



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio

Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio is a quintessential community organizer, bringing her deep empathy, strategic savvy and life experience to her work. She is a devoted mother, of Indigenous Mexican origin, who uses her fluency in Nahuatl, Spanish and English to serve her neighbors and the broader community.

Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio answered the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in March 2020 immediately. She reached out to her extensive network to establish a food pantry and distribution program where she and her volunteer team offered fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy staples to hundreds of local families through Spring 2021. The community group born out of that effort, Brooklyn Immigrant Community Support (BICS), transitioned to become a program of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where it continues to operate. Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio received recognition for her food advocacy as a Brooklyn COVID-19 Hero, as well as from Hunter College and *City & State*.

Since 2019, Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio has been a lead organizer, fighting traffic violence with the grassroots organization Families for Safe Streets. She has personally engaged with families throughout the region who suffer a loss or injury due to traffic violence, walking with them through mourning, legal action when appropriate, and recovery. She was awarded the 2021 Advocate of the Year by Transportation Alternatives and Families for Safe Streets.

Professionally, Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio serves as a Community Engagement Associate for the NYC Public Advocate's Office, where she uses her passion for social activism and community engagement and her belief in the potential for government to act as a tool to strengthen and empower local communities.

Close to Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio's heart is her organizing for Indigenous human rights and immigrant rights. Born into a Nahuatl-Mexican family in central Mexico, she was an organizer from a young age, avidly reading her father's discarded newspapers, helping to raise her nine siblings, and labor organizing with women in local factories as a teenager. Facing ongoing discrimination, minoritization and abuse as an Indigenous woman in her economically-depressed hometown, she made her way to New York as a young mother and is a deeply respected and beloved member of her community.

Ms. Mendieta-Cuapio serves on her children's School Leadership Team and supports fellow immigrant mothers navigating the public school system. When not organizing, she can be found cooking vegetarian dishes for family and friends and sharing Indigenous traditions and knowledge with younger generations.

***Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio was selected as a
2022 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Andrew S. Gounardes***

