Agreeing to disagree is not really taught when you're a child. It's something that must be learnt over the course of a lifetime where experiences and interactions broaden one's scope of understanding the world and everyone in it. My collective experiences have led me to a point where I understand how fundamental this concept is, especially as a religious student leader.

I joined the Muslim American Society over a decade ago and volunteered with the community since, including for Ramadan interfaith events to break the fast with our non-Muslim neighbors, first introducing the idea of dialogue. I then joined the Muslim Alliance of NY, an organization aimed at linking high school MSAs as a support network. I was involved with MSAs since then, during which the MSA and Jewish Club planned the school's first ever interfaith event .

I have previously volunteered with Muslims-Giving-Back, an outreach charity seeking to feed the homeless. I've volunteered with the Islamic Center at NYU, which I actively attend. The ICNYU introduced the most diverse perspectives within the Muslim community, as they regularly host dialogue events like "Jummah Shabbat." I served as the secretary of NYIT's MSA and later president using the knowledge gained from different MSA's to foster a more inclusive community on campus.

I recently co-founded an initiative called ThoughtSpace aiming to create a safe space for young Muslims who desire studying faith with a critical, more academic and theological lens. We have thus far started our first community book club led by a Columbia PhD candidate.

I am currently serving as the very first Charity Week New York State Director. This internationally renowned organization seeks to unite campuses globally for one week out of the year raising money for orphans and needy children worldwide. This past semester I helped lead Charity Week with MSA for it's first year in America and our institution raised the most money in the entire country. I'm now working with this international network to build a foundation here in NY and by extension, the US.

As the current MSA vice president, inviting speakers like Imam Khalid Latif (NYU) was one of my major goals and I was able to accomplish just that this past semester setting a precedent for succeeding years. With the Ibrahim experience, I hope to open up my mind to new ideas, thoughts, perspectives and develop stronger critical thinking skills. As an active member of my community I would seek to incorporate these new ideas within my community by leading and initiating more dialogue, interfaith as well as intercultural work with the local mosques, Islamic Centers, and organizations I am associated.

At the campus level I would use this experience to promote and organize more MSA events that would bridge the gap sometimes seen between different religious clubs. Last year, an Interfaith Holiday Feast was held in conjunction by MSA and Hillel and to my surprise, I was told it was the first joint event the two organizations at Queens. It was a successful, educational event, which produced a friendly and mutually respective atmosphere. I'm currently working on hosting a Women in Faith with Hillel event with a focus on feminism in faith and where religious identities fall in this most recent wave of feminism.

I hope to use my experience with Ibrahim Leadership to take these interfaith initiatives to the next level. Over the last year I have seen a more flexible culture within our MSA and Hillel neighbors where members of each club comfortably walk over to the respective centers and have genuine conversations. Using the Bridges Program model at NYU, I believe we can further cultivate and foster understanding between other religious clubs to the extent of taking

relief trips together where we can learn from and with each other all while working towards a greater collective cause. I hope to implement this initiative at our institution and leave a legacy for students to come.

I believe the Ibrahim Leadership Program would help me grow in every sense and personal growth invites collective growth as a community, whether in the academic setting or elsewhere. It only takes one person to take initiative and that initiative could very well leave a legacy.

Batool Chaudhry