

With Our Deepest Sympathies and Heartfelt Condolences  
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## Of Blessed Memory



Our Silk Road community mourns the loss of two extraordinary individuals whose sudden and unexpected departures have left an unfillable void in our hearts: Al Murad Gillani and Dima Sulaiman. Though no longer with us, Al Murad and Dima continue to inspire us with their legacies. We cherish their memories as precious threads woven into the fabric of our collective story.

**Al Murad Gillani**



It is with heavy hearts that we share the news that Al Murad ("Al") Gillani has passed away. The beloved brother and brother-in-law of our Co-Founders, Malik and Jamil, Al's loss is immeasurable.

Born in Pakistan, Al arrived in the US with his family at the age of eleven. As an immigrant, he was committed to preserving his heritage and culture while embracing all that he loved about being an American.

Many in our Silk Road community will remember Al with great fondness as our Box Office Manager (a role he proudly embraced in addition to his regular tech job). Al lit up the front-of-house with his infectious smile and gracious hospitality. He was adored by all who met him.

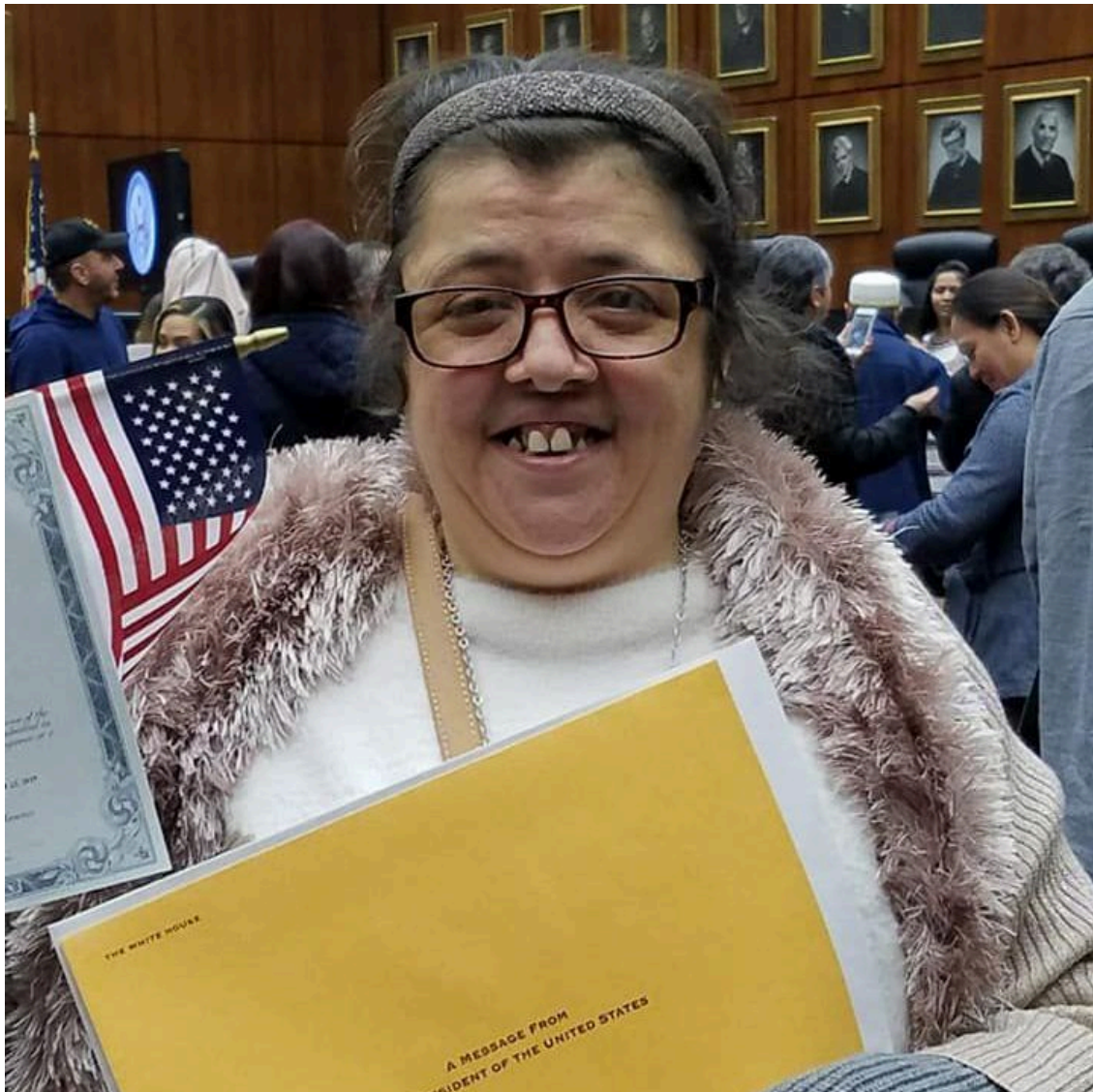
The dedication and enthusiasm with which Al supported Silk Road was an expression of love and admiration for his younger brother Malik.

We remember Al as a treasured member of the Gillani family, a devoted believer of the Shi'a Ismaili Muslim faith, and a fierce advocate for the values and principles we hold dear at Silk Road Cultural Center.

Reside in God's love, Al Murad.

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## Dima Sulaiman



Iraqi-born Dima Sulaiman was a gracious and enthusiastic student in our EPIC ELL (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course for English Language Learners) residency in Chicago's West Ridge community in 2020.

The course was offered in partnership with Trelus (formerly Asian Human Services) and drew immigrant and refugee participants of diverse backgrounds. All of the participants were newcomers to the art of playwriting.

Dima was loved and appreciated by students and teachers alike.

*According to EPIC ELL Teaching Artist, Lexi Saunders:*

*Dima was always the first to volunteer, and always the loudest when encouraging other students. I share the video of her play as a strong example of theme and messaging with every EPIC ELL class. She encapsulated it all so perfectly in her play's last line, "You know, I don't like when people say, 'Disabled people can't do this or do this.' We can do it, just give us a chance or time!"*

One cannot help but be moved by Dima's story of navigating obstacles and overcoming challenges with positivity, kindness, and grace.

Rest in God's warmth, Dima.



Click here to read a moving tribute to Dima written by our board member Rummana Hussain for the Chicago Sun-Times

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