

## **GROUP HOPES TO BRING MOHAMMED TO MALDEN**

Residents want to foster goodwill, thank Iraq man who helped rescue Jessica

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A group of Malden residents hopes to bring the mysterious Iraqi who helped rescue Jessica Lynch to West Virginia.

The group, calling itself the Friends of Mohammed — after the only name the man would provide to U.S. troops — is made up of about 100 people who have already contributed about \$200 to the effort. They also hope to lure Mohammed's wife and daughter.

"It's a pure humanitarian thing that he did," said James Theibeault, a member of the group. "And this is a humanitarian thing that makes us feel good. I'd like to shake his hand."

Members of the group are working with the Islamic Center of West Virginia, the West Virginia State Bar and the West Virginia Nursing Association, Theibeault said.

Mohammed walked for miles on foot to tell U.S. Marines about Lynch, and returned twice to the hospital where she was held to collect more information to coordinate the rescue. Mohammed's wife worked as a nurse at the hospital.

"A person, no matter his nationality, is a human being," Mohammed, a 32-year-old lawyer, said in an interview last week at a Marine base where he, his wife and his daughter were being kept.

Theibeault said the Islamic Center would act as lead organization in bringing Mohammed to West Virginia. He said it would be a good opportunity to foster goodwill during tense times for Muslims.

"They're in a tight spot with everything that's going on," Theibeault said of the Islamic community. "So a little town in the Upper Kanawha Valley will step forward to invite [Mohammed] here and try to help them out."

Theibeault said the length of the war and any debriefing Mohammed and his family might go through makes a timetable impossible to predict. But if Mohammed travels to the United States, Theibeault hopes he will speak in the Mountain State.