



2025

Impact Report





Gather around the table

At Kahanee, we believe in bringing all voices to the table; in earnest, in story, in curiosity, in reciprocity, in humility, in peace. We believe that stories are the bridge between people, to nurture understanding and peace across cultures, generations, and experiences.

By using storytelling and story listening, we can better understand all voices at the table and connect people who may not believe they have any connection. By utilizing the ancient conflict transformation methods and modern creative elements - we aim to encourage people to share their stories, listen to others stories, and approach the world with more curiosity - all in the name of peace.

2025 Board of Directors

Board President Dr. Durdana Islam

Board Members Keziah Arevalo
Bonface Beti
Meaghan Morrish
Val Monk



Table of Contents

| | |
|----|---|
| 02 | Letter from the Founder |
| 03 | 2025 Initiatives - Sawa Iftar |
| 04 | 2025 Initiatives - Pass the #%&!@* Potatoes |
| 05 | 2025 Initiatives - Scoops for Peace & Gajarah |
| 06 | 2025 Initiatives - Story Connections & Organizational |
| 07 | 2025 Initiatives - Community Connections |
| 08 | What we learned |
| 09 | Looking Ahead |
| 10 | Thank you |



Letter from Somia Sadiq



Dear friends, partners, and supporters of Kahanee,

I keep returning to the image of a courtyard in a brick home.

A space held by strong walls, open to the sky. A place where people gather - not because everything is tidy or resolved, but because it is shared. It's where they gather, irrespective of what is happening. Where voices echo, stories linger, and even silence has room to breathe. A place where we can pause, notice who else is there, and want to stay just a little bit longer.

That courtyard is at the heart of Kahanee.

From the beginning, Kahanee has been rooted in a simple but radical idea: that stories are not extras to peacebuilding—they are the work itself. Stories help us see each other more fully. They interrupt assumptions. They soften certainty. They invite curiosity, becoming bridges across cultures, generations, faiths, and lived experiences.

2025 was such a big year for Kahanee. Some parts flashy, some parts chaotic, some perfectly polished, all parts deeply human.

We gathered in shared spaces during Ramadan, creating interfaith connection. We watched conflict unfold and transform in a family setting on stage. We listened to stories over ice cream, in community halls, across digital spaces, across national boundaries. Again and again, we saw that people are hungry for spaces that feel like courtyards - places where they can slow down, be honest, and feel a sense of belonging.

None of this happened alone. None of this would be possible without you.

Every gathering, conversation, and initiative that you read about in this report exists because you chose to walk alongside us. Your support - whether financial, logistical, creative, or relational - made it possible for Kahanee to move ideas into the world and meet people where they are.

As the founder and president, I feel such immense gratitude - for who we're becoming, how we're getting there, and who's in the field with us. Kahanee is still growing. And it's growing with care, like a home, brick by brick, strengthened by the people who gather within it.

As you read this report, and hear about the incredible things coming next year, I hope you see your presence throughout it - in the spaces that felt possible, in the conversations that mattered. Thank you for believing in this work, thank you for trusting storytelling as a tool for peace. And thank you for stepping into the courtyard with us.

With deep appreciation,

Somia Sadiq
Founder & President, Kahanee

Sawa Iftar

The Sawa Iftar took place on March 8, 2025, at the Ukrainian Labour Temple, in partnership with Bridge and Mediation Services. The event brought together more than 100 people; across ages, faiths, and backgrounds to break fast together during Ramadan. At its core, the Iftar was about community: creating a welcoming space where people could meet each other, learn from each other, and build real connection through shared experience.

A big part of what made the night special was how personal it felt. Everyone was invited to bring a dish for the potluck, and the food became its own kind of storytelling, Jollibee alongside samosas, Jeannie's Cake alongside recipes passed down through generations. Sharing food made it easy to start conversations, and it gave people a chance to share a piece of their culture without needing the "perfect words."

Before breaking the fast, each table was guided through a set of story-based questions designed to help people introduce themselves in a deeper way. Instead of small talk, guests were encouraged to share who they are, where they come from, and what matters to them. That simple structure helped create a warm, thoughtful atmosphere—one where people could be curious, open, and real with each other.

The Sawa Iftar also created a meaningful bridge between Muslim and non-Muslim community members. For Muslims, it offered a supportive space to break fast surrounded by people who wanted to show up with care. For non-Muslims, it was an invitation to learn more about Ramadan and experience interfaith connection in a way that felt natural and human. The event reflected Kahanee's belief that we often have more in common than we think and it's now become an annual pillar in Kahanee's calendar for bringing people together.



Pass the #%&!@* Potatoes

Pass the #%&!@* Potatoes was a play Kahanee commissioned to make dialogue skills feel real, relatable, and usable, especially when conflict shows up in everyday life. Hosted at Théâtre Cercle Molière on April 12, 2025, the show used the setting of a family dinner table to explore how tension escalates, how people get stuck in patterns, and how small shifts in language and curiosity can change the outcome.

The play centers on a dinner conversation that spirals into conflict. In a “Groundhog Day” style, the same scene repeats five times, with the ending changing each round. It moves from total chaos and blow-ups, toward moments of reframing, better listening, and growing understanding. The conflict doesn’t magically disappear but by the final scene, the family has learned how to stay at the table and start seeing each other with more empathy. The production also reflected Kahanee’s commitment to the local community and strong collaboration. The play was written by Anna Chatterlan and directed by Toronto-based director Niki Landau and Paul Lambert from Panik Theatre Productions. Auditions were held at the University of Winnipeg and brought in more than 15 local actors across age ranges. The final cast was fully local, with performers ranging from 16 to late 50s, and the full production came together through rehearsals the week leading up to the show.

Tone of the most memorable elements was the use of masks. During the first week of rehearsal, each actor chose a mask that fit their character, helping them embody the role without inhibition. Creatively, the masks added a striking visual layer. But they also worked as a metaphor for familiar “family archetypes” many people recognize: the mediator trying to fix everything, the instigator who pokes at others, and the roles we fall into when emotions run high.

What the play showed, again and again, was that curiosity can interrupt the loop. Each repeated scene began with a verbal fight and people storming away upset, until the final version, where story and questions created room for empathy. The dinner table was a deliberate choice: it’s accessible, universal, and familiar. Many people know what it feels like when family gatherings become battlegrounds, especially in a time of intense polarization and the play offered a way to practice new responses without needing a “perfect” script.

The show sold out with 130 attendees, and the energy in the room was high before and after. People laughed, felt heavy moments, and recognized themselves in the characters, comments like “grandpa was just like my grandpa” and “I am definitely the sister” were common. After the performance, the directors, Kahanee founder Somia Sadiq, and Kahanee Board Member Bonface Beti hosted a panel discussion on theatre as a tool for conflict and peace conversations. At the heart of Kahanee’s mission is making peace feel accessible and Pass the #%&!@* Potatoes was a powerful way to do exactly that.



Scoops for Peace

Scoops for Peace was a small, intimate community conversation hosted at Chaeban Ice Cream. Chaeban is a local ice cream and dairy shop founded by Joseph Chaeban; a dairy scientist, entrepreneur, and immigrant who came to Canada when he was young. The setting was warm and relaxed, making it the perfect space for people to gather, listen, and connect in a way that felt natural.

The event brought together 10 engaged attendees, each enjoying a flight of Chaeban's well-loved flavours while hearing Joseph share his story. The conversation blended big themes; community, connection, and belonging, with the kind of grounded wisdom that comes from lived experience (and plenty of joy around Joseph's favourite topic: dairy). It was a reminder that peacebuilding doesn't always happen in formal spaces, sometimes it starts over ice cream and an honest story.

After the talk, people stayed to keep the conversation going. Attendees connected with one another and with Kahanee, sharing ideas about how dialogue can support inclusion, belonging, and peace in everyday life. Events like Scoops for Peace help Kahanee stay rooted locally by inviting community members into simple, meaningful spaces, where stories strengthen relationships and support the fabric of peace.

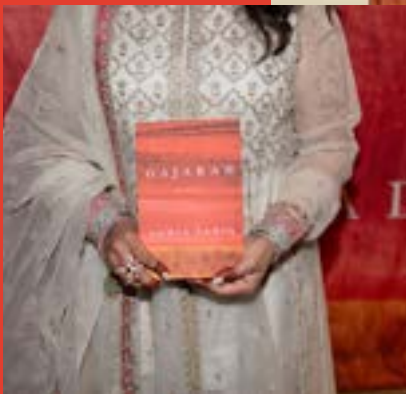


Gajarah

Kahanee's founder, Somia Sadiq, released her debut novel *Gajarah* in September. The novel speaks directly to the heart of Kahanee's mission, following the life of Emahn, a young Pakistani woman whose world is changed by sexual violence. Moving between the UAE, Pakistan, and Canada, Emahn's story weaves through isolation, abuse, love, loss, and ultimately the power of stories and ancestral wisdom.

Gajarah explores the complexity of the human story, reminding readers that people are always more than what we see on the surface. We carry not only our own lived experiences, but also the echoes of our parents', grandparents', and ancestors' journeys. Through a blend of poetry, prose, and myth, Somia brings multiple ways of knowing into the narrative, offering readers different entry points into reflection, healing, and understanding.

All proceeds from *Gajarah* support Kahanee's peace initiatives and programming, a contribution we are deeply grateful for. The book has become another way for community members to engage with the work of peace, story, and belonging that Kahanee strives to nurture.



Story Connections

In early 2025, the Kahanee team found itself building a wide network of new relationships across North America and beyond. Through a mix of virtual and in-person meetings, we connected with people working in peacebuilding, dialogue, and community spaces and many of those conversations were deep, generous, and energizing. We didn't want that wisdom to stay only in private rooms, so we looked for a way to share it more openly.

That's what led to the launch of Kahanee's Story Connection Interviews. Even though we called them "interviews," they weren't formal or scripted. They were real, free-flowing conversations hosted by different members of the Kahanee team on a rotating basis. We recorded each conversation and shared it in a few ways: short clips on Instagram and Facebook (often in collaboration with the guest), a written blog summary to capture key takeaways, and later because people wanted more, the full conversations on YouTube.

The response was strong. Some interview clips reached over 1,500 views on Instagram and helped generate real buzz among peacebuilders, partners, and followers who were hungry for thoughtful content in this space. Guests ranged widely, from keynote speakers focusing on empathy, to poet community-builders, to international mediators, authors, and more, each bringing a different lens to what it means to build peace and belonging.

As interest grew, so did the demand. By the end of the year, it became clear the initiative needed more structure and capacity to keep up with what people were asking for. That demand is what led Kahanee to pause hosting and plan a revamp of the Story Connection Interviews in 2026, so the work could continue in a way that's sustainable, and even more impactful.



Organizational

At the organizational level in 2025, Kahanee invested in the people and infrastructure needed to support growth. The team brought on a full-time peace intern and, over time, expanded that role into a peace practitioner, someone able to support day-to-day initiative work on the ground and help strengthen program delivery as Kahanee's community presence continued to grow.

Kahanee also added a Director of Partnerships role to lead connection-building and relationship management. This helped formalize how Kahanee nurtures partnerships, follows through on opportunities, and stays in relationship with the many community members and organizations engaging with the work.

To support programming more practically, the team moved into a shared office space with partner Narratives Inc. This created more room and flexibility to host events and programs, making Kahanee's work both more connected and easier to activate locally.



Community Involvement and Connections

In 2025, Kahanee focused on building community; both here in Winnipeg and with partners internationally. Our team showed up across the city, attending local events and making connections that strengthened Kahanee's presence and relationships on the ground. This included Adam Kahane's book launch and other dialogue events at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

During Islamic Heritage Month and throughout Ramadan, Kahanee joined community events with the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA). Founder Somia Sadiq was honoured at the Manitoba Legislature and within the MIA community, and the team attended an interfaith Iftar hosted by MIA. These moments were about more than attendance; they reflected Kahanee's commitment to belonging, relationship-building, and showing up alongside the community.

Kahanee also deepened its work through dialogue and partnership. The team attended and spoke on panels hosted by partners Sadaa and Mediation Services, contributing to conversations on storytelling and reconciliation. Later in the fall, Kahanee began a new partnership with Compassionate Winnipeg, a group working to build Winnipeg as a Compassionate City, where everyone can feel true belonging. Kahanee and Compassionate Winnipeg will be hosting a series of dialogues in 2026, called Community Conversations.

Kahanee joined both Folklorama and Celebrate Everything this year through their partnership programs, strengthening our collaborations across the community.

Through Folklorama, we deepened our commitment to using arts as a vehicle for celebration, connection, and intercultural learning. This partnership allows us to engage with diverse communities through story-driven events that honour cultural expression and shared experience. Our partnership with Celebrate Everything further advances our mission of belonging by uplifting holidays and traditions that often receive less visibility. The initiative works to bring cultural and religious celebrations to the same level of recognition as dominant Anglo-Saxon statutory holidays, broadening what we collectively honour and reminding us that belonging is built when every community's rituals and stories are valued. Together, these collaborations reflect Kahanee's ongoing work to weave story, culture, and community into shared spaces where everyone feels seen.

Throughout the year, Kahanee also shared its approach in learning spaces. Somia spoke at a Brown Bag Lecture at the Mauro Institute on the power of story in peace talks, highlighting practical ways story can be used in negotiations and peace processes. Internationally, Kahanee sponsored the Mediators Beyond Borders Peace Summit in Lima, Peru, where Somia was recognized with the Peacebuilder of the Year award, an honour that reflected Kahanee's growing relationships and credibility beyond Canada.



What We Learned in 2025



Community

In 2025, Kahanee focused deeply on building its community connections. As a storytelling nonprofit, our events became an essential way to meet people where they are, build trust, and invite the public into conversations about peace. One of the clearest lessons of the year was that Winnipeg is ready (eager even) to join these conversations. People were looking for spaces where they could experience light, hope, and guidance for the future, especially in the context of peacebuilding and belonging.



Intention

We also learned that connection thrives in smaller, more intentional spaces. The world is shifting away from large, anonymous events where people feel like one of many. Instead, people are craving community, intimacy, and conversations that feel grounded and human. Our most impactful moments came from gatherings that had a grassroots feel, spaces where attendees could talk directly with facilitators, ask questions, and build relationships in a setting that felt warm, welcoming, and authentic.



Conversation

Through our Story Connections interviews, Kahanee's leaders found themselves in meaningful, vulnerable, and wise conversations week after week. We realized that these conversations held exactly the kind of nourishment people were searching for. People want to hear about the good happening in the world. They want to see themselves reflected in others' experiences. They want to leave with insights or wisdom they can carry into their own lives, whether that's in peacebuilding, dialogue, or simply in being human.



Partnership

Finally, 2025 reaffirmed the exponential value of partnerships. From co-hosting events, to amplifying content, to offering financial or logistical support, our partners expanded what was possible. Their contributions were not just helpful—they were essential. This year made it clear that many individuals and organizations are craving spaces where stories can bloom, and where understanding can take root. Partnerships are what allow those spaces to grow.

Looking Ahead



Between the Threads

In 2026, Kahanee is launching “Between the Threads”: A podcast exploring the threads that connect us - story, memory, identity, and meaning - and how they weave the fabric of peace in our lives and communities. This podcast is partnered with Narratives Inc. The podcast is a strategic step in expanding the story connection initiative, expanding production, conversations and reach. The podcast keeps focused on what Kahanee does best: making space for real stories, told with care. It also brought more people into Kahanee’s work by offering an easy entry point: you can listen, learn, and feel connected to what we’re building, even if you’re brand new to us.

The podcast also supported our bigger goal of helping people understand each other better through story. Each episode is a chance to slow things down, hear directly from people, and better understand what’s behind the way we live, disagree, heal, and lead, and explore how story can be used as a tool for this. Throughout 2026, Between the Threads will help strengthen Kahanee’s public voice while staying grounded in community, respect, and truth-telling. Kahanee and Narratives built a studio for interviews at their headquarters, and have three seasons and public shows planned for 2026.



Laachi

In 2026, Kahanee is launching Laachi, a new initiative centered on belonging.

Laachi means cardamom, a small seed with a powerful aroma. Much like this seed, stories may seem inconspicuous or tucked quietly into our personal histories, yet they hold the ability to transform the flavour, mood, and atmosphere of a space. They shape connection. They remind us of who we are to one another.

The Laachi Initiative will unfold through nine gatherings, each exploring belonging through a different form of expression, ranging from written word and poetry to movement, dance, food, and more. Each gathering will feature local experts from across Winnipeg who will share their craft and guide participants in exploring their own stories through that expressive form.

Throughout the year, participants, facilitators, and our wider community will be invited to write a Laachi Letter: a personal letter addressed to a fictionalized “Laachi,” reflecting on their relationship to belonging: their stories, moments, memories, and feelings. These letters offer a gentle entry point into storytelling and self-expression, inviting people to articulate what belonging means to them.

The year-long initiative will culminate in a public exhibition showcasing the creations, expressions, and Laachi Letters from across the gatherings. This exhibition will offer a space for the community to witness belonging in many forms and voices, an embodied reminder that belonging is a shared, collective story, nourished by each of us.

Community Conversations

In partnership with several organizations at the local, provincial, and global level, Kahanee will be co-hosting a series of dialogues across the City of Winnipeg reflecting on avenues to build a more compassionate city. This helps position the city as a key player in the Charter of Compassion, which is a global movement of compassion to co-create transformation at all levels, by connecting, cultivating, and encouraging networks of compassionate action.

THANK YOU

As we close our 2025, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who walked with us, in story, in peace, in reciprocity.

To our community: thank you for showing up, sharing your stories, and trusting us with your time and presence. Every conversation, every moment of listening, and every gathering was shaped by you. You remind us why this work matters.

To our partners: thank you for opening your hearts, your ideas, and your support. From co-hosting events to sharing content to offering guidance behind the scenes, you helped us build spaces that felt welcoming, thoughtful, and grounded in relationship.

To our donors and supporters: thank you for believing in the importance of story and belonging. Your support helped us take ideas off the drawing board and bring them into the community.

To our board, advisors, and volunteers: thank you for your steady guidance and care. Your commitment has strengthened Kahanee in ways that will carry us forward for years to come.

Kahanee is still young, and everything we built this year was made possible because people chose to walk alongside us. Thank you for being part of this story.



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