



Interview with Maram Museitif
**2019 LEADERSHIP AUSTIN
ASCENDANT ALUMNA HONOREE**

WHAT CHARACTERISTIC FROM YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK DO YOU SEE IN YOURSELF?

What I learned from my parents most was generosity and kindness. My father is the most generous individual you will meet. He gives more than he receives and works to make people happy. I have taken this spirit of generosity and kindness in giving without expectation. My mom has taught me humbleness and patience. She is always surrounded by people from different backgrounds and treats them all equal with dignity and respect. She never made anyone feel that they didn't belong. Whenever a person has a personal or financial problem they felt comfortable coming to her. She never hesitated to be their aid in need. She always listened and helped as much as she could. She does it with so much grace, love and patience. Empowering people is an extraordinary trait of hers. That is what I hope to do – listen and support those in need.

WHAT WAS THE BEST LEADERSHIP ADVICE RECEIVED & HOW DOES THAT IMPACT YOU?

I have had many great mentors in my life. Many who came from different backgrounds and experiences. Their unique experiences shaped me to be the person I am today. They all taught me to speak from the heart to the heart, be authentic, humble and kind – and to pick myself up and never give up.

I am very passionate in the work I do and work tirelessly to address the inequities in our community. Knowing that the decisions I make will impact people's lives is a huge responsibility that I do not take it lightly. I put myself in their shoes and make sure that I am doing what is right for them by being their voice at the table. I am fearless and always speak the truth.

My mentors empowered me to speak the truth because it matters. I am known to be vocal, transparent and most importantly respectful. It takes a lot of courage and resiliency to stay the course but if I believe in something I will fight until the end. Improving people's health is my mission that I will keep fighting for. I believe my authenticity and integrity is what earned me peoples respect, they listen when I talk. I am grateful to all my mentors who believed in me and never sugar coated anything. They were always there for me and taught me with every rejection is an opportunity to do something better. They all empowered me to succeed and saw something in me that I didn't. They saw the will, determination and ambition to make a difference in this world.

WHAT IS ONE MISTAKE YOU THINK LEADERS MAKE ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Not listening, being compassionate or being engaged with the people they serve. We assume we have the answers and know what they need. But in reality, we do not unless we ask and meet people where they are. I have learned that personal humility is most important quality a leader should possess. And leaders who ignore the connection and connectivity with people often do not succeed. For this reason we must lead with love, compassion and empathy.

WHAT PROJECT OR EFFORT ARE MOST PROUD TO HAVE LED OR PLAYED A PART IN?

I do not have any one specific project, but being the first Muslim woman on the Central Health Board of Directors would be one of them. I am most proud when I am able to inspire people like me to be in leadership roles. When I get emails from young students who are inspired by me. When my friends think of me whenever they hear the word empathy. I am proud that I can empower people that they can be whatever they want if they followed my 3Ps (passion, patience and persistent) – all three are crucial for success and to enable them to strive in spite of the face of adversity.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD WANT TO SHARE THAT WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED?

That change happens in small steps. We want to be innovative in solving problems but solutions may be easier than we think, as simple as talking face to face with people. Please never underestimate the power of small actions. You can uplift someone without even knowing, your smile may make someone's day. Always aspire to be the best version of you. Be respectful and kind regardless if you agree or disagree on views. Your respect will earn you respect. Use your words wisely and engage with others who are different than you.