



The Skillman Foundation Presents

# YAKTIVITIES FOR HELPING KIDS

## SURA Arts Academy

### Arab American National Museum Program Earns Prestigious Award

SURA Arts Academy, an Arab American National Museum program that gives Dearborn and Detroit youth the opportunity to use photography to foster cultural understanding, is earning national recognition for its efforts.

The program is one of just 15 U.S.-based youth arts and humanities programs to receive the prestigious 2008 Coming Up Taller Award.

SURA Arts Academy is a free, after-school and summer photography course offered to middle school children from Arab American, African American, Latino and other diverse backgrounds in lower-income communities.

Instructors from Detroit's College for Creative Studies teach courses in basic camera operation, provide the participants with digital cameras and then send them into their communities to document topics such as work, food, religion, recreation and family life.

SURA, which is an Arabic word for photography, is also a cultural exchange program held in collaboration with the JOHUD program in Amman, Jordan. It provides students the opportunity to interact with program peers via e-mail and videoconferencing.

The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and support outstanding



Honoring the SURA Arts Academy recently were First Lady Laura Bush; Camille Charara of Dearborn, a SURA student photographer; Celine Taminian, the assistant director of the Arab American National Museum; and Caren Prothro of the President's Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, and provide them with new learning opportunities and a chance to contribute to their communities.

Coming Up Taller is an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

The President's Committee partners with the Institute of Museum and Library Services,

the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities to administer the program, which was founded in 1998. More than 320 nominations were received by the program in 2008.

#### About the Museum

The Arab American National Museum is the first museum in the world devoted to Arab American history and culture.

The Arab American National Museum's mission is to document, preserve, celebrate and educate the public on the history, life, culture and contributions of Arab Americans. By bringing the voices and faces of Arab Americans to mainstream audiences, it seeks to dispel misconceptions about Arab Americans and other minorities and to serve as a resource to enhance knowledge and understanding about Arab Americans and their presence in the United States.



**SURA Arts Academy**  
Arab American National Museum  
13624 Michigan Ave.  
Dearborn, MI 48126  
313-582-2266 (AANM)  
[www.arabamericanmuseum.org](http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org)



"Worried Mother" by SURA student Junaid

### THINK ABOUT CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

SURA Arts Academy teaches students how to use photography to foster cultural understanding of Arab Americans and other minority groups. Students in the course take pictures to showcase the achievements and culture of Arab Americans and others in the community. As a family, talk about the ways Arab Americans have contributed to the communities of Dearborn and Detroit. Then talk about the contributions of other ethnic or minority groups. If you were going to take pictures to show these contributions, what pictures would you take? What pictures would you take to show the contributions of another ethnic group to which your family or friends belong?