

# THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

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**CAPTURING COUNTLESS TALES  
IN A SINGLE SNAPSHOT**



## AFGHAN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Afghan Community Center is a vibrant and inclusive space in Saint Louis that serves as a hub for the Afghan community and fosters connections with the broader community.

The Afghan Community Center seeks to develop a center that reflects the diverse needs, aspirations, and cultural heritage of the Afghan community in the United States. The ultimate goal is to create a welcoming environment that promotes social integration, empowerment, and mutual understanding.

The Afghan Community Center aspires to create a dynamic and inclusive space that celebrates Afghan culture, fosters social cohesion, and empowers individuals and families to thrive within the St. Louis community.

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## HOW ST. LOUIS DEFIES NATIONAL TRENDS

### INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ST. LOUIS' MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM SURPASSES NATIONAL AVERAGE OF PERFORMANCE



The Matching Grant program through the U.S. Committee for Refugee and Immigrants ([USCRI](#)) provides assistance for refugees, asylees, and other eligible populations to attain self-sufficiency through employment. Self-sufficiency is defined as when an individual's income disqualifies them from receiving government cash assistance programs and they can independently cover their own living expenses within a 240-day period, or 8 months.

Matching Grant (MG) is an alternative to public cash assistance funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Through the MG Program, USCRI promotes the economic self-sufficiency and long-term economic security of refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, Victims of Severe Forms of [Trafficking](#), and Special Immigrant Visa Holders (SIVs). Services include case management, employment services, maintenance assistance, English language training, health and medical referrals, and social adjustment services. The USCRI MG Network includes 31 sites in 22 states.

Through its thorough work and long-standing relationships within the community, the International Institute of St. Louis' Matching Grant program currently surpasses the national average of self-sufficiency among other [USCRI](#) refugee resettlement agencies. This helps ensure better and faster job placements, additional housing resources, and more. Additional services provided through Matching Grant include case management, cash allowance, housing and utility assistance, transportation assistance for work activities, job readiness training,

job search and placement, and employment case management. Through this holistic approach, immigrants and refugees are set up for success—being able to independently provide for themselves and their families within our community.

The success of the Matching Grant program demonstrates just one of many things that sets St. Louis up to succeed. As the region is continuously building and fostering a robust and inclusive workforce, by creating prosperous opportunities for all, we are preparing to grow our population and welcome more immigrants, more businesses, more entrepreneurs, and more opportunities for success.

### Matching Grant

Working together to help newcomers become self-sufficient



A client is considered self-sufficient when their income disqualifies them from receiving government cash assistance programs and they can independently cover their living expenses.

**Carrie Brickey**

International Institute of St. Louis

## FOSTERING ECONOMIC COLLABORATION GREATER STL INC UNITES 23 CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN HISTORIC EVENT



In a groundbreaking initiative, [Greater STL Inc](#) successfully brought together 23 area Chambers of Commerce, including the [United States Afghan Chamber of Commerce](#), to collaborate on a unique Economic Development Breakfast. This unprecedented event, held at the Airport Renaissance Hotel on November 9th at 8:30 am, marked a significant milestone in fostering collaboration and inclusivity within the business community.

While the pandemic limited in-person interactions, the collaboration thrived through weekly Zoom meetings, allowing representatives from diverse chambers to actively contribute to the planning and execution of the Economic Development Breakfast. The event witnessed a remarkable turnout, with 550 attendees, including business owners and entrepreneurs from the Afghan community who participated in such an occasion for the first time.

The [United States Afghan Chamber of Commerce](#) played a pivotal role in the event, with two tables representing their community. The highlight of the breakfast was a panel discussion featuring Arrey Obenson, the CEO and President of the International Institute of St. Louis. Obenson shared valuable insights into the monetary contributions of new arrival refugees to St. Louis, emphasizing the substantial impact through rent and taxes, amounting to over \$15 million. Moreover, he highlighted the impressive statistic that more than 88% of new arrivals are employed, underscoring their high level of self-sufficiency.

The event was not only an opportunity for business

discussions but also a platform for cultural understanding and appreciation. The organizers went the extra mile to ensure inclusivity by planning a diverse and accommodating menu, considering dietary restrictions prevalent among attendees from different regions and cultural backgrounds. Recognizing that individuals from various parts of the world may refrain from consuming certain types of meat, and Muslims avoid pork, the thoughtful menu planning contributed to the overall success of the breakfast.

The positive feedback received from attendees reflected the success of the event in creating a space where diverse voices could be heard, celebrated, and networked. The inclusive nature of the gathering demonstrated the importance of bringing together US. born and foreign-born small business owners and entrepreneurs in the same space to promote cross-cultural collaboration.

[Greater STL Inc](#) expressed gratitude for the overwhelming success of the event and anticipates hosting similar gatherings in the future. Creating spaces that encourage collaboration and networking among a diverse range of businesses is essential for fostering economic growth and community development. This groundbreaking event serves as a shining example of how unity and inclusivity can pave the way for a stronger, more vibrant business community in the Greater St. Louis region.

**Moji Sidiqi**

International Institute of St. Louis

## THE ALLURE OF AFGHAN TRADITIONAL WEDDINGS FROM PROPOSAL TO MARRIAGE



A matrimonial union, symbolizing the convergence of two souls, stands as a momentous milestone in the journey of a couple. It is a celebration of shared joys and sorrows, an event that demands an atmosphere that is not only enjoyable and exciting but, above all, truly memorable.

In the contemplation of the type of wedding to embrace, the dichotomy between modern and traditional choices often surfaces. In the current landscape, the allure of traditional weddings is experiencing an upswing, with many opting for customs that infuse joy and entertainment into the celebration. For those intrigued by the cultural tapestry woven into wedding traditions, an Afghan traditional wedding emerges as a captivating choice, promising a series of exhilarating rituals that enthrall from the inception to the culmination of the ceremony.

**Proposal and Acceptance:** The journey commences with the groom sending a proposal to the bride's family, initiating a sequence of events culminating in the union of the couple. The acceptance of the proposal is symbolized by the exchange of "Khimcha" and "Dismal," with the family's willingness denoted by the offering of sweets, known as "Shirini."

**Pre-wedding Etiquette:** The groom's family engages in a series of gift-giving ceremonies, setting the stage for joyous celebrations. These gifts, ranging from traditional [cuisines](#) to [clothing](#) and money, include ceremonies such as Iftari during [Ramadan](#), Eidi on Eids, Nowrozi for the new year celebration, and Barati on the night of lights in the Islamic calendar.

**Engagement Party (Sher-E-Ne Khore):** Hosted by the bride's family, the engagement party becomes a vital component of the wedding process, fostering a deeper connection between the bride and groom.

**Henna Night (Khina Night):** Following the engagement party is the Henna night, characterized by the intricate artistry of henna application on the bride's hands. This night is accompanied by music and the lively Attan dance, as the bride and groom don traditional Afghan attire.

**Rukhsati:** The Rukhsati tradition unfolds as the bride bids farewell to her family, marked by the tying of a green cloth around her waist. This poignant moment can occur a few days before the wedding day or simultaneously with the Nikah ceremony.

**Nikah:** The religious ceremony of Nikah takes place on the wedding day, involving a marriage contract agreed upon by the two families. The ceremony is a private affair, attended by the couple's immediate family and an Islamic clergy.

**Wedding Ceremony:** The grand wedding ceremony commences with the entrance of guests, guided by the families of the bride and groom. The evening is filled with contemporary and traditional music, creating an atmosphere of joy that extends into the early hours of the morning.

In essence, an Afghan traditional wedding unfolds from the proposal to the Attan dance, bearing financial responsibilities primarily on the groom's family. For those considering this cultural extravaganza, engaging a professional wedding planner well-versed in Afghan traditions can enhance the experience, even in settings like the United States. The celebration is not just a union of two individuals but a fusion of tradition, joy, and the promise of a new life together.

## THE AFGHAN DREAMERS' RESILIENT ODYSSEY IN THE WORLD OF ROBOTICS



In the dynamic realm of robotics, the Afghan Girls Robotics Team, affectionately known as the Afghan Dreamers, stands as an embodiment of unwavering determination, breaking barriers, and igniting inspiration among young minds globally. Founded in 2017 by Roya Mahboob, a visionary mentor and the founder of the [Digital Citizen Fund \(DCF\)](#), this group of girls, aged 12 to 18, along with devoted mentors, has embarked on an extraordinary journey spotlighted in the 2023 release from MTV Documentary Films, titled "[Afghan Dreamers](#)."

Prompted by an invitation from Dean Kamen for the 2017 FIRST Global Challenge in the United States, Roya Mahboob initiated the team despite grappling with initial challenges such as limited resources and makeshift training spaces. Undeterred, the 12-member team emerged, transcending geographical and societal limitations.

Their debut at the FIRST Global Challenge in 2017 was marked by visa rejections and customs complications. Despite setbacks, the team secured a Silver medal for Courageous Achievement. Tragedy struck upon their return when team captain Fatemah Qaderyan's father fell victim to a suicide bombing. Unfazed, the team pressed on, winning the Entrepreneurial Challenge in Estonia with a solar-powered robot designed to assist farmers. The subsequent year witnessed the team refining their skills in Canada.

In 2019, the team aspired to establish a [science and technology school for girls in Afghanistan](#), resulting in the creation of The Dreamer Institute in collaboration with various departments at Yale. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the team contributed to their community by designing low-cost ventilators, supported by [UNICEF](#) and using unconventional materials.

Confronting challenges amidst the intricate political landscape in Afghanistan in August 2021, the team sought refuge and appealed to Canada for assistance. Despite obstacles, some members successfully reached Mexico, underscoring their commitment to education. Their story is vividly depicted in the documentary "Afghan Dreamers," directed by David Greenwald and premiered in May 2023.

In 2022, the Afghan Dreamers expanded their skills and knowledge through a training program at [the Texas A&M University at Qatar's STEM Hub](#). The team showcased their creations at the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2023, highlighting the role of science and technology in addressing global challenges.

From humble beginnings in a basement to international acclaim, the Afghan Girls Robotics Team symbolizes the triumph of determination over adversity. Their inspiring journey continues to empower and resonate with aspiring young minds worldwide. As they contribute to technological advancements and showcase their talents on global platforms, the Afghan Dreamers persist as a symbol of resilience and empowerment in the field of robotics.

During [David Beckham's trip to Qatar](#) for the 20th Doha Forum, engaged with the Afghan Girls Robotics Team, testing out their robots. Amidst controversy over his reported £15 million-per-year deal to become the country's ambassador before its first World Cup, Beckham peered into a device attached to a pair of glasses as the Robotics Team demonstrated the functionality of their creation. This encounter further underscores the global recognition and impact of the Afghan Dreamers in the field of robotics.

**Hamdullah Hamdard**  
International Institute of St. Louis

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE AFGHAN HOUND



**Zardin, 1902**

One of the initial Afghan Hounds  
Photo: afghanhoundpedigrees.com

In the snow-clad mountains of Afghanistan, the winter hunt unfolds with the swift and clever [Tazis](#), a breed of dogs renowned for their agility and intelligence. Little did the world anticipate that these adept companions, celebrated for their hunting prowess, would capture the hearts of British colonial officers and metamorphose into the majestic Afghan Hound we know today.

The term "Tazi" denotes these exceptional hunting dogs, meticulously bred for their sharp eyesight and unparalleled speed in chasing prey. As Afghan hunters navigate through snow-covered terrains, their Tazis move stealthily, outwitting their quarry and showcasing their exceptional hunting abilities. With a long body, slender head, black nose, and almond-shaped dark eyes, the Tazi exudes grandeur and possesses a distinctive appearance.

Across centuries, dogs, including Tazis, have evolved from domesticated wolves, becoming indispensable companions to humans. Selective breeding tailored dogs for diverse tasks, and the Tazi emerged as a sighthound—slim, intelligent, and designed for rapid pursuit. Afghan hunters have cherished their Tazis for generations, employing them in the pursuit of rabbits, wild goats, jackals, and even prestigious deer. The transition from Tazi to Afghan Hound unfolded when British colonial officers introduced these dogs to London in the early 20th century. [Zardin](#), one of the initial Afghan Hounds, gained fame after being presented at Buckingham Palace and subsequently preserved at the British Museum. The breed's elegance, aristocratic demeanor, and aloof beauty contributed to its swift rise in popularity. The Afghan Hound, distinguished by its exotic ex-

pression, lengthy silky topknot, and distinctive coat pattern, swiftly became a symbol of tradition and sophistication. Yet, it was the dedication of individuals like Captain John Banff, who brought Zardin to London in 1907, that cemented the breed's presence in the Western world.

In the realm of dog breeding, the Afghan Hound stands out as a unique and ancient breed. Genetic studies reveal its basal position in the dog's family tree, underscoring its distinctive heritage outside Western Europe. The selective breeding and grooming practices of the past century have sculpted the Afghan Hound into the graceful and silky-coated companion we recognize today.

Despite its aristocratic appearance and prominence in dog shows, the Afghan Hound retains its innate hunting instincts. Lure coursing, a simulated hunting game, provides these dogs with an opportunity to exhibit their speed and agility, maintaining a connection to their tazi origins. During the 1971 state visit of the Afghan [king, Zahir Shah](#), to London, Afghan Hounds formed a "guard of honor," welcoming their homeland's ruler. This moment highlighted the enduring connection between the Afghan Hound and its country of origin.



The journey from the Afghan mountains to the splendor of [Buckingham Palace](#) encapsulates the narrative of the Afghan Hound. It is a story of elegance, loyalty, and the seamless fusion of tradition and modernity, rendering the Afghan Hound a cherished and timeless breed. Today, as the breed encounters shifts in popularity and breeding practices, the Afghan Hound stands as a testament to the enduring bond between humans and their faithful canine companions.

**Hamdullah Hamdard**

International Institute of St. Louis



## PRESERVING MISSOURI'S HISTORIC GOVERNOR'S MANSION



The [Missouri Governor's Mansion](#) stands as a timeless testament to the state's rich history, a residence that has witnessed the passage of time and the stewardship of numerous governors since its completion in late December 1871. Nestled on 10 acres overlooking the majestic [Missouri River](#) and the [State Capitol](#), this historic dwelling has been a symbol of elegance and endurance for over a century.

Constructed in a remarkably short span of eight months, the Mansion's creation was a collaborative effort, with prisoners from the nearby penitentiary contributing significantly to the labor. The visionary behind its design was the renowned St. Louis architect, [George Ingham Barnett](#), whose notable works also include the Henry Shaw House at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Embodying the popular Mansard Style of its time, characterized by a steep roof allowing for additional living space, the Mansion's original three-story structure boasted 13 bedrooms but lacked modern amenities like bathrooms or closets. The imposing portico, adorned with four pink granite columns, welcomed Governor B. Gratz Brown and his family on January 20, 1872, marking the beginning of a legacy.

Over the years, the Mansion became a canvas for successive first ladies, each leaving their indelible mark on its history. First Lady Dalton, recognizing the historical significance of the residence, undertook efforts to restore and secure antique furnishings, refurbish front doors, and advocate for an historical overseer—a tradition continued by those who followed. First Lady Betty Hearnes, motivat-

ed by a leaky roof, initiated extensive renovations, uncovering hidden treasures like original interior window shutters. She dedicated herself to repairing ornamental ironwork, slate roofs, and window casements, setting a precedent for future restoration endeavors.

In 1974, First Lady Carolyn Bond established the Missouri Mansion Preservation (MMP), a non-profit organization committed to the preservation and restoration of the Governor's Mansion. Mrs. Bond's visionary leadership resulted in the restoration of the library and the launch of a room-by-room improvement effort, raising millions in private and corporate funds.

First Lady Jean Carnahan continued the journey of "living restoration," addressing structural issues, refurbishing the basement, and raising funds for a fountain that stands as a reminder of Missouri's children. Her dedication paved the way for subsequent governors and first ladies to contribute to the Mansion's ongoing legacy.

First Lady Melanie Blunt secured \$3.1 million from the Missouri General Assembly for restoration projects, emphasizing the importance of recapturing the original design. Her commitment to historical significance and community engagement was further showcased through events like the Luncheon with the First Ladies.

The Missouri Governor's Mansion remains a beacon of Missouri's past, present, and future. As it continues to stand proudly on Madison Street, overlooking the Missouri River, its enduring charm and historical significance are a testament to the collaborative efforts of governors, first ladies, and preservationists across generations.



Photo Credit: missourimansion.org

**Hamdullah Hamdard**  
International Institute of St. Louis

## DARUL AMAN PALACE: A SYMBOL OF AFGHAN RESILIENCE



Photo Via pexels  
Gasim Mirzaie

[Darul Aman Palace](#), translating to 'Abode of Peace,' is a three-story-tall architectural marvel situated approximately 16 kilometers southwest of [Kabul](#), Afghanistan, in Darulaman. Originally built in the 1920s during the reign of Emir Amanullah Khan, the palace has endured a tumultuous history marked by destruction, abandonment, and, more recently, a remarkable restoration effort.

[Emir Amanullah Khan](#) initiated the construction of Darul Aman Palace in the early 1920s as part of his ambitious plan to modernize Afghanistan. In June 1926, he declared himself King of Afghanistan, envisioning the palace as the centerpiece of the new capital city, Darulaman, connected to Kabul by a narrow-gauge railway. To bring this vision to life, Amanullah Khan enlisted 22 architects from Germany and France, emphasizing the enduring ties between Afghanistan and Germany.

Designed by French architects A. Godard and M. Godard, along with German engineer [Walter Harten](#) and his team, Darul Aman Palace is an imposing neoclassical structure perched on a hill, offering a panoramic view of the dusty valley in the western part of Kabul. It was one of the first buildings in the country to boast central heating and running water, showcasing its technological advancements for the time.

Despite its grand design, the palace faced setbacks when religious conservatives forced King Amanullah from power in 1929. Intended as the seat of a future parliament, the building remained partially complete for years. Over time, it served various purposes, including as a medical school for [Kabul](#)

[University](#), a warehouse, and the seat of smaller ministries. The palace suffered extensive damage over the years, with fires in 1968 and 1978, as well as during the 1990s [Afghan Civil War](#), where rival Mujahideen factions battled for control of Kabul. Heavy shelling left the palace in ruins, serving as a refugee settlement and nomad camp until the early 2000s when it became a battalion headquarters for the Afghan National Army.

In 2005, plans were unveiled to refurbish the palace for Afghanistan's future parliament, funded by private donations. However, it became a target for the Taliban in a series of attacks in 2012. Eventually, a new building was constructed to house the parliament, and attention turned towards restoring Darul Aman Palace itself.

Commencing in 2016, a restoration project with a budget of 16 to 20 million dollars began, aiming to revive the palace for the centenary celebration of Afghanistan's full independence in 1919. The extensive restoration involved the removal of nearly 600 tons of debris, and by July 2019, major reconstruction work was completed.

Today, Darul Aman Palace stands as a testament to Afghan resilience and unity, with its neoclassical architecture restored to its former glory. Once considered a symbol of abandoned dreams, it now represents the nation's independence, resistance, and sacrifices.

## A CULINARY TREASURE WITH HEALTH BENEFITS

[Garlic](#) has long been acknowledged for its myriad health benefits, acting as a remedy for various ailments and a shield against dangerous infections.

If you aspire to maintain a healthy weight, regulate blood pressure, ensure normal cholesterol levels, keep your vision sharp, and fortify your digestive and [immune systems](#), incorporating garlic into your diet is the key.

**First Method:** Crush three cloves of garlic, finely mince them, and soak them in a glass of warm water. Mix two teaspoons of pure honey into the concoction and let it steep. Consume this mixture every morning for 15 consecutive days to promote a healthy stomach, clear vision, and normalized cholesterol levels. It rejuvenates the brain, wards off microbes, and strengthens the body's defenses.

**Second Method:** Finely crush garlic cloves, steep them in a glass of warm apple cider vinegar, and mix in the juice of two lemons. Consume this concoction once daily, preferably in the morning, to enhance the body's overall well-being. It is especially beneficial for those dealing with respiratory illnesses, male weakness, and cardiovascular issues.

**Third Method:** Mix minced garlic with yogurt and lemon juice in a half-glass serving. Consume this every morning and evening for 20 days to experience its myriad health benefits. This method is particularly effective in addressing issues like bad breath, joint pain, and abnormal cholesterol levels.

**Fourth Method:** Utilize garlic for respiratory ailments. Crush garlic cloves and add them to a pot of hot water. Inhale the steam to alleviate respiratory issues.

Remember to consume garlic consistently, and it will not only fortify your immune system but also serve as a preventive measure against various illnesses.

**Fifth Method:** Prepare a remedy for the joints by combining garlic cloves with coriander seeds. Soak the mixture in water overnight and consume it the next morning. This is an effective remedy for joint pain.

Garlic is not only a versatile kitchen ingredient



but also a potent medicinal herb. Embrace the habit of including garlic in your daily diet, and you will witness its transformative effects on your overall health.



**Fawzia Shahab**  
Afghanistan National Radio TV  
Former Anchor

## KABUL, A TAPESTRY OF HISTORY, CULTURE, AND LOVE

Kabul, a city adorned with sweet stories and ancient history, has borne witness to the ebb and flow of powerful kings and rulers. Its unique geopolitical location has consistently drawn the attention and influence of nations across the globe.

Geographically, the city is nestled in the elevated plains south of the "[Hindu Kush](#)" mountains, its structure intricately linked to the geological series of the Hindu Kush range. Post the Ice Age, Kabul underwent a gradual transformation into an agricultural plateau, leaving fertile residues that enriched various areas of the city. Surrounded by hills and hillocks such as [Sher Darwaza Hill](#), [Asmai Hill](#), [Merinjan Hill](#), Bala Hisar Hill, Bibi Mahro Hill, and Kollolah Pushta Hill – all referenced in the third geological era.

With a history spanning over 3,500 years, Kabul has become home to a population exceeding four million within an expansive 425 square kilometers. Diverse ethnicities have seamlessly merged, embracing each other's customs and traditions, giving rise to a nation that breathes life into Kabul, infusing the city with a profound sense of intimacy.

Kabul is a city resonating with love and kindness among its people. Its residents are genuine and hospitable, harboring mutual respect. The city boasts courageous and valiant men, alongside beautiful and brave women who have never bowed their heads, consistently striving for a brighter future. The active and hardworking sons and daughters have, throughout history, achieved numerous accomplishments, not only shining in various sectors but also leaving an indelible mark in the realms of science and art, thus introducing Afghanistan's name to the world.

The city of Kabul is adorned with a plethora of historical treasures. The Forty Columns Palace, Darul Aman Palace, Bala Hisar Fortress, Tapa-i-Toup, and Bagh Bala Palace stand out as notable [landmarks](#) in the capital. Among them, Bagh Bala Palace is particularly revered by the people and frequented by numerous tourists, serving as one of the oldest and most historical sites in Kabul.

Indeed, these myriad aspects collectively make Kabul a grand and beloved city—a city steeped in both love and art.



Photo Via pexels  
Mohammad Husaini



**Elyas Mirzaee**  
Kabul - Afghanistan



## FROM IMMIGRANT DREAMS TO DRIVEN SUCCESS: PRESTIGE MOTORS' JOURNEY

In 1999, Ahmad Safari, at the tender age of 10, embarked on a journey to the United States, leaving behind his homeland and stepping into a new world of opportunities. Fast forward to today; Ahmad, alongside his business partner Faisal Faez, stands as a proud owner of Prestige Motors, a thriving car dealership in St. Louis. Their story is one of determination, hard work, and the power of community.

Ahmad's American journey began with navigating the challenges of adolescence, moving through fifth grade, middle school, and ultimately earning a Bachelor's degree in Finance from the University of Missouri St Louis (UMSL). However, it wasn't just about academics for Ahmad; it was about realizing a dream he and Faisal had nurtured since their college days – owning a successful business.

The duo didn't jump directly into the car business. They started with the cell phone industry, learning the ropes of entrepreneurship before venturing into the challenging world of car dealerships in 2017. Surrounded by like-minded friends who shared their entrepreneurial spirit, Ahmad and Faisal motivated each other through the ups and downs of establishing a new business.

The early days of Prestige Motors were not without obstacles. Starting with a modest budget and a handful of cars, they faced the trials of being newcomers to the field. The car business, notorious for its potential to incur substantial losses quickly, required resilience and a strategic approach. However, Ahmad and Faisal, being family-oriented and sharing a common vision, never doubted their path.

Reflecting on their journey, Ahmad emphasizes the significance of having similar goals and putting in the hard work required for business

growth. They started small, steadily expanding their inventory year by year. Sacrifices were made, but the unwavering belief in their dreams fueled their determination.

In 1999, St. Louis had fewer than 10 Afghan families, including Ahmad and Faisal. The absence of Afghan community centers, mosques, grocery stores, or restaurants made assimilation challenging. However, over the years, the Afghan community in St. Louis has flourished. Ahmad takes pride in contributing to this growth and assisting fellow Afghans in settling faster by providing reliable vehicles, often the first purchase for many newcomers.

Customer satisfaction has been a cornerstone of Prestige Motors' success. Ahmad and Faisal prioritize selling quality vehicles, ensuring that their customers become long-term patrons. This commitment to excellence has not only fueled their business growth but also contributed to the broader success of the Afghan community in St. Louis.

As Prestige Motors continues to thrive, Ahmad and Faisal's journey serves as an inspiring testament to the power of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of giving back to one's community. From immigrant dreams to driven success, their story resonates as a beacon of hope for aspiring entrepreneurs and newcomers alike.

### **PRESTIGE MOTORS**

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