

# The American Mideast Leadership Network

**A**s the tragic events of September 11, 2001, reverberated around the world, they shook New York to its core. Fissures between communities ensued, promoting segregation and social isolation of Arab and Muslim groups in particular, damaging, in the process, one of New York's finest assets: the multicultural character of its social fabric. In the years since then, various organizations have tried to address these

problems by promoting healing and understanding between communities most affected in the aftermath of the attacks. Few, however, have approached these issues from within the Arab community and fewer still have worked with young Arabs, who, more than their parents, have felt ostracized, misunderstood and disempowered following the World Trade Center attacks.

The American Mideast Leadership Network (AMLN) believes that for a society to be healthy and thriving, it is important for all members of that society to feel accepted as integral members of that society. Having communication and collaboration between various groups is key in achieving such a society, but, as research has shown, it is just as important to work with groups in what is known as a "mono-communal setting" allowing members of a group to become self aware, confident and empowered. This way interaction with other groups can, in the end, yield more positive and enduring results.

The AMLN is an Arab initiated, Arab funded not-for-profit organization that was created in 2004 to address the needs of Arabs living in the United States. The AMLN aims to support and strengthen the Arab-American community through dealing with internal issues, while at the same time improving its relationship with US society at large. The AMLN understands the problems facing Arab-Americans today, internally as well as in relation to others. It seeks to deal with these problems head on by bringing together prominent community leaders, professionals, academics and youth through a variety of different events and programs, which aim to:

- empower Arab communities in the United States through leadership, development, and immigrant education programs;
- raise awareness of the common values and aspirations that young Arab Americans share with their peers in the United States;
- debunk stereotypes and misunderstanding of Arabs through education, people-to-people programs, lectures and grassroots outreach;
- promote cultural and educational exchange between professionals, academics, and future leaders from the Middle East and the United States;
- cultivate relationships between local communities within the United States through fostering an environment of coexistence and dialogue.