NESMA HASSAN

People identify me as CONFIDENT, ARTISTIC & ENERGETIC, but I am so much more than that. This is my story.

Taking a stand for her Islamic religion, Nesma Hassan decided to make the Hijab, a headcovering worn by some Muslim women, a daily part of her attire since her sophomore year.

"I grew up seeing the women in my life wearing it such as my mother, sisters, and cousins," Hassan said. "It really is something that comes on your own time when you're ready for that step. It's like being baptized in the Christian religion."

She made the decision after seeking advice from Muslim family and friends. She said the Hijab symbolized modesty and maturity in her religion, and women in the Islamic culture are required to wear the Hijab at some point in their lives.

"Extremist groups put out an image that is not what Islam originally is supposed to be," Hassan said, "so I wear my Hijab to symbolize that there is more to it than what people stereotype it as."

Hassan initially worried how people might react.

"I actually wore it the first day on schedule pickup my sophomore year," Hassan said. "I was so scared because I thought everyone would just stare at me because they already knew me for what I looked like freshman year."

Though many see the Hijab as a limiting fashion factor, Hassan said she loved to mix and match scarves so that she can portray her personality.

"You see, many people just put on the scarf with dull outfits, but I'm not one to do that," Hassan said. "I really like to put my own touch of fashion in there.

Hassan said she felt compelled to shed light on the sometimes negative view some people might have about Islam. She said she wanted to be a model for the good in her religion.

In light of the terrorist event in Paris, Hassan said she worried that young girls might not take the stand to represent a good image for Islam. She offered encouragemtn to them to bring a new vision to the Muslim people.

"I just wanted to let anyone know that if they need help, you can go ahead and approach me because I am very open to answering questions and will give you positive feedback," Hassan said.

story by becky chung

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