

Academy of Greatness & Excellence Acquires Former Neumann Prep High School Property

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Academy of Greatness and Excellence (AGE) is pleased to announce that the School Board has completed the purchase of the largest real estate property to be owned by an Islamic educational organization in New Jersey. In less than one year after being approved for its potential campus in the Temple Emanuel- Paterson NJ, AGE has purchased the former Neumann Prep High School building in Wayne, NJ. The property is about 25 acres, with a 56,000 sq.ft. high school building, chapel, rectory, and athletic field.

The purchased property has been owned by the Diocese of Paterson since 1965. The rectory and athletic field are leased to TSF Academy until July 2023, with no renewal option. The high school building was leased to the Islamic Education Foundation (IEF) for the last 9 years with no option to renew.

The School Board of AGE was informed that the Diocese of Paterson was actively trying to sell the property and was no longer interested in any long-term leases. A few developers were interested in buying the property to



AGE School Picture 2014-2015



AGE School Picture 2017-2018



AGE School Picture 2018-2019

turn it into an apartment building or a senior citizens facility. The AGE Board members believed that they were morally obligated to secure the building and maintain it as a school for future generations. The lack of proper educational facilities is the most challenging part of attracting parents and students to Islamic education. The scarcity of the real estate inventory and the difficult, costly, and long process of transforming a commercial building into a school due to the building codes and zoning ordinances represent an overwhelming and sometimes an impossible process.

“At this point, our main concern is to secure this beautiful building for educating our children in such an adequate facility regardless of which organization is running the operation. We are grateful to Allah (SWT) for being able to complete this large financial transaction without asking the community for help or resorting to fundraisers, which is something AGE has never done during its existence,” said Wahid Melook, the Chief Financial Officer of AGE and one of its founders.

“For the last few years, AGE has a cooperative and productive relationship with the IEF, which is a pillar of Islamic education in New Jersey. Unfortunately, due to the confidentiality agreement that was imposed on all parties involved in this transaction, we did not get the opportunity to discuss any future plans with the IEF. However, during the purchase process, we have worked diligently with the Diocese to secure the renewal of the IEF’s lease until the end of the 2022/2023 school year. Unless the IEF decides to move Al-Ghazaly High School back to its original building in Teaneck, which will be available for 2023/2024 school year, we anticipate that the IEF will continue leasing the Neumann Prep High School building, and hence AGE will ensure that the IEF’s lease is uninterrupted. If that will no longer be the case, AGE will expand its operation and utilize the purchased building as an additional AGE school campus. In all cases, and pending the Wayne Township approval, AGE plans to redevelop the rest of the property for recreational and community purposes,” Wahid Melook continued.

Dr. Hammad Choudhry, the Vice-Chairman of AGE stated, “Although this step seems reactionary, it is in line with the AGE vision, and it is necessary to avoid a situation that may negatively impact future generations of Muslim students. AGE’s vision is to provide affordable high quality Islamic education that combines the “Greatness of Character and Excellence of Knowledge” motto that the school holds so dearly. This vision was never limited to a certain city, county, state, or even a country.”

AGE is currently serving about 500 students, and for the last five years the enrollment closed within days of opening the process, with about 150 students on the waitlist. “It is very important to take advantage of any opportunity that comes our way to increase the ability of accommodating students who seek Islamic education, while strengthening the academic, character building, and athletic programs in Islamic Schools,” said Dr. Abdeslem El Idrissi, AGE Board member.

The Chairman of the AGE Board, Dr. Rashed Rashed, also added, “The unity of the AGE

community, the support of the parents, and the dedication of the administration and staff are the major factors of the continuous success of AGE. Securing such a property to educate future Muslim generations is a dream come true. I have been involved with Islamic education for the last 35 years, my four children were all educated in Islamic schools. Having an adequate and proper school building was never attainable due to the limited resources and the financial burden. It is really phenomenal that AGE was able to acquire this property without overwhelming the parents and the community with fundraisers and donation requests despite being a not-for-profit organization.”

“Within a very short period, AGE has witnessed an exponential growth in student enrollment and facility expansion; nevertheless, what’s most remarkable is that within this time, we have gained the respect and trust of the AGE parents, students and staff as well as the surrounding community, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. At our Ridgefield Park campus, we’ve had a great relationship with St. Francis of Assisi (Archdiocese of Newark), and we anticipate having an equally wonderful experience with the Diocese of Paterson at our new location in Wayne. We look forward to building strong bonds with the local community and reaching out to all Neumann Prep alumni to build up much needed bridges in our society,” said Iman ElDessouky, the Principal of the Academy of Greatness & Excellence.

Academy of Greatness & Excellence has become the fastest growing and one of the most successful Islamic Schools in New Jersey during the last ten years. AGE will continue to honor its commitment to providing quality and affordable Islamic Education for current and future generations regardless of the time and place.

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