

*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.