

NOTED COMMUNITY HEALER TO KEYNOTE ANGEL OF MERCY AWARDS BANQUET OCTOBER 29, 2015 -
Angel of Mercy and Scholarship Awards Presented & Food Drive for St. Francis Cabrini Clinic

[Detroit, MI] JULY 31, 2015 – The National American Arab Nurses Association (NAANA) will hold its fourth Angel of Mercy Awards Banquet at Byblos Banquets, 7258 Chase Road in Dearborn on Thursday, October 29, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. Sister Mary Ellen Howard, RSM, former executive director of St. Francis Cabrini Clinic, Detroit, will keynote the event.

Rose Khalifa, founder and president of NAANA, said, “The contributions of nurses often go without public acknowledgement. We know that there are several nurses who positively impact the health and well-being of the Arab American community daily, whether they are Arab American themselves or unselfishly serve the community’s needs for care. The board of NAANA believes that we can accomplish the dual purpose of elevating these nurses as well as showcase nursing as a viable career choice for Arab Americans in our community.

A woman of faith, a nurse whose compassion and service crossed racial and ethnic lines, Sr. Mary Ellen Howard could not be a better representative of what nurses can do when they extend themselves beyond what is expected to what is possible.”

Mary Ellen Howard is a native Detroiter, a Sister of Mercy, and a nurse.

She earned her BSN at Mercy College of Detroit, and her Masters in Health Care Management from the University of Wisconsin School of Business at Madison. For 25 years, Sr. Mary Ellen served as a nurse and health care administrator in Mercy hospitals across Michigan, including as CEO in Grayling and Muskegon. She was instrumental in founding Riverside Domestic Violence Shelter, Jordan School-based Health Center, and the LaVida Domestic Violence Program.

Since 1995, she served as Executive Director of St. Frances Cabrini Clinic of Most Holy Trinity Church in Detroit, the oldest free clinic for uninsured persons in the nation. She is the current President of the Free Clinics of Michigan. She recently completed a fellowship from the McGregor Fund in which she focused on the impact of the Affordable Care Act on free clinics.

Sr. Mary Ellen retired in 2014, but she continues to actively advocate on the local, state and national levels for improved access to quality, cost-effective healthcare for all. In her honor, NAANA will be holding a food drive to benefit the community served by St. Francis Cabrini Clinic in Southwest Detroit. Angel of Mercy banquet attendees are asked to bring healthy food items and pop-open canned items to the banquet for distribution to the poor and homeless.

Kelly Herron, executive director of St. Francis Cabrini Clinic, said, “This loving gesture to feed the hungry and sick in Sr. Mary Ellen’s honor is more than appreciated. Cabrini Clinic teaches families how to cook healthy meals to preserve their health and grow healthy children despite their poverty. As well, the homeless who come for assistance are really helped by portable food items like canned or microwavable meals. St. Francis Cabrini Clinic is indebted to Sr. Mary Ellen for her decades of service to our community and grateful to NAANA for this generosity.”

In an effort to recognize the contribution of Arab American nurses or nurses whose work has had a major positive impact on the Arab American community, NAANA has created the Angel of Mercy

Award. The 2015 awarded will be honored at the October 29th banquet. The Arabic phrase for nurse translates to “angel of mercy.”

Nursing scholarships valued at over \$40,000 have been awarded since 2004. The 2015 scholarship winners will be announced at the Angel of Mercy Banquet.

Tickets and sponsorships are available by contacting Renée Ahee at 586-484-2390, by e-mailing events@n-aana.org or by visiting www.n-aana.org.

NAANA was established as the American Arab Nurses Association in 2002, and expanded its scope nationally in 2006, as a voice, a network and a resource for men and women in their pursuit of employment and advancement within the nursing profession. NAANA focuses primarily on the Arab American nurse but it is an inclusive nursing organization fostering knowledge of cultural diversity and sensitivity between members and the community in the area of transcultural health care.

For more information, please contact Renée Ahee, NAANA executive director, at 586-484-2390 or reneahee@gmail.com