Maha A.

Trainer | Program Development & Management - Direct Hire
310-980-9984 / fellowship@upotential.org

PROFILE

Multilingual educator, Program Director, and dynamic public speaker who helps audiences bridge differences and achieve deep understanding and cultural competency. A passionate and innovative advocate for social justice with determination to shape a changing world, skilled at working with faith-based and community organizations, law agencies and private and public educational institutes. A polished trainer with deep knowledge of and broad life experiences in both Western and Eastern cultures. Recently selected as a delegate to the UN to advocate for the empowerment of women and girls.

KEY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- Program design & management
- Strategic planning & leadership
- Grant writing & fundraising
- Speaking & Cross-cultural training (website Finding the Missing Link)
- Writing, editing and translation (English ⇔ Arabic)
- Curriculum design, development and evaluation

WORK EXPERIENCE

Jiran: a Program of Middlebury College, CT (2 years)
Co-founder and Site Community Coordinator of student language immersion program with social & cultural mission.

- Connect refugees & recently settled families to resources, programs and other communities
- Build and manage relationships with non-profit organizations, government officials, and local community
- Design and implement workshops to serve the needs of families & participants
- Conduct media outreach and public relations including acting as a spokesperson
- Fundraise through grant writing, donor cultivation, and organizing events
- Develop and oversee the program budget
- Create, design and supervise student-led youth internship program

New Britain Consolidated School District, CT (9 years)
Teacher and Community Liaison, Cultural Consultant

- Plan and coordinate academic & non-academic programming for a diverse population from the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America.
- Conduct cultural competency training for teachers and administrators, topics include: *Global Citizenship, Diversity, and Approaches and Practices: Simple Truths that Lead to Harmony at the workplace*.
- Teach English as a second language to non-native speaking students K-12 and adult learners.
- Draft & deliver Connect-Ed messages: Communication & community outreach
- Translate written and oral district-wide communications into Arabic
- Manage communications between the school district and the Islamic Center of New Britain & liaising being a board member and the district representative.
- Conduct community outreach to utilize services and improve collaboration

The Islamic Association of Central Connecticut, New Britain, CT (4 years)
Program Director & only female board member (manager of communication & Community Outreach)

- Designed and Directed "Belonging in American Society " an extra-curricular program for youth and adults
- Taught workshops and organized events with local communities

Miss Porter's School, Farmington, CT (4 years)

- One-on-one language instructor of beginner, intermediate and advanced Arabic to private school students.
- Design and create all teaching materials, lesson plans and assessment tools.

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT (3 years)

- Designed and taught workshops focused on cultural competency
- Instructed high school and college students (Arabic & English) in Upward Bound summer program

SPEAKING AND ADVOCACY

Muslim Coalition of Connecticut Speakers Bureau (4 years)

- Serve as a panelist for the ongoing event series "Honest Conversations with Our Muslim Neighbors"
- Present at and attend Conferences as a spokesperson
- Conduct meetings with local and state government officials
- Conduct cultural competency training
- Engage with the greater community, advocacy work

Islamic Network Group (3 years)

- Serve as 1 of only 3 ING certified speakers for the state of Connecticut
- Train with a nationwide network of ING speakers

Common Ground Institute (3 years)

- Lead cultural competency trainings for non-profit organizations and agencies in CT assisting refugees

Speaker Sisterhood

Keynote speaker (1 year)

- Train & network to create a voice through public speaking to raise awareness

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

- *Master of Arts, English* - Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT 2009
- *Bachelor of Arts, English Language and Literature* - Damascus University, Damascus, Syria 1998
- *Teaching Certification in English (015), Cross Endorsement in Arabic, CT Department of Education* *2011*
- *Certificate of Public Speaking* – Islamic Networks Group Speakers Bureau 2016
- *Speaking School for Women* *2018*
- Alice certificate 2018
- MOAB certified - principles, techniques, and skills for recognizing, reducing, and managing violent and aggressive behavior both in and out of the workplace. 2019

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Abdullah, Maha (in progress) *Holding Your Grounds: Conflicts Give Birth to Resolutions*. Dar Shehrazad. Beirut, Lebanon.

Meraay, Maha (2010). *Salman Rushdie the Believer: A Satanic Journey Mirroring Belief*. IUniverse.

Articles:

Meraay, Maha (2010). *"The Gifted and Talented Child."* Parent and family Section. Examiner.com

Meraay, Maha (2006). *"The East and the West: Parallelism Put in Place."* Al-Thawra Newspaper, Damascus, Syria

Audiences have included:
United Nations (63rd Commission for the Status of Women & Join Together Conference)
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
Central Connecticut State University
University of St. Joseph
Wesleyan University
Gateway Community College
Unitarian Society of Hartford
Common Ground Institute
Manchester, West Haven & New Britain School Districts

Presentation topics have included:

Clarifying Stereotypes, Adaptations & Raising Awareness
Refugee Cultural Competency (Training NGO's, Government Officials & School Personnel)
Syria: A Theological Juxtaposition & a Globalized Struggle
Simple Facts Enhance Understanding and Create Harmony at Schools & Workplace

Media Links

- This Language Immersion Program Links Students With Newly Settled Arabic- Speaking Families, *Hartford Courant*
http://www.courant.com/community/new-britain/hc-news-new-britain-jiran-language-immersion-program-20180727-story.html
- Students Come to NB to help Arabic Speaking Newcomers, *New Britain Herald*
http://www.newbritainherald.com/NBH-New+Britain+News/330610/students-come-to-nb-to-help-arabicspeaking-newcomers
- Honest Conversations with Muslim Leaders Planned for Canton, *Hartford Courant*
www.courant.com/community/canton/hc-canton-muslims-conversation-0120-20170119-story,amp.html
- Jiran: The Arabic Community in Action
http://schoolinjordan.middcreate.net/acas/
- Refugee Resettlement Group Welcomes Imam Working to Find "Common Ground", *Hartford Courant*
http://www.courant.com/community/manchester/hc-mr-manchester-community-refugee-resettlement-group-0908-20160906-story.html
- West Hartford Church Hosts Refugees for Thanksgiving Dinner, *Fox61*
https://fox61.com/2016/11/24/west-hartford-church-hosts-refugees-for-thanksgiving-dinner/
- "Honest" Panel Speaks on Breaking Down Barriers, *Press News*
https://view.publitas.com/p222-6222/vp_020917_layout/page/20-21
- 14 Moms and Daughters Who Traveled To Protest Together at the Women's March on Washington, *Cosmopolitan*
https://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/a8607583/womens-march-washington-mother-daughter-photos/