



ACCESS

51st

Annual Dinner

THURSDAY 27 APRIL
2023

Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

*From the Neighborhood
to the Nation*



DTE Foundation



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A Message from Leadership

ACCESS takes its responsibility to provide solutions to seemingly insurmountable community challenges very seriously. This past year, we took another historic step, announcing the development of a state-of-the-art substance use disorder treatment center, expanding our unique wraparound model of whole-family care, which provides more than one million services each year.

We led significant efforts to establish a Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) category, allowing our communities to finally be recognized, protected and counted.

This is a very special Annual Dinner as it coincides with our MOVE (Mobilize, Organize, Vocalize, Empower) Summit. It is the only conference that brings Arab Americans from across the professional and political spectrum to discuss the most pressing issues facing our communities.

Our work, mission and energy remain steadfast as we continue to build communities From the Neighborhood to the Nation.



Ahmad M. Ezzeddine, Ph.D.
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Maha Freij
President and Chief Executive Officer



Lina Hourani-Harajli
Chief Operating Officer



Sara Shouhayib Alawar

Mistress of Ceremonies

Sara Shouhayib Alawar is the founder and owner of Capital Emcee, specializing in emceeing, voice-over, on-camera and fundraising services. Sara has emceed over 30 events across the United States, including in Michigan, Ohio, California, Texas and Washington, D.C.



Emma Aboukasm Quartet Featuring Victor Ghannam

Musical Entertainment

Emma Aboukasm is an award-winning, Detroit-based recording artist, vocalist, pianist and composer. As a graduate of Jazz and Contemporary Music at the University of Michigan, she performs in a variety of venues, ranging from intimate venues like the Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe to expansive stages like the Detroit Jazz Festival.



Victor Ghannam is a self-taught musician who has performed throughout Europe, the Middle East, North, Central and South America, playing a variety of instruments, mainly the Oud and Qanun. A veteran of the stage, he has toured with many of the leading recording artists of the Middle East and is most recognized for his dazzling improvisational taqsim.



Chris Farah

Presenter

Christine Farah is an actress and comedian who frequently performs around the world. She is a board member for the Hollywood Fringe Theatre Festival and created their Diversity Scholarship Program, after winning Best Cabaret/Variety for her cult hit Fancy! She hosts the podcast DocuSweeties, has worked on Modern Family, Superstore and Kenan. Her new show Lebanese Debutante will premiere in June in Los Angeles.

2023 Arab American of the Year

Michael Farah



Trusted financial expert and talented innovator, Michael Farah is a visionary business leader and longtime philanthropist whose tireless work has fostered awareness, understanding and improved communities across the nation and the globe.

Farah, a native Californian and Syrian Lebanese American, began his philanthropic work in his teens when he met the iconic actor and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital founder Danny Thomas at a radio telethon in Hollywood, California.

In the decades since, Mike has devoted his time to raising millions of dollars for St. Jude and countless other philanthropic

causes. He created the Celebrity Foundation for Children, which has become one of the most celebrated charities in the nation and is ranked in the top 1 percent of all charities. The Celebrity Ranch in Temecula, California, built by Mike for the specific purpose of helping underprivileged children, is recognized as the largest charity children's ranch in the world and hosts more than 10,000 children annually for camps and educational programs. Mike also is the founder of the American Polo Association, the largest charity Polo Association in the world, raising millions each year through charitable events. His daughter, the iconic actress Chris Farah, is often by his side at many of these events.

Mike's other passion is fostering understanding and pride in being an Arab American. In the early 2000s he was instrumental in creating the American Lebanese Trade Board and the American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce, leading trade missions to Lebanon and Syria, and currently serves as the Chairman of the Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs.

Being born and raised in Hollywood, Mike has spent his life surrounded by celebrities, and hosted the well-known public television show "On the Town with Mike Farah" in the 1990s, interviewing thousands of Hollywood stars.

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Narratives

Program

Mistress of Ceremonies

Sara Shouhayib Alawar
Founder, Capital Emcee

Welcome

Ahmad M. Ezzeddine, Ph.D.
Chair, ACCESS Board of Directors

Entertainment

Emma Aboukasm Quartet Featuring Victor Ghannam

Special Remarks

Hon. Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan

Hon. Abdullah Hammoud
Mayor of Dearborn

ACCESS 50th Documentary Preview

Executive Remarks

Maha Freij
President and Chief Executive Officer

Arab American of the Year Presentation

Chris Farah
Michael Farah

Dinner

Halal

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Arab American Heritage Council (AAHC)
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Community Foundation of Greater Flint
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Detroit Zoological Society
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