



Dr King's Visionary Awards Gala

PRESENTS

*Women's History
Month*

W O M E N O F D E S T I N Y

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WELCOME MESSAGE

On behalf of The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Visionary Awards Gala committee, I am honored to celebrate with you.

It is so important to continue to work towards a fair and just system, as it becomes harder in this society.

Tonight, we celebrate a group of honorees that have worked tirelessly to strive for fairness and justice. Whether in business or activism we are proud of your hard work and dedication to our communities.

Congratulations and well wishes for your continued success.

Pastor Emmanuel Asse
Executive Director
Lincoln-King Center

Global Peace Ambassador
The Institute of Public Policy & Diplomacy Research

Member
Full Gospel Church of Island Park Assembly of God

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Visionary Awards Gala

Recognizing outstanding individuals who demonstrate excellence in their work, service and commitment to their communities.

THEME

WOMEN OF DESTINY

Reception Cocktail 4:30PM
Dinner 6pm -10pm

Crest Hollow Country Club

PROGRAM

MISTRESSES OF CEREMONIES

Professor Hoona Kim

*

Ms. Melissa Figueroa

Deputy Director

Nassau County Office of Hispanic Affairs

AMERICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Soprano Cassandra Douglas

INVOCATION

Pastor Marie G. Gilles

First Revelation Church I Premiere Eglise D'Apocalypse

*

Ms. Selma Mujovic

Islamic Unity & Cultural Center of Plav-Gusinje (ISCCPGNY)

Welcome Remarks & Statement of Purpose.....Pastor Emmanuel Asse

Special Remarks.....Honorable Justice Andrea S. Ogle
New York State Supreme Court

Special Remarks.....Honorable Soma Syed
New York City Civil Court

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Introduction to the Keynote Speakers..... Professor Hoona Kim
Ms. Melissa Figueroa

GUESTS OF HONOR

Dr. Corrinne Graham - Margalie Dorcelet - Shareefa Williams
Noida Clarke, RN - Detective Tanya Duhaney - Malini Shah
Selma Mujovic - Minister Victoria E. Goulbourne - Pastor Marie G. Gilles
Apostle Ruth Degand - Lourdes V. Hartrick - First Lady Ermany Beau brun
First Lady Nirva Celestin - Yilling Li

CHIEF GUESTS

Hon. Justice Karen Gopee
New York State Supreme Court

Ms. Rhonda Bindu, Esq
Chief Executive Officer
Gracie Mansion Conservatory & Former Queens Deputy Borough President

Dr. Nayeema Khan
Chairperson, Khan's Tutorial

Dr. Laurie D. Hamilton
Hempstead Public School

Stephanie Delia, Esq
Little Haiti, BK

SPECIAL APPEARANCE

Honorable Bashir Qamar
Founder
Pakistani American Community of Long Island

Honorable Lemell Sherod
United For Progress Democratic Club

Devicka Persaud, MD

Stephanie Delia, Esq
Little Haiti, BK

Rev. Dr. Karen Champion

Keria Blue, Vice Chair
Nassau County Human Rights

Honorable Francis Becker
Deputy
Nassau County Clerk

Rev. David T. Ball
St John's United Methodist Church

Rev. Dr. Jean C. Romulus

Dr. Frantz H. Metellus, Ph.D

Dr. James Lamar
Assistant Commissioner
Nassau County Department of Consumer Affairs

Pastor Sandra Levasseur

Dr. Ahmed Elkoulily, MD
Express Medical Group

Mr. Mizan Choudhury
Community United Democratic Club

Pastor Joseph Altildor

Dr. Gladys Chevalier

Dr. Maria Bernard

Rev. Edvard Esteve

Rev. Joel Hernandez
Senior Pastor
Full Gospel Church of Island Park

Rev. Dr. Joseph N. Felix

Past Emmanuel Beauvil

Rev. Serge Robert

AWARDS PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Lifetime Achievement Award

Presented By
Pastor Emmanuel Asse * Honorable Francis Becker

United States Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award

Presented By
Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America

Proclamation

Presented By
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
United States Senate

Community Service

CITATION

Presented By
Honorable Bruce Blakeman
County Executive
Nassau County

New York State Assembly Resolution

Presented By
NYS Assemblywoman
Honorable Vivian Cook

New York State Senate Resolution

Presented By
Honorable Kevin Parker
New York State Senator

Community Service

CITATION

Presented By
Honorable Jennifer DeSena
Town Supervisor
Town of North Hempstead

Community Service

CITATION

Presented By
Honorable Waylyn Hobbs, Jr.
Mayor
Village of Hempstead

Community Service

CITATION

Presented By
Honorable Don Clavin
Hempstead Town Supervisor

Community Service

Proclamation

Presented By
Honorable Laura Gillen
United States Congresswoman

Community Service

Proclamation

Presented By
Honorable Gregory W. Meeks
United States Congressman

Community Service

Citation

Presented By
Honorable Joseph S. Saladino
Supervisor
Town of Oyster Bay

Community Service

Proclamation

Presented By
Honorable Yvette D. Clarke
United States Congresswoman



Pastor Emmanuel Asse

Global Peace Ambassador
The Institute of Public Policy & Diplomacy Research

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Congratulations and well wishes for your continued success.

Masters of Ceremonies

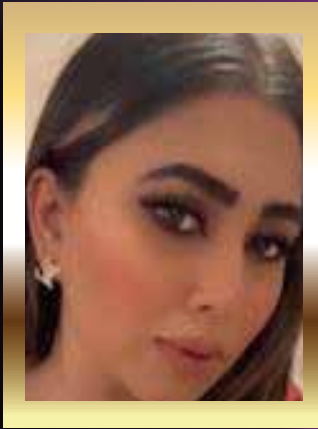


**Professor
Hoona Kim**



Melissa Figueroa

Deputy Director
Nassau County Office of Hispanic
Affairs



Madiha Mustafa

VICE PRESIDENT
PAKISTANI AMERICAN COMMUNITY
OF LONG ISLAND NEW YORK

My name is Madiha Mustafa, and I proudly serve as the Vice President of PACOLI (Pakistani American Community of Long Island), the most dynamic community organization in New York. Over the past five years, I've dedicated countless hours to serving my community, engaging in charitable initiatives both in the United States and back home in Pakistan. My passion lies in uplifting all communities, and I actively participate in various social, religious, cultural, and ethnic events.

My journey began with a solid foundation in the arts, having graduated from an esteemed art school in Pakistan. Upon moving to New York, I pursued cosmetology studies, honing my skills to become a proficient makeup artist. With 14 years of dedicated experience, I've earned recognition for my expertise, specializing in bridal and celebrity makeup artistry. Notably, I played a pivotal role in the success of the Miss Indian contest in the United States and have collaborated with prominent figures from both Bollywood and Hollywood.

In addition to my professional achievements, I am deeply committed to advancing the cause of women's empowerment. During Women's History Month celebrations in 2025, I had the privilege of spearheading several initiatives aimed at celebrating and honoring the achievements of women from diverse backgrounds. Through workshops, panel discussions, and community outreach programs, we highlighted the importance of gender equality and empowered women to pursue their dreams without limitations.

Beyond my professional endeavors, my greatest joy comes from my beautiful family. I cherish my husband and our two wonderful children, a son, and a daughter, who inspire me every day. With a heart devoted to service and a commitment to excellence, I look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in both my personal and professional spheres.



Lamiaa Elkoulily
ADMINISTRATOR
EXPRESS MEDICAL GROUP

Mrs. Lamiaa Elkoulily is the practice administrator at Express Medical Care. She holds a bachelor's degree in arts and education and a master's in business. In addition, she holds many certifications in management and leadership. Lamiaa Elkoulily has 25-plus years of experience in management. She is the Muslim Advisory Board Chairwomen, she is the President and founder of American Muslim of Suffolk and NY, she sits on the board of Pronto of Long Island. She has received multiple awards for hard work advocating for the community. She is the wife of Dr. Ahmed Elkoulily and a mother to two daughters, Layla and Lina Elkoulily.

Mrs. Lamiaa Elkoulily has been a dedicated servant to the community, especially the Muslim community. She is a good representative for women in Islam and sets an excellent example for Muslim women in leadership.



Deb Harrison

Mrs. Deborah (Deb) Harrison is a lifetime resident of New York's Hudson Valley. A growth and change catalyst, Deb helps individuals and organizations adapt to and initiate change so they can improve performance and well-being. Deb was raised in the Shawangunk Mountains and spent her childhood building her body, mind and soul through adventures in the woods, avid journaling and striving to overcome difficult obstacles. Her experiences, along with her curious and compassionate nature, set her off on a lifetime of looking to shine her light and help others to shine. Family members and friends note how she has

always had this "way about her," seen in her eyes and smile, resilience beyond the hurt she held inside.



AMB. Dr. Andrise Bass
THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY
& DIPLOMACY RESEARCH

Dr. Andrise Bass is a beacon of inspiration. She embodies visionary leadership and unwavering dedication in her tireless pursuit of creating a world of equality and positive change. With a career spanning an impressive 29 years in the private and nonprofit sectors, Andrise has established herself as a dynamic leader, renowned mentor, accomplished author, and passionate advocate on a global scale.

As the founder of the Humanitarian Focus Foundation in 2009, Andrise has demonstrated her unwavering commitment to making a profound difference in the lives of others. Her pioneering work in Haiti earned her an Honorary Mention from Walden University for her transformative reading program, which impacted the lives of over 1,600 children. Furthermore, her advocacy for education equity has left an indelible mark in Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Gambia, Peru, Uganda, and Guinea of Africa, bringing about significant positive change in communities worldwide.

Beyond education, Andrise's impact extends to critical social issues, including human rights, social development, peacebuilding, immigration reform, and migration assessment. She established the Institute of Public Policy & Diplomacy Research to address these issues and empower individuals to create lasting peace for a better future. Her dedication has garnered recognition from esteemed figures such as Former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden, as well as influential leaders like Nobel Peace Prize Winner and former US Vice President Al Gore.

Andrise's is a trailblazer in diplomacy and public policy, advocating for temporary protected status (TPS), deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), and challenging legislation such as the Peacebuilding Act (H.R.1111). She has received two Honorary Doctorate Degrees for her humanitarian work and leadership, underscoring her commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution on a global scale.

As a respected consultant for the United Nations, Andrise spearheads initiatives transcending borders and chairs the NGO Sustainable Development NY. Her organization, the Humanitarian Focus Foundation, is associated with the UN Department of Communication and the Youth and Capacity Building Department, further solidifying her influence on the global stage.

Andrise's impact is not confined to policy and diplomacy; she is also a dedicated educator, mentor, and motivational speaker. Through her books on leadership, business, and sustainable development diplomacy, she empowers individuals to become leaders in their fields and advocates for minority women speakers.

As the Global Peace Ambassador Country Director for the US, Dr. Andrise's continues to inspire positive change and champion societal impact. Her exemplary achievements and unwavering commitment to advancing the greater good make her an invaluable asset to any academic institution or organization dedicated to creating a better world for all.

She's a proud member of the association ASPA (The American Society for Public Administration in the US)

As Andrise's believes, "Education is not just a key; it is the master key that opens countless doors of opportunity, unlocking the potential for a brighter future for all."



**Minister Modupe O.
Armstead**

OWNER
MRO PALACE AFROCENTRIC
CUSTOM & HAND SEWN APPAREL

Modupe Ogunlaja Armstead is a dynamic leader, entrepreneur, and ordained minister committed to empowering communities and bridging cultures through faith, education, and Afrocentric expression. She is the co-owner of MRO Palace, an Afrocentric apparel boutique located at 470 Hempstead Turnpike, Elmont, NY. Together with her husband, Modupe curates unique fashion pieces that celebrate African heritage and culture, specializing in handcrafted designs such as embossed Guinea brocade fabrics with embroidery. MRO Palace is a cultural pride and creativity hub, serving the local community and beyond.

As an ordained minister at the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York, Modupe is deeply rooted in her faith and dedicated to serving her church community through Christian education and spiritual leadership. Her commitment extends globally as the General Overseer of KDFI Global Women of Destiny, a network that empowers

Christian women leaders across the globe. Under her guidance, this initiative has supported women in navigating leadership challenges, fostering spiritual growth, and advocating for justice and equity in ministry.

Modupe holds a Master of Science in Strategic Marketing and Communication (MSSMC) from the prestigious Fordham University Graduate School of Business and is pursuing a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) at United Theological Seminary. Her academic and ministerial training uniquely equip her to address contemporary challenges in ministry while promoting cultural and spiritual renewal within her spheres of influence.

With a passion for community engagement, Modupe has spearheaded medical missions to Sierra Leone and Nigeria, providing life-changing assistance to thousands of individuals. Her efforts in both ministry and business reflect her mission to inspire and uplift others through faith, service, and creativity.



**Prophetess Ilioda J.
Antenord**

CHURCH OF JESUS CRHIST
REPENTANCE INTERNATIONAL

Prophetess Ilioda Jacques-Antenord A Woman of God Destin for a Purpose. A purpose to seek the face of God continuously, a desire to Love, and to serve the people of God. Prophetess Ilioda has been reaching out too many in the State of New York, Florida, and Haiti through her Prayers and helping to restore the Saints of God through the Word of God. The Prophetess accept the Lord Jesus Christ in her life been save for 24 years. She began her Christian journey in 2004 at Bethel United Pentecostal Church where she got Baptized. The Prophetess is Holly Ghost fill and Fire Baptize. In the State of New York Prophetess Ilioda has been bible trained and certified for Discipleships, Through the Bible, and End Time Ministries at Bethel United Pentecostal Church Under Bishop Doug Davis.

She also serves in the Children Ministry, Youth Ministry, Cleaning Ministry, and Care Group Prayer Ministry in Bethel. Reaching out to the community of Brooklyn helping the Haitian Community, and serving the Community in Long Island, New York as a Mentor, mentoring troubled teens at the Juvenile Center and Home groups, and caring for the sick at Jamaica Hospital as a volunteer. Prophetess Ilioda is a Visionary of Church of Jesus Christ Repentance International in Haiti since 2009. She held Family Repentance Global Prayer Conference Line in 2020 helping many in prayer and strengthening families all over the world at the time of Cov-19. Prophetess Ilioda is Married, she is a gifted woman of God, a business woman, an entrepreneur, and a woman with a giving heart.



Hon. Justice Andrea Sabita Ogle

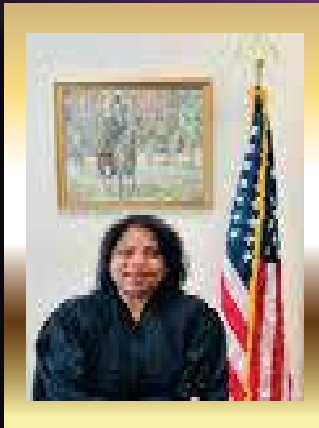
NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT

Honorable Andrea Sabita Ogle Justice Ogle's family immigrated from Guyana to the United States of America in 1970 and settled in Queens County. Her personal experiences of being of mixed heritage, born in another country and assimilating into the United States, have enabled her to benefit from combining the best part of two cultures and absorbing those cultural values. Judge Ogle is a graduate of Queens College of the City University of New York and Seton Hall University School of Law. She successfully managed her own law practice in Queens County for over twenty years. She was a member of the Attorneys for Children and 18b Assigned Counsel Panels and represented indigent adults and children in all phases of Family Court and Supreme Court proceedings for twenty-one years. When the Family Treatment Court was launched in 2002, she was selected to represent adults affected by substance abuse and co-occurring disorders for more than fourteen years. Her legal experience extends beyond Civil, Criminal, and Family Court practice. She is trained in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, and as a Special Education Due Process Impartial Hearing Officer. She has served as a Revocation Hearing Officer for the New York State Office for Children and Family Services and as an Arbitrator in Civil Court. Throughout the years, she has displayed a selfless commitment to public service and has organized educational and community events, seminars and webinars in conjunction with elected officials, community and professional organizations in her tireless efforts to

educate and improve diversity, tolerance and relationships. While she was in private practice, she emerged as a leading advocate for her community and has been a keynote speaker at various community events. She was selected by Council Member I. Daneek Miller from 2019 to 2021 to organize the annual Senior Appreciation month program to educate our most vulnerable on issues related to elder law, elder abuse, senior identity theft, mortgage forbearance and predatory lending practices. She believes that we have a collective responsibility to secure the well-being of our youth. She served as a mentor and has prepared various programs in conjunction with the NYC Department of Probation, The Sullivan County Human Rights Commission, My Brother's Keeper, Queens Engagement Strategy for Teens, the Interfaith Council for Community Development, the Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival in conjunction with the NYC Department of Continuing Education, to educate the youth in the community and those who are currently before the Court.

She has written on a variety of issues including the 13th, Amendment, bail, representation of the indigent, implicit bias, senior identity theft, how to navigate the courts during covid-19, and has organized Continuing Legal Education Seminars conjointly with several Bar Associations and the Attorneys for Children Appellate Division Second Judicial Department and the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on a variety of topics.

Page Bio for Hon. Andrea Sabita Ogle In 2021, in conjunction with Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the Office for Justice Initiatives the Hon. Edwina G. Richardson, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, the New York State Unified Court System Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Amitav Chakraborty, Esq., (a member of Secretary Jeh Johnson's team), and the Appellate Division 2nd. Department, she prepared and moderated a program on "Advancing Equity in the New York State Courts." The program examined the findings of Special Advisor on Equal Justice in the Court Secretary Jeh Johnson, his recommendations, and the implementation of his recommendations. She has received honors and awards from the New York City Mayor, members of the New York City Council, US Congress, the Borough President of Queens, the Queens County 18b Assigned Counsel, the Queens County Bar Association, the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association, the Sikh Society and other community organizations in recognition of her contributions and exemplary service. She is a member of the Asian American Judges Association, the Civil Court Judges Association, the Advisory Board of the South Asian and Indo- Caribbean Bar Association of Queens, the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association, and a sustaining member of the Queens County Bar Association. She served as a member of the Board of Managers for the Queens County Bar Association, is the former Vice President of the Assigned Counsel Association Queens Family Court, former treasurer of the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association, and a former member of the South Asian/Indo Caribbean Advisory Council Queens District Attorney. In 2021, she was elected in Queens County as the first Indo-Afro Guyanese Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York. Currently she serves as the subcommittee co-chair of the New York City Civil Court Equal Justice Implementation Committee, Queens County and as a mentor and host to the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission internship program. In 2023, she was invited by his Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of Guyana, to celebrate her accomplishments.



Hon. Judge Soma Syed

QUEENS COUNTY CIVIL COURT

Honorable Judge Soma Syed is the first Bangladeshi American elected judge in New York State and the United States. In 2021, Judge Syed was elected to the New York City Civil Court from Queens County. From 2022 to 2023, Judge Syed was assigned to the New York County Criminal Court in Manhattan, where she presided over busy arraignment, felony, and misdemeanor parts. Since January 2024, she has been assigned to the Queens County Civil Court. Judge Syed is a former special prosecutor and a private practitioner with a vast community and pro bono experience. Judge Syed obtained her J.D. from the Albany Law School of Union University and B.A. from the City College of the City University of New York. Judge Syed is a product of New York City public schools.

Judge Syed was born in Bangladesh to an educator and a freedom fighter and grew up in Queens, where she is currently living with her husband, Mizan Choudhury, and family. Judge Syed immigrated to the United States with her family when she was twelve years old. At a young age, Judge Syed decided to pursue law as a profession and devoted her time and limited resources to achieving her dreams with the help from her parents, teachers, and guidance counselor who believed in her, despite all the challenges she faced as a first-generation immigrant. After passing the New York State bar examination, Judge Syed soon started a legal practice in Queens County to provide effective and competent legal services to the minority communities of New York City. For many years, she wrote legal articles for Bangla newspapers on immigration and other legal issues that affected the community.

She appeared at numerous community events, seminars, and television shows to discuss legal issues that the communities faced. For Judge Syed, it was important that immigrants and members of the public that she represented received competent representation when they navigated through the complex legal system in this country. In addition to Judge Syed's legal work, she is passionate about serving the community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, she helped communities with mask and food distribution, and appeared with the New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams to discuss pandemic relief programs.

Judge Syed is devoted to building pipelines for next generation of legal practitioners. She values her mentorship with students from high schools, colleges, and law students. During her three years on the bench, she has mentored more than ten students in her chambers and has spoken at various school visit events. Judge Syed values diversity and representation. She has held leadership roles and maintained membership in various bar associations. Judge Syed currently serves on the NYC Equal Justice Implementation Committee (NYC EJIC) in Queens County Civil Court, and NYC Access to Justice Committee of NYC Civil Court. Judge Syed believes that law can be a powerful vehicle to achieve, ensure, and provide justice, fairness, and equality in our society. She has brought her years of life and professional experiences to the bench with the goal of delivering justice to the community. Judge Syed looks forward to continuing being a jurist and serving the people with distinction and honor.



Soh Young Lee-Segredo

PRESIDENT
MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF NEW
YORK

Mrs. Soh Young Lee-Segredo was born in Seoul, South Korea, and lived in Paraguay, Brazil, and Spain. At a very young age, she showed her leadership in education, music, and community activism. As a Vice President of the Red Cross Youth Middle School Division in Seoul, she understood the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. (D.E.I.) Her study in the U.S. began as a Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) at New Town High School. She is a multi-faceted artist (soprano, a storyteller, director, MC, event & program coordinator), tirelessly connecting local and global communities as a past director of the Multicultural Peace Mission Choir, president of Korea American Association of Queens, president of the Multicultural Council of NY, an advisor for the Gaia Essence's Women's Wellness Conference, volunteer for Shanti Fund, and president of the Asian Pacific American Council of Educators (APACE) where she promotes Asian voices and advocates for Asian teachers and parents.

Soh Young Lee-Segredo has been the Music Coordinator for Hofstra University's Annual Celebration of Diversity Gala since its inception. She is the Hempstead Union Free School District Jackson IB PYP School (International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program) coach. During COVID she provided concerts and Online cooking classes for the Queens Public Library, bringing cultural diversity with S.E.L. With the collaboration of the Long Island Council of Church, she delivered food to needy families.

Soh Young Lee-Segredo is a multifaceted performer weaving many different cultures and has been performing since the age of five. The 'Soh Young Ensemble' is a winner of the Artists International Alliance and the Ensemble debuted in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and won the KBS Korean Idol NY Competition in 2007. As a lifetime member of the NAACP, she initiated the re-establishment of the Education Committee at the Freeport /Roosevelt NAACP branch. She received the Nassau County MLK Award, Town of Hempstead, Village of Hempstead and Village of Freeport, NAACP Harlem Chapter, 2023 Legislator Kevin Thomas Women's Award, Hofstra University Celebration of Diversity honoree in 2013, "Merchant of Hope" Education Award from Freeport/Roosevelt NAACP, Hofstra for Hempstead, Hempstead for Hofstra award in 2018.

She was a recipient of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) Equity, Social Justice Advocacy Award at the 25th Anniversary New Orleans conference in 2015. In May 2016, she had the unique opportunity to present 'Cross the Border' stories and sing at the 66th UN DPI/NGO Conference in Kyongju, Korea, the first UN conference in Asia. She was recognized by the Korean American Association of Greater NY for her effort to work with multicultural communities. She is spreading Korean Cooking and Art initiatives in synagogues, museums, and libraries.

Soh Young Lee-Segredo holds a BA from Queens College, an MA from Bank Street College, a Professional Diploma from Dowling College, and a Bilingual/ESL Studies Certification from St. John's University. She was invited to Alabama by the National Endowment for Humanities in 2005, to Israel in 2008, to Turkey in 2011, and to the Korean Youth Summer Leadership Program in 2013-14. She received the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) Equity, Social Justice Advocacy Award at the 25th Anniversary New Orleans conference in 2015. In May 2016, she had the unique opportunity to present 'Cross the Border' stories at the 66th UN DPI/NGO Conference in Kyongju, Korea, the first UN conference in Asia. She was recognized at the New York State Association of Bilingual Education 2023 Conference in East Wing on March 17, 2023, as NYSABE Bilingual Teacher of the Year (Dr. Ximena Zate Teacher of the Year Award) This is the first time an Asian educator has received this award in 45 years. She believes we have more similarities than differences. As a Shanti Fund volunteer, she collaborated Celebration of Korean and Indian Independence Day (Same day on August 15) and the Celebration of Black History Month with the Multicultural Council of NY at the Indian Consulate. For her effort to bridge cultural understanding, she has contributed her talent to the Queens and Long Island libraries for over 35 years.

Her volunteer work began in the library in the USA and she was recognized with a Gift of Knowledge from Dowling College and was presented with a certificate and \$500 after she presented at the NYS Library Association event at Dowling College in 2004. Councilman John Liu recognized her with the NYC Citizenship Award during his time as a NYC Councilman. The Certificate of Appreciation was presented for her exceptional contribution to the New Americans Program and Queens Public Library at the Queens Public Library Celebration of the Lunar New Year Concert on February 3, 2024, at the Bayside Library Branch. She continues to work with multicultural communities to advocate D.E.I. You can follow her work at www.multiccny.org and www.apace-li.org and www.soh-young.com.



**Cristina Contreras, LMSW,
MPA, FABC**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NYC HEALTH LINCOLN HOSPITAL

Born in the Dominican Republic, Mrs. Cristina Contreras is a proven healthcare leader that is passionate about improving the health of the communities she serves. She is a highly driven and successful chief executive with over twenty-nine (29) years of progressive leadership experience in executive level management of inpatient, ambulatory, clinical and ancillary services hospital operations.

Cristina's demonstrated commitment to her staff, patients, and the community has made her a well-known and respected leader within New York City Health + Hospitals, the country's largest municipal healthcare system. She started her career as a caseworker, and successfully progressed through various positions of leadership with increasing responsibility, culminating with her appointment, in 2024, as Chief Executive Officer at NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln in the South Bronx. Cristina previously served as the Chief Executive Officer of NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan, from 2021 – 2024. Among her many accomplishments in that role, Cristina expanded access to care for underserved communities, recruited and cultivated outstanding talent, advanced programs of excellence and improved financial and operational performance.

As a visionary leader, Cristina has had continued success in her senior leadership roles by driving innovation, operational excellence and strategic collaborations. She is recognized for creating an organizational culture that thrives on authenticity, kindness and transparency, and as a champion of her team's well-being. Cristina believes that focusing on staff members' overall happiness and satisfaction drives positive outcomes for both staff members and health care consumers.

Cristina has a deep commitment to public service and is passionate about improving access to care for underserved and immigrant communities. In recognition of her leadership and service to the community, Cristina has been the recipient of a variety of honors and awards including being consistently listed on the City and State Power Players List, the Government Service Leadership Award by 100 Hispanic Women National, and a Hero of Hope and Champion of Inclusion by the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Hafza Girdap

ADVOCATES OF SILENCED TURKEY

Mrs. Hafza Girdap serves as the Executive Director and spokesperson for AST (Advocates of Silenced Turkey) and is a founding member of the Set Them Free platform. She is dedicated to addressing women's rights violations, particularly in Turkey. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies at Stony Brook University, New York, Girdap is actively engaged in delivering lectures as part of her academic pursuits with a background holding a B.A. and M.A. in English Language and Literature, Girdap's research focuses on human rights and the status of women in Muslim contexts. Her primary interest lies in exploring the integration and adaptation experiences of Muslim immigrant women while redefining their cultural identities.

Girdap aims to analyze the lives of Muslim women, studying the challenges they encounter within their cultures before, during, and after conflicts. Her doctoral research concentrates on the self-identification and gendered racialization experiences of immigrant women from Turkey in the United States. Beyond her academic pursuits, Girdap contributes as a nonresident research associate to ECPS's gender program (European Center for Populism Studies).

In her research endeavors, Girdap actively incorporates the voices of female survivors of conflict. She examines the coping mechanisms employed by these women to navigate various challenges, including social discrimination, oppression, and violations of basic rights, across different contexts such as their home countries, refugee camps, and new settlements. Residing in the United States since July 2016 due to political persecution in her native Turkey, Girdap has expanded her research interests and actively participates in women's rights movements. Over the past three years, she has organized and spoken at UNGA and UN CSW panels, focusing on women's issues and experiences. Additionally, she mentors youth, encouraging their involvement as researchers and speakers in these events. Embracing the personal motto "Let Dreams Lead You," Girdap runs online global book clubs on Instagram.

Through live interviews, she addresses topics related to women and youth empowerment. Hafza, accompanied by her two daughters (20 and 15 years) and her husband, currently resides on Long Island, New York.



Dr. Maria Santiago

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HOME HEALTH AIDE TRAINING
INSTITUTE

Dr. Maria Santiago Throughout all the years I studied, I also worked providing care for the elderly; and I adored it. I felt a true connection caring for each individual person with their own life stories that shaped their autonomy. Despite my passion in broadcasting, I couldn't ignore this calling, which quickly became my life's calling; caring for the wellbeing of seniors.

Ironically enough, my academic career wasn't originally rooted in healthcare. After my departure from Trinidad to the United States, my educational pursuits led me to Hostos Community College in the Bronx, as well as Lehman College for television production and directing and finally, the Connecticut School of Broadcasting.

I balanced both my passion and my life's calling, working my way up from administrator to now, being a CEO of my own Home Health Aide Training Institute, Westbury, N.Y training future healthcare workers and finding them employment where they too may experience the fulfillment that comes with caring for another. My philanthropic endeavors led me to serve families in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and Trinidad, providing meals for those in need. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I hosted celebrations recognizing essential workers by granting them over \$100,000 in scholarships and life insurance policies.

With every training program I oversee, each job placement fulfilled, and every recognition I'm blessed to receive, my goal is to increase the awareness of exemplary healthcare practices for seniors in need. There is a divine plan for all of us and by acknowledging and understanding challenges seniors endure, we can provide better care, profoundly improving the lives of those in the community, as well as those we love.



Dr. Vertika Goel

Dr. Vertika Goel was born and raised in northern India in the capital city of New Delhi. She completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Physical Therapy at Rajiv Gandhi University in 2006 and 2007, respectively. She accumulated seven years of working experience from 2009 to 2016 as a senior Physical Therapist in India, including five years of experience handling the government physical therapy department independently in Delhi, India. In August 2016, she moved to the USA to pursue her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

Currently, she holds a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree specializing in Geriatric and Pediatric Physical Therapy since 2017. With seven years of extensive hands-on experience, she takes pride in helping patients regain full mobility and independence following challenging injuries or surgeries. Vertika has completed hands-on courses on vestibular rehab, lymphatic therapy, manual therapy, prevention of falls, occupational-related injury prevention, and is certified in primitive reflexology and applying sensorimotor strategies.

In addition to her clinical practice, she is the driving force behind RK Goel Care and Wellness, a non-profit medical charity. Under her leadership, the organization has made significant global contributions, including providing aid to Amazon rainforest tribes in Ecuador, raising \$45,000 for earthquake survivors in Turkey and Syria, and offering crucial medical treatment and education on fall prevention for the elderly. She has also dedicated herself to addressing chronic pain within the community. Additionally, she hosted a fireside chat on mental health recently.

Her efforts have been recognized, and she was recently selected as a respected speaker and panelist alongside other successful speakers and panelists at the 3rd Annual Key Elements of Success event. She was also honored as a Woman of Distinction by the honorable David McDonough, Assemblyman of the 14th Assembly District in New York. Additionally, she received a recognition award for her nonprofit medical charity work from Tamil Nadu Foundation USA. Her journey continues, fueled by a determination to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.



Minister Geraldine Felix

Pastor Geraldine Felix born in 1962 In Port Au Prince, Haiti, Geraldine Felix, from a young age was always drawn to God. This was evident as, starting at the age of 9, she would ascend the mountains and pray. By God's sovereignty, she was able to come to America at 13 years old in 1977. Living the complex life of a young immigrant in America, she still managed to earn an education having attended Andres Huddie Middle School, Midwood High School, and CUNY City College. The highlight of her youth, however, was the divine encounter she had at a prayer meeting in 1982. There she surrendered her all and responded to

the call of salvation. Full of earnest endeavor, Pastor Geraldine was soon evangelizing in the streets of Brooklyn, NY on public buses and trains, and served at Remsen Church of God.

Later, she moved to Boston where she earned a degree from the School of Architecture.

While in New Hampshire there was a spiritual void in the area. Thus, being led by God, she started her own prayer group which grew into a church after being newlywed to her husband, Rev Joseph N Felix. They met at a wedding, and tied the knot themselves at the end of that same year. They married in 1993, and she gave birth to their three children Kestia, Daniella and Benjamin. After having their first child in Manchester, the couple would move back to Brooklyn and establish a new Church, initially located on Snyder Avenue and Church Avenue. The church moved to its current location on Flatbush Avenue in 1998. Thus, she has been serving in ministry side-by-side with her husband as a First Lady for over 25 years. She earned a degree in theology at MKI University in 2022.

In celebrating her 60th birthday at the El Caribe in Brooklyn, she was ordained as a pastor by her husband Pastor Joseph N Felix. Throughout her ministerial career, she has been referred to as a Prayer Warrior for her almost literal application of "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonian 5:17). She has also been to numerous missions throughout the United States in Boston. and internationally in Haiti and Dominican Republic.



Dr. Neva H. Alexander

Dr. Neva Helena Alexander, as CEO of Nevalliance and Co-Director of Ascend Long Island, exemplifies transformative leadership in education, entrepreneurship, and professional development. A visionary, she founded the National Educational Venture Alliance (NEVA), underscoring her devotion to equipping students for academic and professional triumphs. Renowned as an educator, speaker, and author, Dr. Neva profoundly influences various business sectors, delivering insights on startup strategies to women's empowerment. Her captivating webinars and seminars have established her as a pivotal figure in the business community.

Her reach extends beyond the digital realm; Dr. Neva's global influence is evidenced by her impactful workshops and keynote addresses at international conferences, tackling subjects like leadership, entrepreneurship, and cultural diversity. Her adeptness in connecting with diverse audiences highlights her exceptional communication prowess and deep subject mastery.

Dr. Neva's dedication to promoting innovation and economic growth shines through her work with Ascend Long Island, aiding entrepreneurs in their developmental journey. Since 2017, she has orchestrated the International Women's Conference at Hofstra University, attracting renowned global leaders. Her leadership history includes serving as President of the Caribbean Business Network.

Dr. Neva's achievements earned her the Long Island Power Women in Business Award in 2018. Her prestigious speaking engagements span globally, including the Institute for Cultural Diversity on Global Business at the United Nations, New York; the International Summit Youth to Youth, Dubai; the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists, New Delhi; the Africa Business Conference at Harvard University; the New York Business Expo Conference Women Lead and Learn, Manhattan, NY; and the Global Women in STEM Leadership Summit, Atlanta, GA. Dr. Neva's steadfast dedication to education, empowerment, and entrepreneurship continues to be a source of inspiration and catalyst for positive change in individuals and organizations worldwide.



Dr. Samarth Joseph

FOUNDER OF
ESPOIR YOUTH PROGRAMS, INC.

Dr. Samarth Joseph was born in Haiti, came to the US at the age of 17. She is a proud graduate of Westbury High School. Dr. Joseph is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of ESPOIR Youth Programs Incorporated which she founded in May 07, 2012 to provide educational services for youth in the Town of North Hempstead and throughout Nassau County. ESPOIR, which in French means “hope,” has been spreading plenty of hope, as it continues to fix its eyes above. The Espoir’s programs seek to address social issues impacting families in the Town of North Hempstead and to prevent youth involvement in at-risk behaviors. Youth are assisted in developing the fundamentals of good character during their involvement with the agency. Espoir connects families to resources throughout Nassau County while providing education on navigating systems to maintain full autonomy over personal life issues.

Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph, Espoir’s Youth and Family Counseling Unit provides individual and group counseling sessions, case management and social services to youth ages 6 – 21 and their families; tailored to individual needs, including anger management, substance abuse, relationship conflicts, mental health issues, educational advocacy, etc. Teen pregnancy prevention and parenting skills training are also provided with an emphasis on providing awareness and education on enhancing parent, child relationships, and to respond to life issue appropriately.

In the Espoir After-School Enrichment and Advantage Program, homework assistant is provided to elementary and middle school age children in the Westbury School District. The children received tutoring in language, arts math, science, social studies and cultural arts education, enrichment courses such as Piano, Zumba, Swimming, Girl Scouts/Young Men InProgress Club, African Dance, STEM (Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics), Peer Mediation Training. Also, in the high school, Espoir provides Peer Mediation Training, High School Talk sessions, African Dance and Crisis Intervention. For the past three year, Espoir gave the William Pruitt Scholarship award to two Westbury High School students. And this year, Espoir is so proud to give this scholarship to one of his children, Berlinda Pierre-Louis who is the Validatorian of the class of 2023. It is customary for Espoir to travel with his children and make sure they understand that the world is bigger than the Town of North Hempstead. As a result, Espoir took his participants and parents to the following places: NAS A, Greenbelt, Maryland; The White House, Washington, DC; Liberty Bell, in Philadelphia, PA; The Mint, Philadelphia, PA. The United Nations, New York, NY.

Furthermore, Espoir provides a real estate course and a stock market course to adults in the Westbury community. For the past eleven years, Espoir’s Food Pantry has been given food to citizens in the Town of North Hempstead.

Dr. Joseph is involved with many organizations. She is a lifetime member of the United Nations Association of the United States of America; The Empire Who’s Who of Executives and Professionals and the Epsilon Rho Chapter. Also, she sits on various boards such as Advantage Care Health Centers and Westbury Carle Place Chamber of Commerce. On Friday, June 23, 2023, The Town of North Hempstead inducted Dr. Samarth Joseph into the Women’s Wall of Fame. In addition, Dr. Joseph is the owner of El Olam’s Exquisite Properties and the author of the book collection “It’s Not Over Yet.”



Sylvia Kowalczyk

A native of Poland, Mrs. Sylvia Kowalczyk received the Master of Music Degree with Distinction from the Warsaw Academy of Music. She holds a Master of Arts degree from Queens College of Music of the City University of New York where she was granted a full scholarship and affiliated with teaching. Miss Kowalczyk has also studied at the International Academie D'Ete in France which is under the aegis of the Paris Conservatory.

First-Prize-Winner of the International Harp Competition in Varallo, Italy and winner of Artists International Audition in New York Sylvia Kowalczyk was presented in her New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall. She has received the highest critical acclaim from the New

York Times.

When Sylvia first came to the United States she joined the already established renown group, the New York Harp Ensemble, where she was the youngest member at that time. Founder of the group, Professor Aristed von Wurtzler published a book about his life and the history of the ensemble, 'Talking About Harp'. In it he expressed that it was his wish for Sylvia to become his successor.

Sylvia Kowalczyk concertized all over the world, playing in Europe, Africa, Asia (including Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, (China and Taiwan), as well as the United States Vigado Concert Hall; Budapest, Hungary Sylvia Kowalczyk has appeared at several international music festivals in Italy, Germany, Hungary and participated in festivals of contemporary music in Poland (Warsaw Autumn), as well as in music festivals in the US with great success.

She recorded four albums solo and as a soloist with orchestra. She recorded five albums with the New York Harp Ensemble and also was featured as a soloist with the Avery Fisher Hall; New York, N.Y. She gave concerts at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II and the White House for presidents Clinton, Bush and Reagan. She also appeared at International festivals as a soloist.

She also has been broadcast on several international Television and Radio programs such as WQXR's McGraw-Hill "Young Artists Showcase."

In great demand as a pedagogue, Ms. Kowalczyk has given master classes at several International Harp Festivals. She has been instrumental in organizing the International Harp Master Class and Festival at Keszthely, Hungary for ten years.

She was also spotlighted as a guest on the show "Good Morning America" as well as appearing in two episodes of the popular HBO series "The Sopranos;" "Eloise" and "The Test Dream," for which she as credited for Outstanding performance.



Zara Kandic

Zara Kandic is a seasoned professional with a robust background in catering and administrative roles, showcasing proficiency in organization, teamwork, creativity, communication, problem-solving, attention to detail, and time management. Fluent in Bosnian, Serbian, and English, she has consistently demonstrated her skills over the years.

During her tenure as a Caterer from 2006 to 2018 at Islamic Unity & Cultural Center and Bosniak Islamic Cultural Center, Zara efficiently managed reservations for special events and contributed digital articles on community events for online platforms.

Transitioning to her role as the President. Collective Work of Sister. CEO of Zara Services Corp. from 2018 to 2024, Zara not only demonstrates her commitment to professional growth but also empowers Balkan women through civic engagement. This underscores her dedication to making a positive impact on both professional and community fronts.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES BY



Thomas Donovan



**SOPRANO
CASSANDRA DOUGLAS**



**SONGHEE LEE
Korean Traditional Dancer**



SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

