



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Abeda Khanam

Abeda Khanam is an Educator, Chaplain, and Mental Health Advocate. Named the 2015 Hometown Hero in Education, Abeda Khanam is a Teacher Leader with the United Federation of Teachers in Queens, NY, and a biology teacher at Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for the Arts and Technology, a position she has dedicated herself to for over two decades.

Ms. Khanam served as the longtime chair of Wagner's Science Department and has written pioneering curricula for classes ranging from molecular biology to urban botany. Outside the classroom, in her community of greater Jamaica, Queens, Ms. Khanam serves as a chaplain with the New York State Chaplain Task Force.

She is a certified instructor of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a course designed to teach how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideations, psychosis and substance use disorders. Ms. Khanam has brought the MHFA teachings to communities nationwide through her work with American Muslim Health Professionals. She utilizes the mental health platform to bring interfaith communities together and has taught courses at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Khanam is a strong advocate for family values, social justice and mental health, and she is committed to building resilient communities that are rooted in the wellbeing of all members, including students, teachers, parents, neighbors and guardians.

In her spare time, Ms. Khanam enjoys traveling, gardening, hiking and exploring the Catskills with her family.

***Abeda Khanam was selected as a
2020 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator John C. Liu.***

