-Shahrouri felt about what happened to the mosque?
- If you were to describe Dr. Al Shahrouri using a word or two, what would they be?