



# Women of DISTINCTION

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## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Maria Lizaro*

Maria Lizaro, LMSW joined Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) in 1998 as the Director of Social Services, bringing with her a fierce dedication to community empowerment and transformative care.

Her exceptional leadership and deep commitment to client advocacy quickly earned her a promotion in 2004 to Deputy Director of Client Services. In this role, Ms. Lizaro further deepened NMIC's capacity to serve the most vulnerable residents of Northern Manhattan with dignity, compassion, and culturally responsive services.

Prior to her tenure at NMIC, Ms. Lizaro spent eight formative years at PROMESA, Inc. in the Bronx. She began her journey as a social worker within the substance abuse program, and through tireless dedication and a visionary approach, she rose to become the Director of Community Development. There, she led and expanded initiatives that addressed systemic inequalities, championed public health, and created pathways for self-determination in underserved neighborhoods.

In 2014, Ms. Lizaro stepped into the role of Interim Executive Director at NMIC, and she was later appointed Executive Director. Under her inspiring leadership, NMIC evolved into a settlement house model, significantly broadening its scope of impact. Today, NMIC touches the lives of over 32,000 community members annually, providing holistic services that uplift, empower, and transform lives.

Ms. Lizaro's influence extends far beyond NMIC. She serves on the boards of the National Dominican Day Parade, Riverside Park Conservancy, United Neighborhood Houses, and the West Side Campaign Against Hunger. As Chair of the Human Services Action Board, a C4 branch of the Human Services Council, she advocates tirelessly for equity and policy change within the human services sector. She is also the co-founder of the Brides' March, a powerful movement honoring victims of domestic violence and raising public awareness through solidarity and remembrance.

A proud co-author of *Latinx in Social Work*, a bestselling and trailblazing publication, Ms. Lizaro continues to elevate underrepresented voices in the field.

She holds a B.S. from Hunter College and an MSW from the Silberman School of Social Work, and she is fluent in both English and Spanish. Ms. Lizaro's life's work is grounded in love, justice, and the unwavering belief that all communities deserve to thrive.

***Maria Lizaro was selected as a  
2025 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Robert Jackson***

