



Women of **DISTINCTION** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Victoria Thomas-Ramos

*V*ictoria Thomas-Ramos is an educator, an innovator and an inspiration to all. A lifelong native of New York City, Ms. Thomas-Ramos comes from a tight-knit family of nine children. She attended New York City public schools, graduating from Jamaica High School in 1984. An Alumnus of Nyack College, she received her degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2005, setting the path for her to become a special education teacher with the Board of Education.

While working with the Department of Education, Ms. Thomas-Ramos crossed paths with Captain Obadiah Baker who is the founder and president of Tender Hearts Crusades. Captain Baker pitched the idea to start a nonprofit organization that directs its attention toward community involvement. Inspired by his vision, Ms. Thomas-Ramos took his idea and expanded it to include at-risk youth from ages 8 to 15 in the areas of tutorials, mentorship, arts and music, CPR training, and certified educational workshops. Under Ms. Thomas-Ramos' guidance, these services are geared toward parents with children diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and autism, along with recreational activities, parent support groups, and outreach through community involvement in Queens County.

The fusion of Tender Hearts Crusades came to fruition in December 2009 when Tender Hearts Crusades was incorporated and later received tax-exempt status.

However, Ms. Thomas-Ramos' initiative did not stop there. Captain Baker and Ms. Thomas-Ramos decided to further their organization abroad, and in August 2011 Tender Hearts Crusades officially became an international government organization with its first project in Afghanistan, where the Tender Hearts Crusades founder is serving.

As Tender Hearts Crusades expands and grows, Ms. Thomas-Ramos is involved with every step the organization takes. She is right there staying true to her organization's mission to bridge the gap between school and community.

Ms. Thomas-Ramos' sense of compassion and dedication and her call to serve are what make her an inspiration to all.

Victoria Thomas-Ramos was selected as a 2012 Woman of Distinction by Senator Malcolm A. Smith.

