

Hadja Bangoura
Mashallah, This Made My Day

After the terrorist attacks in Paris, Donald [Trump](#) [said on MSNBC](#) News on November 16, 2015 that he would “strongly consider” closing mosques. He stated, “I would hate to do it, but it’s something that you’re going to have to strongly consider because some of the ideas and some of the hatred — the absolute hatred — is coming from these areas.”

As a young Muslim girl, I felt worried about the message he was sending to the world, and how others may react to Trump’s own hatred and bigotry towards the Muslim community. Soon I noticed sight changes in the atmosphere when I went to my mosque for my weekly prayers. Our Imam, the head of the mosque, began to offer extra support, like “talking sessions,” personal prayers, and any other sort of comfort.

Almost a year later when Trump won the presidential election of November 9, 2016, I became concerned if mosques will soon close down or if people will be too afraid to even come.

On November 11, 2016 my school was closed, so I decide to go to my mosque for the Friday noon prayer. While I was walking out of my house wearing my usual hijab, I was worried about what might happen to me now. Would I become a target? Would people point their fingers at me? Would all eyes be on me? More than ever, I needed to go to my space of serenity.

As I arrived at my mosque, I saw a man standing outside holding a piece of cardboard which read: I stand with my Muslim neighbors. I stood there smiling at him as he was smiling back at me. In that moment, I almost teared up with joy. I was so touched by his action. The fact that he was standing there by himself in front of the mosque with a smile on his face, while holding that supportive message, showed me there was hope for my Muslim community. We were not alone. It was a moment of light in this tragic situation.

This stranger’s message gave me so much comfort in a time when Trump and others were saying so many despicable things about Muslims. I gave this stranger a hug and asked to take of picture of him holding the sign -- I wanted to remember that beautiful moment forever. After I came home from my prayers at the mosque, I felt compelled to share this moment on social media. There had been so many posts of hopelessness after the presidential election, so I wanted share with people this incredible moment which I experienced. With the message that there are supporters in our community, I wanted to offer the same comfort to my friends and family.



Wilderness House Literary Review 13/1

As soon as I posted the picture on Snapchat, many people screen-shot the image to share with their network. I also posted the image on Facebook, which received several positive reactions. In the past, I mostly posted selfies and would share others' posts. It was the first time many people shared my post with their community.

When I came to school on Monday, many people approached me and told me how much they appreciated what I posted. Some were surprised about what happened, while others became aware of the need for support.

I grew more confident in speaking out in my community and proud of showing appreciation for the little things in life. A stranger holding a cardboard with an important message could save someone's life. Perhaps my post could give someone else the same courage and comfort I felt that day. I realized that using social media for social justice causes can create a positive impact in not only my life, but in others' lives as well. Embracing these small kind gesture can create a ripple effect.

