Submitted photo The class of 2013 gets ready to graduate at Pierre's of South Brunswick June 16.

The Noor-Ul-Imam High School hosted its 20th Commencement Ceremony Sunday, June 16 at Pierre's Restaurant. The Noor-Ul-Imam Islamic school was founded by Sister Saffiya Turan, in her home, according to Admissions Committee Spokeswoman, Sister Sufia Azmat.

The school is a non-public, non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education and is accredited by the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools, according to Ms. Azmat. Located in the Monmouth Junction section of South Brunswick, there are more than 500 students currently enrolled in this pre K-12 grade school located on the premises of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey on Route 1, according to Sister Azmat.

Introduction of the twelve graduates, eight girls and four boys, was given by the High School Division Head, Sister Saffiya Turan. Head of School, Janet Nazif, said in her opening remarks regarding the beaming graduates, “Smile is a charity.”

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation also recognized four top students at the school. Out of 1.5 million students, according to the opening remarks by Sister Nazif, the top 3.3 percent of college bound students are awarded National Merit scholarships for exceptional academic promise. The commended students were awarded to Hira Majid, Tasneem Maner, Roana Fatiha Rahman, and Amjad Shaikh.

According to Sister Naif, The Department of Education recognizes a GPA of 3.5 and scoring 85 percent, and above, for both the verbal and math scores of the SATs with the President’s Award signed by U.S. President Barrack Obama.

Of the graduates, Muzalifah Ayub, Hira Majid, Tasneem Maner, Roana Fatiha Rahman, Amjad Shaikh, and Ameena Soliman were awarded that honor.

“There was a tie for Salutatorian because this is such a talented group,” said Sister Nazif, prior to Salutatorians, Amjad Shaikh and Tasneem Maner taking the podium after the Valedictorian speaker, Rozana Fathya Rahma.

“We will also be giving character awards because our mission as an early school values character on an equal footing with academics,” said Sister Nazif. “Our mission says it all: ‘Children of good character are the building blocks of a successful community.’ Character is right up there first, even before the academics.”

The service award went to Mahdi Anayetullah, The Effort Award to Dahlia Feitar, Kindness Award to Amjad Shaikh, Citizenship Award to Ruqayyah Totten, and The Effort Award to Hasan Usmani.

In closing, High School Division Head, Sister Turan, took the podium,

“I do this because I love you. Throughout the years it has given me just that. Love is the reason. It heals. It soothes. It's the gift that keeps on giving,” she said. “Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this unforgettable experience. I will always remember you. I will always thank you for the memories that will always live in my heart forever. You are all jewels in my treasure chest.”