



ANNOUNCING THE 2019 NUESTRO PUEBLO AWARDS HONOREES!

Arts and Entertainment

Awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to our Hispanic community through their skills, leadership, or portrayal of Latinos in Arts & Entertainment.

Honoree: DJ Sammy



On top of being an entertainment legend in the Atlantic City nightlife for over a decade, Sammy is also a diligent and present member of our community.

A proud Colombiano, DJ Sammy is often seen at various Hispanic Heritage Month and Career Day events at the various local Atlantic City elementary schools serving as a mentor to aspiring artists or providing the entertainment needs for many non-profit organizational-related events in the community.

Community Service

Awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to our community through volunteerism, as a provider of social services and/or promoting the welfare of others.

Honoree: Edbelinda “Mimi” Nambo



Ebelinda “Mimi” Nambo is the Employment Specialist for Catholic Charities. Mimi has a long track record inspiring others to volunteer through her diligent and unwavering support of youth programs in Atlantic City and beyond. During her tenure at City Hall, she worked diligently with City and State Officials to spearhead and assist with community outreach programs. She serves as an active member of the Consulate Committee, Atlantic County Puerto Rican Parade Committee, the Atlantic City Festival Committee, and the Hispanic Association of Atlantic County.

Mimi is a woman who “makes things happen” in her pursuit of unifying and improving the lives of Atlantic City residents. She is currently a senior at Stockton University pursuing a bachelor’s degree in sociology and anthropology.

Education

Awarded to an individual at any level in the education system in Atlantic County that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her skills, leadership, or advocacy on educational issues.

Honoree: Jonathan Rivera



Jonathan Rivera is a guidance counselor at Atlantic City High School and is of Peruvian and Cuban descent. After graduating from Oakcrest High School, Jonathan attended ACCC and transferred to Rowan University where he graduated with a Bachelor's in Biological Sciences and later a Master's in School Counseling (K-12). Being a Latino professional at ACHS, his goal is to inspire other Latino students in striving to graduate and become professionals in their desired field. Furthermore, apart from being a school counselor at ACHS, he is also a licensed professional counselor in the state of NJ and provides intensive individual counseling for at risk youth in Atlantic County. A large majority of the youth he services are of Hispanic descent. Being able to be an advocate and educator for these families has been his greatest great honor.

Currently, Jonathan is a PhD candidate in the field of psychology and is in the process of completing his dissertation which is a correlational study on religious

participation and overall happiness. He is happily married to his beautiful wife, Angelica Rivera, where she also serves as a BSN at AtlantiCare in Atlantic City.

Lifetime Education Achievement Award

This award is in recognition of the significant contribution you have made in the field of

education and for your tireless and generous commitment as an advocate for greater educational opportunities for our youth and Latino community.



Honoree: Dr. Arnaldo Cordero-Roman

Dr. Arnaldo Cordero Román has been teaching at the School of Arts and Humanities, in the Languages and Culture Studies Program at Stockton University in Southern New Jersey since 1999. Before then, he taught at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He earned his BA and MA at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras in Hispanic Studies. He later obtained a Ph.D. in

Comparative Literature at the University of Maryland, College Park. Past and present mentors have inspired him to integrate community engagement, intellect, and socio-political interaction at home and abroad. Even though he has been residing in the United States since 1985, he maintains close ties with friends and family in Puerto Rico.

Entrepreneurship

Awarded to an individual in the field of business that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her leadership in business, service, and providing professional opportunities to the Latino community.

Honoree: Evan Sanchez



Evan Sanchez is an entrepreneur with his sights set on the long-term renaissance of Atlantic City.

While still an undergrad at Columbia University in New York City, Evan joined the founding management team of [Olo](#). For nearly a decade he worked in leadership positions across Olo including Operations, Account Management, Sales and Business Development helping to build it into the industry leader in digital ordering and delivery for over 250 restaurant brands across 50,000 locations including publicly traded brands like Chipotle, Red Robin, Jamba Juice, and Applebee's. Evan also served as President and Board Member of the Columbia Venture Community, the largest Columbia University-

based entrepreneurship organization.

Evan returned to his hometown of Atlantic City in 2015, and in his efforts to promote positivity co-founded ThisIsAC, a non-profit grassroots community movement. He also serves as President of the Atlantic City Arts Foundation, President of the Atlantic City Community Fund and a Board Member of the Absecon Lighthouse.

Evan co-founded [Authentic City Partners](#) (ACP) in 2016 to create development projects in Atlantic City with a singular commitment: to better the lives of those in our community. ACP's first project is the [Orange Loop](#), a neighborhood revitalization effort within the three beach blocks of Tennessee Avenue, St James Place and New York Avenue.

Healthcare

Awarded to a healthcare professional who embodies the characteristics of compassionate care, respects patients' values, culture, choices and decisions, and understands the significance of educating our community with regard to the latest healthcare issues.

Honoree: Ivette Guillermo-McGahee



Ivette Guillermo- McGahee, MA, ACS, LPC was born in Toluca, Mexico and grew up in the city of Guadalajara. Ivette's experience as a child of Deaf parents has provided a profound understanding of the potential for growth that lies within the hardships that are a part of the human experience. Her vision is to help families thrive and develop into more skillful, mindful, and compassionate human beings, while working through the adversity in their lives. Allies In Caring, Inc. (AIC), was founded by Ivette in 2012. She was driven by a strong desire to be more effective in helping children, youth and their families develop resiliency and become strong, creative and thriving despite the adversity in their lives. Her mission for the non-profit organization is to be dedicated to leadership, advocacy, and excellence in

promoting culturally responsive, mental health services for diverse populations. She recognizes that persisting racial and ethnic disparities in health care are major clinical, public health, and societal problems. Her approach to culturally competent responsiveness involves provisions for language accessibility and culturally affirmative action, counseling, education and community advocacy, and a focus on supporting the development of bilingual/ bicultural professionals.

Under Ivette's leadership, she received funding from NJ Community Capital Bank and the USDA to acquire a building where she plans to establish the Con-Vivir Wellness Hub by the end of this year. The Con-Vivir Wellness Hub is an innovative health project that implements strategies that reduce the barriers of traditional programs, and effectively addresses the health and welfare needs of families facing barriers due to cultural differences, and language. Con-Vivir will be the gateway to access community resources that Hispanic families need. Ivette focuses on developing innovative alliances to enhance the capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of the community, specially the Hispanic population.

Currently, she serves as a Trustee for the Hammonton Main Street Board, the Pinelands Preservation alliance, and a member of Hammonton's Revitalization committee. She works tirelessly to promote an atmosphere of inclusion at all events sponsored by those organizations, and brings the voice of the Hispanic population to the table.

Ivette Guillermo-McGahee lives in Hammonton, NJ with her husband Stephen and daughter Tara. She's come a long way from the young girl in Guadalajara that painfully watched her deaf parents struggle because they had no voice. Today she is a wonderful mother and wife, an admirable citizen, and community leader that actively affects positive changes within Hispanic families in and out of Atlantic County.

Public Service

Awarded to an individual in public service including government employees, elected officials, law enforcement or in military services that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her skill, leadership or advocacy of issues that affect the Latino community within the public sector.

Honoree: Rosa Farias



Rosa Farias was raised in Wildwood, NJ, and graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She went on to earn her master's degree, graduating summa cum laude from the Rutgers University – School of Public Affairs and Administration in Newark. Prior to joining the Atlantic City Initiatives Office, she was the Director of Urban Policy for the New Jersey Senate Majority Office. In her role as Director, she worked closely with the 26 Democratic Senators in the New Jersey Senate to create policy and draft legislation ranging from housing to local government issues that affect urban communities. In addition to being policy lead on urban affairs, she was also the Senate lead for higher education. Aside from her work in the New Jersey Senate, she was appointed to Governor Phil Murphy's transition team as Deputy Director for Policy - Education, Access & Opportunity, where she was the lead on higher education policy.

Among her accomplishments, Rosa has worked on policy giving undocumented immigrants access to financial aid for the first time in New Jersey in 2018 and helped pass legislation for student loan forgiveness for NJCLASS loans. Prior to leaving the New Jersey Senate, she led the efforts to create legislation that would allow undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses, which would put New Jersey on track to becoming the 13th state in the nation to do so if enacted. Rosa has served as an adjunct faculty member at the Rutgers University – School of Public Affairs and Administration where she teaches community development and social capital building and public administration. She recently was honored by Latinas United for Political Empowerment (LUPE) as a Latina Pioneer for the work she has done in the New Jersey Legislature. She has served as the Secretary of the Board for Emerge New Jersey where she was also a fellow in its charter class. She is a proud Big Sister to her Little Sister Stephanie as a member of the Big Brothers & Big Sisters organization for more than six years.

Future Leader

Awarded to an individual under the age of 21 who has made a significant contribution to our community through scholastic achievement, leadership or exemplary accomplishments that qualifies him/her as an outstanding role model for other youth.

Honoree: Christian Cabrera



Christian Cabrera is a freshman at Stockton University majoring in biochemistry molecular biology with the hopes of becoming a pharmacist seeking to serve the diverse minority communities that helped raise him. His love of chemistry and the healthcare sector began as a student at Atlantic City High School where he learned under the inspiring and dedication of his teacher, Mrs. Agnes Arsensis. Having spent two rigorous years under her tutelage in both Honors and Advanced Placement Chemistry, Mrs. Arsensis helped cultivate and refine his appreciation for the sciences.

As a Dominican American fluent in both English and Spanish, Christian blended right in to the cultural melting pot that is Atlantic City. His greatest strength is having the opportunity to effectively interact with community members from all walks of life including his Bengali brothers, Chinese sisters, and Mexican cousins.

Christian is the new youth representative on the Citizen Advisory Board of Atlantic City, is the recipient of the 2019 HAAC Youth Leadership Summit, and the AtlantiCare ALMA (AtlantiCare Latinos Moving Ahead) Scholarship.

Nuestro Amigo/a

Awarded to a non-Hispanic individual that has demonstrated devotion to the betterment of the Latino community through their work, special achievement(s) or service to the community.

Honoree: Jay Sodha



Jay Sodha was born in Uganda Africa and moved to India at the age of four. He lived in India until the age of 17 when he moved to United States permanently. He completed his high school education in Pasadena California and attended Pasadena College majoring in business management. He had a very successful career for 25 years in the food and beverage industry and managed several restaurants. He was introduced to the Spanish community in California. He is a self-taught Spanish-speaking translator and interpreter. He moved to the state of New Jersey in 1997 and has been here for 22 years.

His career in New Jersey began at the Tropicana Casino as a food and beverage server. He soon became the shop steward at Tropicana Casino for the UNITE HERE Local 54 union. He was then recruited to join the team at Local 54 for the grand opening of the Multilingual Office in 2000. He worked and served

Local 54 members for 10 years. During his time at Local 54, he attended immigration classes at Newark and attended labor law classes at Rutgers University. He was then recruited by former mayor Langford to work at City Hall as the Multicultural Coordinator for Atlantic City. He assisted the community with immigration and socioeconomic issues. Currently he is serving as a treasurer for the South Jersey Indian Association, vice president of the Marty Wilson's Music and Art Foundation, and his immensely proud of creating a coalition with the Chinese, Bangladeshi, Vietnamese, and Hispanic community members of Atlantic County.

Nuestro Organizational Amigo/a

Awarded to an organization that has demonstrated outstanding social responsibility to the Latino community through participation and support of issues, programs, or events relating to the Latin community or that has demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of Latinos in their organization.

Honoree: AtlantiCare Mission Healthcare (FQHC)



AtlantiCare Health Services is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). FQHCs include all organizations receiving grants under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act. FQHCs qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, as well as other benefits. AtlantiCare Health Services serves an underserved area of population, offers a sliding fee scale, provides comprehensive services, has an extensive quality

assurance program, and a governing board of directors. No one is denied care because of an inability to pay. This practice offers a sliding fee discount program for both insured and uninsured patients based on an individual's income and family size. Individuals may apply for a discount at the front desk. The health center has also fully implemented the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (The National CLAS Standards). These standards focus on improving health care quality and advance health equity by establishing a framework for organizations to serve the nation's increasingly diverse communities.

STEM

Awarded to an individual in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics who has made significant contributions through the advancement of their work, leadership, or in advocating opportunities for advancement of Latinos in STEM.

Honoree: Robert Ortiz



Born and raised in San Jose, California (the heart of the Silicon Valley), Robert lived through the personal computer and internet explosion of the 1980s and 1990s. The son of an interracial couple, his father is African American and his mother was Mexican, Robert was predominantly raised in a single-parent home by his mother. It was her that instilled a hard work ethic in him at an early age as he would accompany her at the age of 5 on the weekends as she was a part-time maid helping clean bathrooms and vacuuming. When his mother became a preschool teacher, this was also an opportunity for him to begin working as a Teacher's Aide in his teenage years during the summer. He watched her go back to school and eventually witness her work her way up to become the Director of the Preschool.

Robert put himself through school and received his degree in computer aided design while working full-time for Aramark Uniforms and part-time for the San Jose Museum of Art as a Teacher's Aide on the weekends. At the age of 13, I painted my first mural, which was one of the first of its kind in San Jose. I received numerous speaking engagements at local high schools and even did several art installations (one at San Jose State University for their art students). I also worked with various cities and their mural programs tutoring kids from 10-18 years of age in mural design.

Community Service/Participation has been a big part of his life, working with programs such as the D.A.R.E. Program in Tracy, California, the Bay Street Wall Project in Santa Cruz, California, The 11th Street Mural Project in San Jose, California, Atlantic County Habitat for Humanity, and most recently serving as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Egg Harbor Township Police Athletic League.

As a father, Robert experienced the limited resources available for students interested in STEM programs first hand. Robert did not want to create "just another STEM program" and was determined to create the region's premiere STEM program. An additional (but unwritten) goal of their STEM program, is to engage a large cross-section of students. The technology industry will continue to grow and they want to make sure the youth in our community embrace it, and are prepared to be a part of it and enjoy careers doing something they love.