

*Beyond a Single Story* - groundbreaking student conference  
by Swami Anjani

On April 4th St Edward's School hosted this very special day-long program to evoke empathy for all people, to create an opportunity for respectful debate, and to encourage critical thinking skills.

The keynote address was given by Aisha Saeed, a Pakistani American writer, teacher, and attorney. Her writings have appeared in publications including *The Orlando Sentinel*, *Muslim Girl* magazine, and *BlogHer*. As one of the founding members of the "We Need Diverse Books Campaign," she is helping to change the conversation about diversity in literature. Her published books include *Amal Unbound* and *Written in the Stars*. She is also a contributing author to the highly acclaimed *Love, InshAllah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women*.

After the keynote, the students then chose from an amazing menu of hour-long interactive presentations, including "Immigrants, Migrants, and Dreamers," "Gender Identity and Teens," "Let's Talk About Race," and "Youth in the Criminal Justice System."

Some of my Interfaith Clergy cohorts and I were honored to present "Who are We - and why are we here?" from our different faith perspectives. Rabbi Michael Birnholz, Christian Scientist Suzy Feeney, Rev. Dr. Joe LaGuardia, St. Ed's Chaplain Rev. Tommy Matthews and I hosted three sessions. Once again I was touched by how similar our paths are and the way they can merge in our hearts - if only we are open to it. We definitely gave the students something to think about, and I was grateful to be part of this wonderful day.