



We Are New York Project Celebrates the Completion of its 500th Group

Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama Joins Celebration of Milestone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The We Are New York Project, a partnership between the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and the City University of New York, is pleased to announce the completion of the 500th We Are New York conversation group. *We Are New York* (WANY) is a nine episode Emmy award winning television series intended to help immigrant New Yorkers practice English that will be helpful to them. Using WANY episodes, conversation groups—which are made up of adult immigrant New Yorkers and led by trained volunteers—discuss issues that most concern immigrants. The Bangladesh Society, located in the Bronx, is designated as the 500th WANY conversation group.

In addition to the Bronx chapter, The Bangladesh Society has multiple locations throughout the city including Queens and Brooklyn. It has been a key partner with WANY in providing an opportunity for Limited English Proficient New Yorkers to improve their conversational English skills.

There are 1.8 million adult immigrants in New York City who need help with English. Since the launch of the We Are New York Project in April 2010, which brings together community based organizations and volunteers to offer free conversation groups around the City, more than 4,000 immigrant New Yorkers have improved their conversational English skills while learning about essential city services. Lessons conveyed in each episode help to make New York the most immigrant friendly city in the nation with a focus on access to city services such as healthcare, education and financial empowerment regardless of immigration status.

Frank Nigro, who led conversation groups comprised of immigrant New Yorkers of various ethnicities—including Bengali, Hispanic, Korean, Pakistani and Chinese—will be honored along with his conversation group participants at the end of their ten week session on Friday, December 30th. In attendance will be Commissioner Fatima Shama of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs who will present Nigro with a letter signed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Nigro, the volunteer facilitator at the Bangladesh Society, has worked with the We Are New York Project from its earliest days and has led over 10 conversation groups. “WANY is a very profound experience, not only for me but also for the participants,” said Nigro. “I get as much as I give.”

The We Are New York Project is based in the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by recommending policies and programs that facilitate successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the City. To learn more, visit www.nyc.gov/immigrants

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