



Name: Anne Marsa

Year of Graduation: May 2003

All Degrees received: BA Interdisciplinary Studies, Friends World

Currently a M.A. Candidate in Ethics, Peace & Global Affairs at American University's School of International Service.

All Awards/ Honors received:

Global Citizen Award from Friends World Program for 2 consecutive years

Why did you decide to attend the Friends World Program?

The Comparative Religion and Culture program is what initially attracted me to Friends World. I researched CRC extensively, and knew it was an opportunity that I could not pass up. I was looking for a program that would not only expand my understanding of other religions and cultures intellectually, but experientially as well. I wanted to be able to actively participate in the learning process.

How was the program different than others?

Friends World offers the opportunity for a sort of direct engagement with the rest of the world. This makes the learning process more interesting and directly relevant, as well as more meaningful and rewarding on a personal level.

What was your area of focus while in the program?

World religions & peace and conflict resolution

What are you currently doing (professionally)?

I am currently the dialogue coordinator for a Track II Diplomacy effort at Hands Along the Nile Development Services, an NGO in the Washington, D.C. area; working to bridge cultural, religious, and political gaps between Egyptians and Americans through dialogue.

How have you been able to apply what you learned at Friends World to what you currently do?

It was with Friends World that I developed a more sophisticated understanding of the impact culture has on perception and world views. I have continued to study this concept in greater depth throughout my Masters. Friends World laid the groundwork for my cross-cultural studies. I am grateful for not only the introduction to this important topic, but for my time in Friends World where I lived and worked in situations where I grappled with these differences everyday. Understanding cross-cultural issues is important and can be gleaned from textbooks. Being able to negotiate and work with cultural differences is an entirely different skill set that is best (and perhaps only) developed through lived experience.

Is there any additional information that you would like to share that you think would be beneficial?

I recently coauthored a chapter on Sufism in a book titled "Islamic Peace Paradigms", edited by Dr. Karim Bangura.