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Middle East Meets Midwest in Dearborn, Michigan

With a massive mosque, minarets and scores of Arabic-signed stores and restaurants, parts of this city look like the Middle East.

But Dearborn is a lot closer than Beirut, Damascus or Cairo. And while this Detroit suburb may be better known as the hometown of Ford Motor Co., it's also where the Mideast meets the Midwest.

A third of the city's 100,000 residents trace their roots to the Arab world. Originally these immigrants came here to work in booming auto



factories. Today they have created corridors of culture and commerce unlike anywhere else.

Warren Avenue is the epicenter of Arabic life in Dearborn. It's grown over the past few decades from a few Arab-owned establishments to a road

bustling with Middle Eastern restaurants, markets, boutiques and bakeries.

One of the most prominent and popular is Shatila Food Products, whose website boasts of "sweets of the Middle East from the heart of the Midwest." The bakery, founded in 1979, ships its desserts nationwide. Its distinctive, round retail store draws customers from across the state and beyond.

Amal Shatila, the bakery manager and sister of owner Riad Shatila, came from Lebanon in 1989 and joined her brother in the business.

"I came, running away from war," she said. "I came to visit and stay away for a while — then I ended up staying for good."

Shatila has expanded as other Middle East businesses have built up around it.

"The community is growing up — everyone has their own business," she said.

Some earlier immigrants also were entrepreneurs, but many opted to work in the many local auto plants. That

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Investors Favor Tunisia

Tunisia is rapidly becoming a favourite target for international and regional investors as it emerges from the effects of Europe's financial crisis. With one of the world's best-performing stock markets, it is now set to launch North Africa's first offshore financial centre.

Exports to the Gulf and Europe are increasing rapidly, tourism is expanding and huge new commercial and infrastructure projects are under construction.

By the end of the first quarter this year, the Tunisian stock exchange index had reached 4,686, a gain of more than 9.9% on the 4,292 mark recorded at the end of 2009. This compares with a figure of just 2,892 at the end of 2008 and explains why the market has been one of the most attractive globally despite the retrenchment registered in some of Tunisia's main export areas last year. Currently, the exchange's market capitalisation stands at some 13.4 billion dinars (\$9.4 billion).

The country is also benefiting from the intensified interest which foreign investors from the Gulf states, the US and Europe, as well as China and Asia, are showing in Africa.

Veteran fund manager, Mark Mobius, head of the renowned US firm Temple Asset

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Many Arab-American Avoid Taking Care of Their Health Concerns



Jeannette Dakhallah (left) learns how to do a breast self-exam as Hiam Hamade (center) and Diana Awada look on. Hamade is a public health nurse in Michigan who encourages women to get mammograms and do self-exams.

Fear and modesty kept Diana Awada of Dearborn, Mich., from getting a mammogram.

Four times she made an appointment, and four times she canceled. Getting your breasts checked for signs of cancer wasn't something many women in Awada's Arab-American community felt comfortable doing.

The day Awada did show up for the test, the machine wasn't working. "Good," she thought, as she rushed away.

But just outside the Dearborn health clinic, Awada, 56, bumped into Hiam Hamade, the woman who had convinced her to schedule the X-ray screening in the first place.

Hamade persuaded Awada to going back inside for a cup of coffee. The pair chatted until the mammogram machine was up and running again.

It's a good thing they did.

Awada's mammogram revealed a cancerous lump. After surgery to

remove the lump and two years of chemotherapy at the Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, Awada's cancer is in remission.

"Hiam saved my life," Awada says. "And who was the first person I saw when I opened my eyes after the surgery? Hiam. Right beside me."

Hiam Hamade (HEE-AHAM HA-ma-de), 55, is a public health nurse who travels mosque-to-mosque, door-to-door and friend-to-friend throughout metro Detroit's Arab-American community, preaching the importance of breast cancer screenings and teaching women how to do self-exams.

Hamade, a native of Lebanon, does it because early detection is the surest way to survive the disease. She knows that cultural beliefs cause some Arab-American women to shy away from both breast and cervical cancer screenings. Low-income and uninsured Arab-

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