



# Women of DISTINCTION

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## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Cynthia Orellana, Ed.D.*

Cynthia Orellana, Ed.D. is Chair of the World Languages Department and an 8th grade Spanish teacher in the Westbury School District. She teaches Spanish to Hispanic students to strengthen their native language and culture.

Dr. Orellana was born in California to Salvadoran parents, and lived in El Salvador for 11 years before returning to the United States in 1985. She began 7th grade in the Westbury School District, studying English as a Second Language. She experienced and lived the struggles that many face when arriving in a different country – a new language, culture and society.

The challenges this country presented did not stop her from continuing her dreams of becoming an educator. After finishing high school, she attended the State University of New York, SUNY-Old Westbury, graduating in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts. During that same year, she obtained her first position as a teacher in the Uniondale School District, where she worked for 11 years. In 2002, she earned her first Master's degree from Queens College in Hispanic Literature & Culture, followed by her second Master's degree in Literacy and Reading from Touro College in 2011. In May 2019, she earned the highest academic degree, her Ed. D., Doctor in Education, from St. John's University.

Dr. Orellana has been honored by Nassau County during the Noche Latina in 2015, and recognized by the Town of North Hempstead during Hispanic Heritage Month in 2017. In March 2019, she received the Teacher for Excellence Award from the SCOPE Educational Organization, presented by the Westbury School District. In October 2019, she was an honoree at the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in Nassau County. In 2021, she was recognized as an Educator of Excellence by the organization S.T.R.O.N.G.

She chairs the Hispanic Committee of Saint Brigid's parish, and is a volunteer with A New Beginning Animal Rescue, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping homeless, senior or sick dogs. She is also the secretary of the Hispanic United of Westbury organization.

Dr. Orellana is committed to work in and for her community to promote education and the importance of language and culture.

***Cynthia Orellana, Ed.D. was selected as a  
2022 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Anna M. Kaplan***

