

# Volume 82

## April 2022

### Alumnae E-News

#### An Interview with Villa Girl Saima Huq '91!



**Education:** Master of Public Health, The George Washington University, 2000 BA, American University, 1995 Major: Print Journalism. Minor: International Relations.

**Current Job:** I am a Contact Tracer for the University of Pennsylvania, and an emergency responder at a retirement community in NE Philadelphia (so I live there with the older folks.) I also run my own two companies, *Always Love Lucy Theatre* and *King Lahiri Productions*.

**Honors and Career Highlights:** To be honest, I have NO work honors but I have been dismissed from a lot of so-called "real jobs". Does that count? Usually it can be traced back to money, and so they dismiss me like I'm the highest-paid person there. Believe me, they did not save that much money by letting me go. That's life.



But I learned a lot from all of these jobs, and I am friends with my former coworkers. I did bioterrorism surveillance of the water system for New York City. I ran a research study on air pollution and cardiac events for Harvard, and co-presented school programs on stroke and healthy eating with Easy AD of the Cold Crush Brothers for Columbia University's Hip Hop Public Health ([www.hhph.org](http://www.hhph.org)). AD is a Hip Hop pioneer from when the culture began in November 1973, and Jay-Z gave them a shout-out in his 2001 song "H.O.V.A.": "We're overcharging for



### Photos:

**First photo:** Saima's Villa Senior Yearbook photo.

**Second photo:** *Always Love Lucy* presents *Shakespeare from the Block: Julisa Ceasar and King Lahiri*. *King Lahiri* went on to become a feature film. This photo was taken after filming was complete. New York City, 2018

**Third photo:** Wrap on final day of shooting *King Lahiri*. We filmed in the middle of the night of a real convenience store in East Rockaway, NY. My cat Phoebe played the store cat.

what they did to the Cold Crush."

I would like everyone to know that Hip Hop is a world culture that has been recognized by the United Nations since 2007. AD was there when they signed the charter. And he is an associate producer on my upcoming feature film "King Lahiri."

**Growing Up:** I grew up in Ewing (half a mile from VVA, actually). I have a large immigrant/first-generation family from Pakistan, and two of my three sisters also graduated from Villa (Nazish '90 and Sarah '95). We are Muslim, and I always appreciated that VVA was truly inclusive of different religions even back in the 1980s. They did it because it was the right thing to do, there was no internet and definitely no social media to post about it. The nuns could teach these corporate board members a thing or seven about true diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Favorite Villa Memory:** The plays. I first joined the plays just because everyone else was in it and what was I going to do after school by myself anyway.

The shows were really well-done. I knew that at the time, and I believe that is why I run such great theatre productions in New York (and now in Trenton) because I have no theatre training past VVA musicals. Yet I have been interviewed by Pat Healy of *The New York Times* for my production of *Death of a Salesman* (one of the cast is now touring as Golde in Broadway's company of *Fiddler on the Roof*.) I turned an original adaptation of *King Lear* into a feature film *King Lahiri* and it is making the film festival circuit now. Danish Farooqui, who plays Danish Lahiri, is about to make his Broadway debut in *The Kite Runner*. It features Joe Gannascoli (Vito from HBO's *Sopranos*) as a restaurant owner. I named his character Frabizio Vitelli, after my VVA friend Holly Frabizio.

When I first started producing theatre in New York, I thought I would only meet actors as great as when I was in high school plays. Nope! A lot of people from professional drama conservatories are not on time, don't know their lines or have egos so big I don't know how they fit in the door. And I find that unacceptable. I have fired actors who won't think of their costars and the production instead of just themselves -- and I time how long it takes to replace them. It has never taken me more than 45 minutes.

**Fourth photo:** Saima's IMDB professional photo.

**Fifth photo:** Saima with no makeup.

Saima said, "My headshot with professional makeup, lighting and photographer vs myself. Never compare yourself to anyone in acting/modeling because we don't recognize ourselves in our headshots either."

Where else to catch one of Saima's productions? She is producing a series of Thornton Wilder one act plays at the Trenton Free Public Library throughout 2022.

Learn more about Saima's work here: [www.kinglahirithemovie.com](http://www.kinglahirithemovie.com)

**The Villa Teachers:** Every single teacher was great, but Sister Josephine Palmieri stands out. Her asking me to join Forensics in 1988 was my first (and only) drama teaching ever, and I still use her technique of dinging a cowbell if I can't hear a line in rehearsal.

I got my cowbell from Amazon. I have no idea how Sr. Josephine found a cowbell in the 1980s without the Internet. N o w *that's* one innovative and resourceful teacher!

**My hobbies:** Sleep is great! Pre-pandemic, I was a tour guide at Central Park Zoo for 6 years, so I learned a lot about wildlife and conservation, but also how to talk with the public and work with Boomers, who are all still my friends and don't deserve the stigma younger people give them. I appreciate zoos in a whole new way now, and make sure to thank volunteers at any events I attend, whether at a zoo or not.

**Another fun photo  
from the Villa Alumnae Brunch  
held prior to our annual Musical.**





A photo of some Villa grads from the 2000s, some of their children and some members of the Seussical Cast at the Alumnae Brunch.

## **Villa Girl Olivia Quinn '18**

Congratulations to Olivia who successfully completed her Senior Recital for Temple University. This recital is a culmination of her studies of voice performance over the last four years.

Congratulations Olivia! Click on the link below to watch the recital.

(Photo from Olivia's recital. Oliva is pictured with Villa Music Director Ms. Katrina Tamarro).





## Connect with us!

Would you like to be the Villa Rep for your class? Email Mrs. White [here](#). We need you!

Would you like to connect with your fellow Villa girls? Join our LinkedIn page [here](#).

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

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## Drivers Needed!

Like just about every school we are experiencing bus driver shortages for our athletic events.

We are looking for a person who:

- has a CDL license
- has a P endorsement
- has an S endorsement
- is available from about 2 pm to 6:30 pm

Please contact Sr. Lillian [here](#) with questions or to apply.

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hey villa grads!  
do you have an update?  
wedding?  
job promotion?  
new baby?  
fill out the form below.

We would love to hear from  
you!



## Alumnae Update Questionnaire

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### **Go and Give!** **Villa Victoria Giving Day is coming up!**

Giving Day will run from  
May 11 Midnight to  
May 13 Midnight  
and include St. Lucy Day on May 12!

Stay tuned for more information!

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## Give Here Now

The Villa Alumnae E-newsletter is produced twice per month during the school year and once per month in the summer for Villa alumnae, alumnae parents, current students, and other friends of Villa Victoria Academy. Any corrections, questions or news should be sent to [cwhite@villavictoria.org](mailto:cwhite@villavictoria.org).