



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Benjamin

Maria Cruz

BRIAN BENJAMIN April 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **2018 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION**



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Maria Cruz

Maria Cruz, originally from Puerto Rico, has been an advocate and visionary for the residents of Taino Towers and the East Harlem community for more than 45 years. She is currently the Executive Director for ARCO Management Inc./Taino Towers. In this position, some of Ms. Cruz's many accomplishments include the creation of the complex's Senior Citizen Park, organizing holiday fundraisers, and the renovation of the Touro College building that conducts several academic programs for the children and older youth of Taino Towers and the larger community.

In 1999, Ms. Cruz organized the first annual Taino Family Day, an event to unify all residents throughout East Harlem. It continues today, almost 20 years later.

In 2002, Ms. Cruz, along with Irving "Magic" Johnson, inaugurated the Magic Johnson Computer Learning Center to provide computer classes to both Taino Towers residents and the local community. It currently serves senior citizens, adults and young adults, Spanish speakers and offers after-school programs for children.

Ms. Cruz is a board member on the East Harlem Council for Human Services, working closely with local officials. She has served as President of the Tenant Association for her apartment building; was Vice President for the East Harlem Little League Baseball organization; and in her spare time, she has organized bus trips for neighborhood children to amusement parks and ball games. Ms. Cruz has successfully encouraged and assisted a number of tenants to return to school and further their education, enabling them to re-enter the work force and no longer need public assistance.

Ms. Cruz has received many awards, including a Commendation from the State Comptroller for leadership and service and from The Puerto Rican Hispanic Task Force in appreciation for years of dedication to the Latino Community of East Harlem.

Ms. Cruz is the proud mother of four wonderful children.