



March 7, 2018
Re: Shaheen Akhtar

Dear Honorable Judges,

I am honored to write to you about the interfaith book club organized by Shaheen Akhtar. In her book club meetings, I have seen Shaheen provide an opportunity for faith leaders and social activists to further understand and build bridges between faith traditions. The attendees are welcomed with baked goods and refreshments, allowing time to mingle and foster relationships. The introductions made by Shaheen reinforce and remind all attendees about the need for love and compassion for our brothers and sisters in humanity, while encouraging freedom of religion. Diverse groups of 7-10 people are formed, representing different faiths, to discuss the topics and questions regarding the book of choice for that month. During this time, interesting conversations arise, spanning topics of faith, worship, rituals, children, and much more. This not only encourages analyzing one's own beliefs but also allows the recognition of commonalities and beauty in other faiths. We may have an academic understanding of each other's traditions but these meetings humanize what we have learned. This monthly book club is a necessity in the current political climate and I believe Shaheen should be honored for her efforts to break the walls of misunderstanding.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Asima Silva".

Asima Silva,
Director of Outreach
EnjoinGood.org