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of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington, said there is a perception among high school kids that Arab youths are more aggressive.

"Is there any foundation for that?" Paul asked.

It is one of many stereotypes Ahwal refutes. She also addresses common ones.

Many Arab-Americans own party stores, Ahwal said. She points out many are also doctors, lawyers and engineers. Many Ara-

'The mythical Arab, we are the 'B-B-B' as they call us: belly dancers, bombers and billonaires.'

Terry Ahwal

...bic people live in Dearborn, but a considerable number reside in Farmington and Livonia as well.

And, despite what's depicted in the movies, not all of the Middle East is desert and added Ahwal. "The first camel I saw was at the Detroit Zoo."

Some generalities are more disturbing, though, especially ones that paint Arab-Americans as terrorists.

Before the World Trade Center bombing, there were no acts of

terrorism committed by Arab-Americans in the United States, Ahwal said. They are critical of U.S. policy in the Mideast, but support the country, she added.

In broad brush strokes, all Arab-Americans are thought to be Muslim. Many, though, are like Ahwal and Christian.

"Again, Muslim people are not all Arab and all Arab people are not Muslims," she said. "Therefore, when you look and judge Arabs, please judge them by who they are and not on a stereotype."



An objection: Haifa Mansour of Farmington Hills stands up and objects to the term Chaldean.



Forum's speakers: The Multi-cultural Forum's speakers were Joseph Kasab and Terry Ahwal.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMLEN

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