

2015 NMNWE Board Elections

Member At-Large candidate Rajaa Shindi's personal statement

I grew up in Baghdad, Iraq. Both my parents were educators, thus I was surrounded by an educational environment. My mother was the principal of the local school and my father was a teacher. They always pushed education to be the highest priority in life. They wanted me to study hard so I could obtain a degree and establish a career. Both of them influential person and always guided me with my decisions. I expressed a desire to study Pharmacy. In Iraq we were required to take a baccalaureate exam, a comprehensive that test high scholars' and determines which area they must study. I took the exam and my score said I should be in Computer Engineering. I was not expecting that because I have not heard of such a thing. We were not allowed to retake the exam, or do something outside the field we received. My parents advised me to get into Computer Engineering because it was a new and exciting field that had a lot of potential. Technology was just becoming a very fast paced field. I took their advice and majored in Computer Science and received a Bachelor's degree with high honors. I always wanted to pursue higher education.

Throughout my life I have been faced with obstacles. I was given the opportunity to come to the United States in 1993 with my husband. I was very nervous because of the language-barrier. When I arrived I was more than ever motivated to learn the language so I could communicate. After a few years, I opened a Computer Science repair shop. Businesses always have their struggles. Finances, family, the economy, it all plays in. Another obstacle I faced was raising a family while studying my Master's Degree. It was hard balancing four young children with work and school. However, it has made me stronger and my children are my driving force that pushes me toward my goals. I believe my education and past experiences lead to my success. However there are many people who helped mold me to the person I am today.

There were many people who influenced my success. In high school I had a physics teacher who always believed in me, she encouraged me to go after my dreams. On one of my exams she wrote a quote on the top that states, "When there is a strong will, there is a way." I follow this quote with dedication and always share it with my children. Another person who influenced me was my grandfather. he was a religious scholar, that was well respected in Ramadi, Iraq. He also encouraged education, especially for his daughters and granddaughters. My father-in-law was another person who inspired me. He was a doctorate in Psychology and his dream was to open a renowned university in Iraq. Till this day the university is still standing and is the second largest in the whole country. He made his dream possible through education and desire. I share those qualities.

One of my dreams is to obtain a doctorate in my field of study through my research. Another dream of mine is to open a facility to help children with specific needs such as ADHD, physical handicapped, mental disorders, and many more. I would like to help by creating an environment where they can learn at their own pace. This dream sparked when I worked in a hospital after college for a year because it was required by Iraqi law. I noticed how the individuals with special disorders were missing resources to help them thrive. Ever since then, I wanted to open a facility where people can be helped.