

# STRIDING FORWARD

Tayba Foundation 2019



TAYBA FOUNDATION  
*Freedom Through Education*



As Tayba's students move forward, so must we.



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# DEAR TAYBA SUPPORTERS,

One of the most amazing things I have witnessed in my life was the desert schools of Mauritania (called mahdaras), a West African traditional schools that dates back over 1000 years. I saw these learning institutions that were not bound by the need for buildings: teachers would literally sit in the shade of a tree or a large boulder and teach both young and old. One of the Mauritanian poets said about his country: teachers would literally sit in the shade of a tree or a large boulder and teach both young and old. One of the Mauritanian poets said about his country:

*“We have taken the backs of camels as madrasas, in them we clarify the deen of Allah to the people.”*

The Mauritians have maintained this tradition for over a millenia, out of necessity rather than want. As proof of this, with the ease of development, many of those “structureless” learning institutions quickly adapted. They began to establish buildings to house the learning that was already happening.

Ten years ago in 2008, when we incorporated Tayba, we began with a cell phone, P.O. Box and a dream to educate Muslim prisoners. We were not discouraged by the lack of a building to house our education, because myself and my colleague and co-founder Nabil Afifi, had witnessed and benefitted from the mahdara system. We knew learning, from basics to a high level, could happen without a building. With the support of our early donors, we began the process of teaching and delivering education to Muslims in prison around the country. We worked out of our homes, and out of 4 different offices, never discouraged by the lack of a permanent home, and always striving to make our donors’ generous gifts go further.

But just like the mahdaras of today, it might be time for Tayba to put a permanent roof over our heads as well. I’ll leave you to read the details on pages 8-9 of this booklet but in short, it looks like the best way for us to make your donations go further over the next decade is by purchasing our own office space. Finances are not the only reason. We want to make sure to leave an established secure foundation for the next generations. Just as people inherit the care of masjids, Islamic schools, and other buildings and continue the care, we want to establish an ongoing charity that will be taken up by the Muslim community to ensure that this work never stops.

Our promise to you is that we will continue to work tirelessly to teach even “from the backs of camels” if we have to. We are in this for the long haul, and we are doing this with your support. So we ask that you assist us, in whatever way that you can, to help us purchase a permanent home for Tayba: a place where we will continue to grow and expand our education and reentry programs. A place where generations and generations of Tayba students can come to receive training and return to their communities to give back, insha’Allah. A place where Tayba’s mission will continue on, just as the mahdaras from which we take inspiration continue on.

May we be granted the ability to grow and serve our incarcerated brothers and sisters, and may you and your family be rewarded immensely for helping us, ameen.

**RAMI NSOUR**

*Tayba’s Director & Co-Founder*

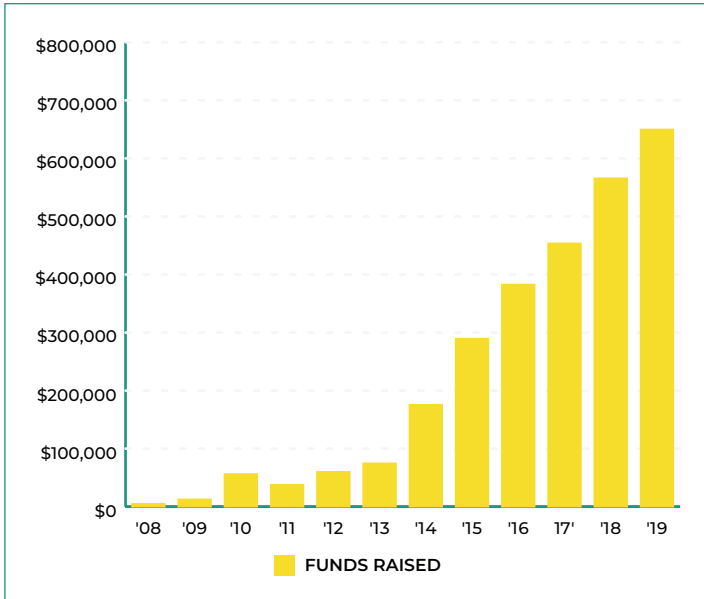




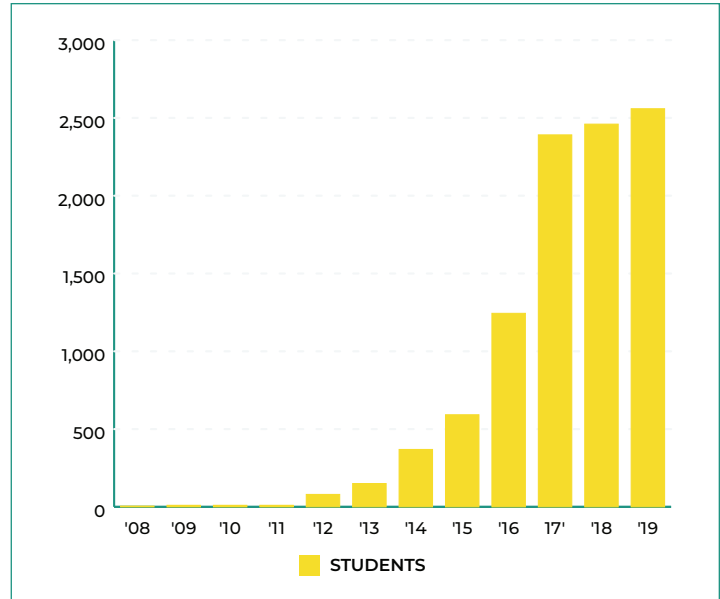
# 2019 AT A GLANCE

## Yearly Donations

(including projected funds for 2019)



## Number of Students By Year

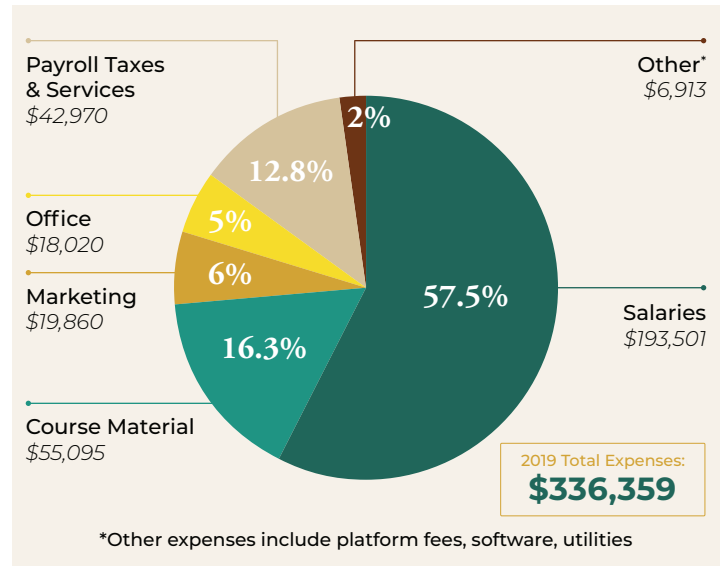
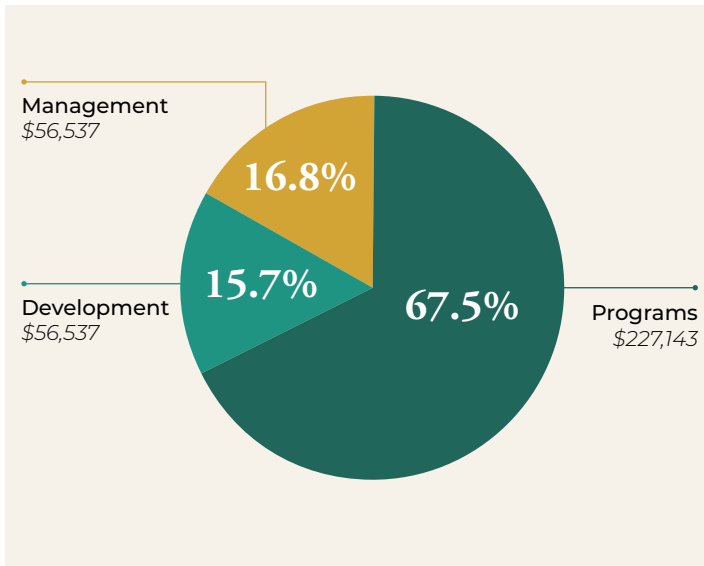


Alhamdulillah, we are projecting another record-breaking fundraising year in which we continue to expand our services and build a stronger financial cushion for the organization.

Alhamdulillah, thanks to an expansion of our grading team, we have significantly increased our student capacity which reflects in this year's student numbers.

## Expenses

As of end of August 2019



As in the past years, salaries are our biggest expense. This is because educating thousands of Muslims requires staffing for writing, grading, answering student questions, and as well as maintaining this process on an administrative level. These expenses are not likely to change in years to come because Tayba Foundation is one of the few and the leading Muslim organizations that provide authentic teachers and education to prisoners.



## GOALS / RESULTS

At the end of 2018, we published a list goals for the organization to achieve this year. Thanks to your support, we were able to:



### Send 1,400 courses *(not counting Islam 99)*

Alhamdulillah, we were able to send 2297 courses to 1825 students this year.



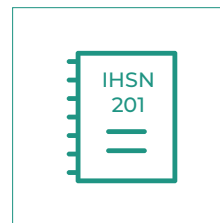
### Develop FIQH 100

This course became active this fall, with 500 students taking it this semester.



### Develop FIQH 102

This course is on track to be released to students early in 2020.



### Develop IHSN 201

This course is on track to be released to students early in 2020.



### Prepare all students due for release for re-entry with our Life Skills material

9 Tayba students have completed a total of 11 Life Skills courses with certificates. We are assessing why the demand has been much lower than expected and plan to adjust the program accordingly.

### Improved curriculum, including pastoral training for dealing with mental health issues aimed at Tayba students who serve in an Imam role in their prison

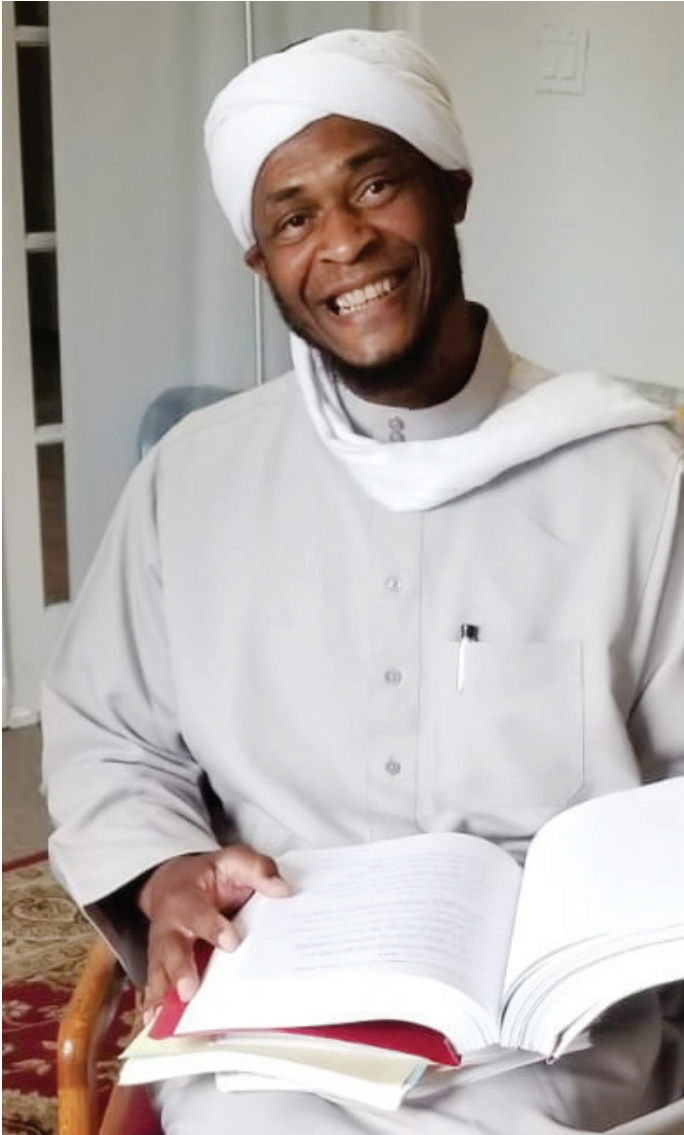
We have performed extensive review of our curriculum, engaged a mental health professional, and began training some students and identified other candidates for future training.

### Staff training & certification in mentorship and counseling

Two of our team members, previously incarcerated Tayba students, have received certifications in a nationwide leading wellness and recovery program. Br. Tabari will be returning, in a full-time capacity, to our team after completing a Master's in Social Work.



# HE TRANSLATED THE ENTIRE QUR'AN WHILE IN PRISON



Abdul Khabeer visiting Tayba's office a few days after his release.

*I was studying things at random, not aware that Muslims have developed a system of learning that relies on the most authoritative scholars. This is what Tayba opened up for me.*

In his infancy, Abdul Khabeer's mother put Drano in his baby formula and was sent to a mental institution. He was separated from his father at 10, making rounds in the foster care system. By 11, he committed his first crime. By 17, he entered prison. And at 19, he was given a 27 year sentence for armed robbery.

He was introduced to Islam by reading Alex Haley's, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X", and took his shahada alone before meeting other Muslims. It was the prison sentence that inspired his change. Abdul Khabeer blamed himself for where he ended up and knew that he had to change for the better. He firmly committed himself to Islam and made the decision to no longer spend time with those who were a bad influence on him.

But it wasn't that easy. Abdul Khabeer's prison was one of the most violent in the country:

"The challenge every day was to get back to your cell alive," he told us. "We worked out a lot, not just to defend ourselves, but also to bulk up enough to take a stabbing from a fellow prisoner or a gunshot from a guard."

The entirety of his 22 years in prison, Abdul Khabeer's life was in danger every day. But this constant stress didn't stop him from taking advantage of the opportunities presented to him - or creating opportunities of his own.

While on trial for his criminal case, Abdul Khabeer represented himself. Despite not having any background in law, he learned a thing or two about the legal system. This came in handy in prison:

"I worked as an inmate clerk in the prison library," he said, "but I also had a 'side hustle'. I would prepare writs of habeas corpus for men who had no appellate attorney to represent them and charge them for the legal work I performed. I then used that money to buy Islamic books."

Amongst the many books Abdul Khabeer purchased for himself and his Muslim community were books on the Arabic language and tafseer (explanation) of the Qur'an. He fell head over heels with the language and through it, the Holy Book.



After getting his Class B license and necessary training, Abdul Khabeer was able to secure a driving position with a rural transit company.

One of his early teachers had him doing word-by-word translations of some of the verses of the Qur'an. Abdul Khabeer thought it would be interesting to translate all of it that way... and he did. Over the many years he had left in his prison sentence, he worked diligently on this project, verse by verse. By the end, he also appended a simple guide to Arabic grammar: something that could be understood by the inmates who struggled with more advanced texts.

When he approached the prison Imam with the desire to publish his work, the Imam connected him with Tayba Foundation. For Abdul Khabeer, this was an entirely new chapter in his life.

"Before Tayba, my approach to Islamic studies was like that of a young man who's studying various subjects and yet doesn't know elementary, middle, and high schools exist," he told us. "I was studying things at random, not aware that Muslims have developed a system of learning that relies on the most authoritative scholars. This is what Tayba opened up for me."

Abdul Khabeer became intent on pursuing the path of Islamic scholarship. He continued his reading, but he also covered a number of texts through Tayba Foundation. "It also simply felt good to be part of an academic program - and be in touch with Muslims on the outside."

"The Christians are very active in the prison community," Abdul Khabeer recollects. "But in my 22 years in prison, no one from the Muslim community reached out to us except Tayba Foundation."

It was Tayba too that supported him as his parole came through. "I have the entire Tayba staff on speed dial," Abdul Khabeer laughed. "Anything I need: financial assistance, an answer to a question, anything else - all I have to do is ask."

Abdul Khabeer rejoined free society in June of 2019. He's working on getting his truck driver license and is looking forward to spending more time with his family, being active in his Muslim community, and working and volunteering for Tayba. He's also finally finalizing his plans to publish his Qur'an translation.

We asked him if he had any final comments to make to Tayba supporters. His response?

"I want to ask them two questions:

1. If you could cure cancer, would you?
2. If you could cure ignorance, would you?

Tayba's doing the latter - I know this from experience. There's far more need out there than what Tayba can provide - we need to clone it to make two Taybas - or 10!"

# Help Tayba Find A Permanent Home

**GROWING OPERATIONS & SKYROCKETING RENT MEANS OWNING  
OUR OWN OFFICE WILL SAVE DONOR MONEY WITHIN  
7 YEARS OF PURCHASE.**



## WHAT HAPPENED:

- Tayba significantly expanded its programming, number of students served, and staff members serving them over the last several years.
- Our office space is now too small for the organization's needs.
- Our landlord recently increased our rent along with his price for a nearby vacant property we were hoping to use to expand our office.



## WHAT WE'RE PLANNING:

- Purchase a ~2500 sq. ft. office space in the Bay Area.
- Take out a shariah-compliant loan to cover 50% of the estimated \$900,000 cost.
- Fund the remaining 50% (\$450,000) through donor contributions and loans.



## WHY WE'RE DOING IT:

- The additional space will help Tayba continue expanding its services in order to help the 98% of Muslim prisoners we're still not reaching.
- We save our donors money: according to real estate experts, property ownership will save Tayba \$93,674 over 7 years vs paying rent for a similar space.
- Allow Tayba to build equity through property appreciation.
- Thanks to Tayba's 501(c)3 status, we're exempt from property taxes.
- Owning our office space will make our expenses more predictable by removing rent increases or other lease agreement issues that have increased over the years.

**Get the full picture:** Read the full 10-page report on the office purchase decision at:  
<https://www.taybafoundation.org/office/>





# The reward of all Tayba's work could be in your book of deeds.



Share in the reward of every Muslim who learns how to pray from a Tayba book.



Share in the reward of every convert who learns to overcome their drug addiction from a Tayba life skills course.



Share in the reward of every prisoner who takes shahada at a Tayba student's hand.

I want everyone at the Tayba Foundation to know — as my brothers and sisters in the faith — I love each and everyone of you. All of you are a God-send to me; especially in my efforts to gain sacred knowledge of Allah and the Shariah. Thank you accepting me as a student and brother into your program and guiding me down the path to a traditional Islamic education.

Br. Joseph, Tayba student

## Talk about a sadaqa jariya (ongoing charity) opportunity!

**Donate today:**

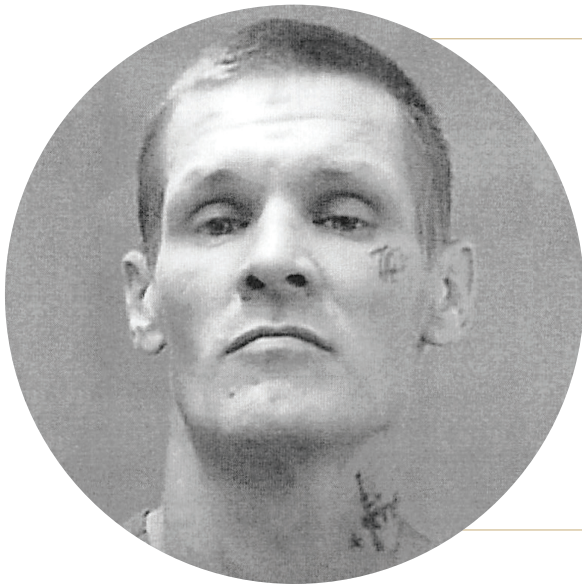
<https://www.taybafoundation.org/donate/>

**Provide Tayba with an interest-free loan:**

Contact [nabil@taybafoundation.org](mailto:nabil@taybafoundation.org)



# HABIBULLAH'S STORY: FROM A DRUG ADDICT TO AN IMAM



**To even have a chance at a normal life, I must obtain the strongest [faith] possible. So my studies, my prayers, and my relationship with Allah must continue to be my primary focus.**



David's father was found dead on the bathroom floor, likely due to his drug habit, when David was only two years old. His death broke David's mother: she spent the next eight years in and out of prison and re-married twice.

By age 10, David was sent to live with his uncle, but his deteriorating behavior quickly landed him in a treatment center for troubled children where he was strapped to beds or confined to "The Quiet Room" in an attempt to "treat" him.

For the rest of his teenage years, David went between various treatment centers and regular public school. His drug use escalated from cigarettes at 9 years of age to marijuana a few years later, then quickly progressed to LSD, MDMA, crack, and finally heroin.

Already in and out of jail and constantly chasing the next high, David's life took a turn for the worse when his mother passed away from cancer. In 2017, high on several drugs, he attacked a police officer with a razor, and was sentenced to 4 years in prison. David came to Islam in jail while waiting to stand trial for the crime he's currently incarcerated for. His jail was notorious for underfeeding prisoners, but special diets (like halal or kosher) were generally more plentiful. However, receiving a halal diet required answering questions about Islam, so David got to studying in order pass the exam and get more food.

"By the third day of reading the Qur'an," writes David, "I began to consider that Islam is for me." He took his shahada soon after, at the first jumu'ah prayer he attended. But all was not well. At his prison, David was one of the two white Muslims. Shunned by the overwhelmingly black population (many of whom have been taught to demonize whites in general), he had to keep mostly to himself. As a recovering addict, he found this extremely difficult.

"I am a stone cold junkie," David wrote us, "so I seek knowledge hoping and praying that I continue to get one more day away from the demon [i.e. drugs] that has done its best to kill me... In order to keep the needle out of my arm, I must find something I love more than that high. And for me, that something is being Muslim. To even have a chance at a normal life, I must obtain the strongest [faith] possible. So my studies, my prayers, and my relationship with Allah must continue to be my primary focus."

***"I seek knowledge hoping and praying that I continue to get one more day away from the demon [i.e. drugs] that has done its best to kill me..."***



***“KNOWLEDGEABLE, PRACTICING MUSLIMS THAT CAN GUIDE THESE MEN ARE NEEDED. I PRAY THAT ALLAH GUIDES MORE OF YOU TO GET INVOLVED NOT JUST IN PRISON, BUT IN THIS COUNTRY IN GENERAL.”***

Needless to say, Tayba’s materials felt like a godsend. “[Receiving Tayba materials for the first time] was probably one of my happiest days in prison,” David told us. “I was glowing for a week.”

David threw himself into his studies, spending 4-6 hours every day studying both the Tayba materials and any other book on Islam that he could get his hands on. He has completed ISLAM 99, ADAB 100, and is working on several more courses this semester.

He has since been appointed the Imam of his prison community - despite the vocal opposition to the color of his skin. He has taught Islamic basics to Muslims using the ISLAM 99 course and (after completing a course on public speaking) speaks to interfaith gatherings about Islam.

Upon his release in a few years, David hopes to eventually go abroad to learn Arabic and continue studying his religion in depth. For now, he does what he can with the opportunities he has been given. His message to his brothers & sisters in free society is:

“Every night people come here from the free world to teach Christianity. Several times a week Rabbis show up to teach Jews. There are Christian halfway houses everywhere, helping men re-adjust to being free men that walk with faith.

Every day Muslims plead with me to teach them Islam, because there is a shortage of people to teach real Islam, while there is no shortage of men to teach hate-filled, militant, gang-like lies they call Islam.

Knowledgeable, practicing Muslims that can guide these men are needed. I pray that Allah guides more of you to get involved not just in prison, but in this country in general.”

**“[Receiving Tayba materials for the first time] was probably one of my happiest days in prison... I was glowing for a week.”**

# THANK YOU

## CONTACT

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EIN: 26-3342933

## DONATE



### SEND YOUR CHECK TO:

31080 Union City Blvd #208, Union City, CA 94587



### OR ONLINE AT:

<https://www.taybafoundation.org/donate/>



### INTERESTED IN OFFERING A FREE INTEREST LOAN?

Contact [nabil@taybafoundation.org](mailto:nabil@taybafoundation.org)

