

IN RECOGNITION OF MARIE  
TORNIALI

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I am pleased to honor Marie Torniali, Chairperson of Queens Community Board 1 and a longtime activist in the Astoria/Long Island City community. I am delighted to recognize her remarkable contributions at a slightly belated event along with Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas. Marie has spent her life working to make our community a better place to live and work.

Marie moved to Astoria in 1979, and fell in love with the neighborhood, a beautiful, welcoming, diverse community with wonderful parks, great organizations and world class restaurants. In 1986, Marie had a life-changing interview with Julie Wager, who was then head of the Central Astoria Local Development Corporation. She was interviewed for what was supposed to be a part time, temporary position. Thirty years later, she runs the place. Marie was fortunate to be mentored by Mr. Wager, who was a remarkable advocate for the community. He taught her that all things are possible with a little persistence and a lot of nudging.

Early in her time at Central Astoria, Marie was part of the team that fought to create a business improvement district on Steinway Street, Astoria's central business strip. When the Steinway Street BID came into being in 1991, Marie became its Manager.

In 2003, Marie was appointed the Executive Director of Central Astoria and the Steinway Astoria Partnership. In these positions, Marie has shown herself to be an outstanding organizer who has succeeded in providing more cultural programming and community development and who has fought to preserve affordable housing. She has also worked to expand the Independence Day celebration which has become a premier event in Queens under her leadership. She has worked to produce Movies on the Waterfront to complement the Waterfront Concert Series, the Dine Astoria Placemaking Initiative, Astoria's Holiday Tree Lighting, the Celebrate Astoria Cultural Fest and the Annual Spring Fling. Marie spearheaded the effort to restore the Steinway Landmarked Clock. She has created graffiti removal programs in Astoria's business districts and the Steinway Street Streetscape program. In addition, in order to assist seniors, she created the Senior One Stop Shop assistance program.

In 2010, Marie joined Queens Community Board 1 and was elected its Chairperson in 2017. Through the community board, Marie has had an impact on issues related to land use, street fairs, liquor licenses, landmark preservation and a host of other issues.

Marie is passionate about Astoria's uniqueness: its kaleidoscope of people; its small businesses and restaurants; its beautiful parks; its history and culture. Marie believes that her work to help Astoria thrive is made easier by the team spirit of her neighbors. Their civic-mindedness encourages residents, business leaders, civic organizations and elected officials to work together—and Marie

is convinced they have succeeded in making Astoria into the best neighborhood in New York City. I admire Marie's dedication, her passion, her delight in all the things that make Astoria a great place to live and work. She is one of the great sources of strength of the Astoria community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the achievements of Marie Torniali, whose hard work, enthusiasm and true love for Astoria have helped this neighborhood flourish.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ROD BLUM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, due to travel complications, I was absent for the votes that occurred on May 21, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 207; Yea on Roll Call No. 208; and Yea on Roll Call No. 209.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MRS. SNEHA MINISANDRAM PHAM TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND CALIFORNIA'S 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**HON. MARK DeSAULNIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional woman who spent almost two years in our office contributing greatly to our efforts on behalf of California's Eleventh Congressional District, Sneha Minisandram Pham.

Sneha regularly welcomed visitors to our Washington, D.C. office and was a model example of providing excellent customer service. Through her work, she assisted thousands of constituents with tour and flag requests, helped streamline and manage the high volume of mail we receive, and was integral in helping to ensure that our office put constituents first.

Sneha's work is one of the reasons that our office was selected as a finalist for the Congressional Management Foundation's Democracy Award in Constituent Service, which I am very proud of.

She is a smart, resourceful, and charismatic person who brings a positive attitude and demeanor to all who have the pleasure of interacting with her.

Sneha's departure from our office is bittersweet as she and her husband continue their journey together in Boston. I offer her my sincere gratitude for a job well done and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. She will be greatly missed.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. VICKY HARTZLER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 21, 2018, I was unable to vote due to a delayed flight. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 207, YEA; on roll call no. 208, YEA; and on roll call no. 209, YEA.

IN RECOGNITION OF SISTER TESA FITZGERALD

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the extraordinary achievements of Sister Tesa Fitzgerald, the powerhouse behind Hour Children, an exceptional organization that helps incarcerated women and their children in New York State. I am delighted to recognize her remarkable contributions at a slightly belated event along with Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas. Sister Tesa is one of New York's most inspiring, dedicated and compassionate leaders.

After joining the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister Tesa taught in a number of local Catholic elementary schools before becoming the principal of Saint Vincent DePaul School in Brooklyn. She was then appointed Curriculum Coordinator for the Diocese of Brooklyn.

In 1986, at the request of Sister Elaine Roulet, Sister Tesa opened the doors of St. Rita's Convent in Long Island City to children whose mothers were incarcerated at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The convent was renamed "My Mother's House" and Sister Tesa and four other Sisters of St. Joseph in residence welcomed 8 children whose mothers were in jail. The children attended school, took dancing lessons, played on sports teams and, in the evening, had the sisters to help them with their homework. Each week, Sister Tesa would bring the children to the prison to visit with their mothers. There, she learned of the struggles of incarcerated women. She started volunteering to help the women—tutoring them, helping them prepare for release, helping them find their children and assisting in family reunification. These efforts grew into Hour Children, a Long Island City-based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.

Today, Hour Children provides transitional and permanent supportive housing to approximately 70 families at seven sites located throughout Queens. In addition, Hour Children offers a job training/reentry program; case management; therapeutic counseling; mentoring programs for children and adults; a fully-licensed day care center; an after-school program; and a community food pantry.

Hour Children also works inside Riker's Island, Bedford Hills and Taconic Correctional Facilities to provide parenting classes, pre-release preparation, advocacy services, transportation and family visitation programs. At Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, Hour Children administers New York State's only nursery for infants born to incarcerated women,

where mothers and infants can be together for the first year of life.

Sister Tesa believes that her programs work because of two core philosophies: "Change takes time" and "Love makes the difference." Her work on behalf of vulnerable women and children has been widely recognized. In 2015, Pope Francis bestowed on her the Pro Ecclesiae et Pontifice medal in recognition of her years of service to the church in the Brooklyn Diocese. In 2014 the Opus Foundation awarded her \$1 million in recognition of her faith-based humanitarian efforts. She was named a White House Champion of Change in 2013 and a CNN Hero in 2012. In 2004, she was named one of the 100 Outstanding Women of New York by the Daily News and in 1997, Irish America Magazine named her one of the Top 100 Irish Americans. Her work on behalf of the most vulnerable should put her on the top of anyone's list.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of Sister Tesa Fitzgerald whose vision, empathy and caring have improved the lives of some of our nation's most vulnerable women and children.

COMMENDING LOCAL 2018 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENLIST IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA FOR HOSTING THE INAUGURAL HIGH SCHOOL ENLISTEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

### HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2018*

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 35 Fairfax, Virginia area high school seniors who plan to enlist in the United States Navy after graduation. These students have excelled in their academic and extra-curricular activities, and I offer my sincere congratulations upon their high school graduation.

I commend these student leaders for their selflessness and courageous decision to serve their country as members of the United States Navy:

Alexandra Villagomez; Rosanna Curiel; Cassidy Blefko; Carlos Castillo; William Labrecque; Ricardo Melendez; Elliot Gamby; Ryan Garnier; Hannah Hong; Cameron Woods; Myiam Anderson; Hyunsoo Hung; Omar Hedgespeth; Daniel Delabarra; Millad Zahedi; Carl Christensen; Edward Beaudoin; Tyger Leiva; Gad Baron; Jack Havens; Bryan Dann; Kevin Anderson; Michael Barnhouse; Marshall Wacker; Kenneth Abankwa; Yawo Afodagni; Marvin Castelo; Mukunda Adhikari; Dane Dailey; Dylan Griffin; Justice McManis; David Koroma; Karl Yao; Ryan Dixon; William Sherard.

These students will be honored by the Fairfax Chapter of Our Community Salutes at their Inaugural Military Enlistee Recognition Ceremony on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 in Sterling, VA.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking these young men and women and their families for their dedication to serving this great Nation. We owe them and the many Americans who have served and will serve a debt of gratitude.