



## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month



2017 Archive: Mexican Independence Day parade in Chicago



### **GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS!**

I'm so excited to be serving as the Chairperson of the Latino Advisory Council this year. Even in a world that has drastically changed and has presented seemingly insurmountable obstacles I see hope all around me. I see it in the sun that shines and in the rain that pours. I see it in the faces of all of us as we doggedly go forth with grit and determination to make a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Many of us have experienced loss: material, emotional, spiritual and physical. I do not know of one person who has not been touched by some degree by the pandemic and yet here we are, ready to do our jobs. Ready to fight the good fight for social justice, for inclusion of all people and for meaningful services to alleviate the burden of stress and strengthen the families in our communities even as we do the same for own families.

I feel proud and privileged to stand among you!

*Con Cariño,*

**Julia Monzón, LCSW**

2021 LAC Chairperson

# Someone you should know: Lourdes Rodríguez Colón



By Julia Monzón

Lourdes has 40 year plus history with DCFS and other social service agencies that began in 1974. Lourdes has worked as a Health Services Coordinator for the Head Start Program and as a Joliet Job Corps Counselor before setting her sights on DCFS in 1978.

Most of you know Lourdes as the Burgos Coordinator here at DCFS. Lourdes says that growing up she witnessed a lot of abuse and neglect first hand. Lourdes' grandmother ran a home daycare and often cared for children without any payment, she would feed everyone Lourdes says. Her whole family was heavily involved in community work through volunteering, their church and supporting other families.

Lourdes was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico although her family is both from Spain

and Puerto Rico. She is no stranger to social services in Puerto Rico and has often enriched others with her knowledge and resources.

One of Lourdes' challenges or pet peeves is the social injustice played upon the poor. It seems that political leaders come and go but the poor remain as do the barriers to social justice. Yes, the situation has improved over the years but change comes slowly. Lourdes advises new staff that while we are here to strengthen and reunify families, we must always keep safety in and the best interests of the children of Illinois. We must always be honest in our work, God is always watching.

Some key moments of Lourdes career include her participation with Director Sheldon in establishing the Chicago Hotline Call Center increasing the capacity of the hotline significantly to handle Spanish speaking calls. No one believed it would happen but Lourdes would like to see it advance even a step further with staff who speak other languages as well as English and Spanish.

Lourdes has also made a contribution on the human resource side. Her son, Andres H. Rodriguez has a Master of Social Work Degree from DePaul University and currently works in the DCFS Consent Unit and true to the calling also spent time in the field.

Lourdes was also involved in the construction of the Burgos Webpage with resources for many languages for those with limited English proficiency. The Burgos Consent Decree Training went live on the Virtual Training Network in 2006. The amount of people trained went from 300 annually to 2,000 after this change. Lourdes is currently doing work on the new Burgos database, updating brochures and posters and reporting monthly on Burgos compliance.

A study of Holiday traditions across the globe occupies Lourdes' free time right now and she plans on celebrating all of them. Two of Lourdes' favorite quotes are "No te dejes," (Don't allow it or don't allow it to happen to you) and "Poverty is the worse form of violence." We salute you Lourdes for your longevity and dedication.

**“Working with children and families is my love and passion.**

**Please make it yours”**

– Lourdes Rodríguez Colón



## LAC MEMBERSHIP

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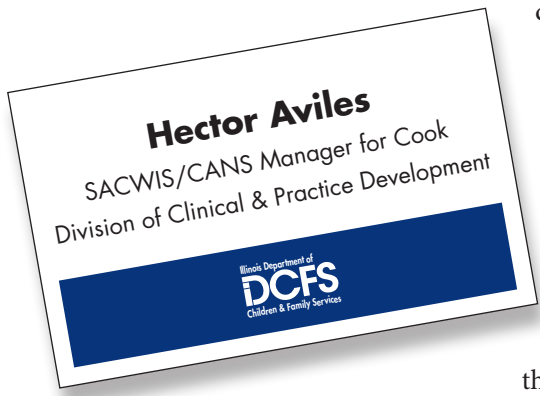
### Committees:

Child Safety & Permanency  
Community Risk Reduction & Staffing  
Data Validity & Disproportionality  
Strategic Communications  
POS Committee  
Latino Family Institute  
Professional Development Day

Contact Julia Monzón at  
[julia.monzon@illinois.gov](mailto:julia.monzon@illinois.gov)  
if interested in becoming a member.

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## Someone you should know: Hector Avilés



By Deborah Folga,  
Maywood DCP Bilingual Supervisor

Spanish is such a cool language. Just one accent can change everything—it gives the word

*Un matiz*...it conveys the feeling behind a word and its hidden nuances. You just have to listen for the accent—just as with the name “Hector Avilés.”

You have to pronounce his name correctly or it does not do justice to the man. Being one of the first Latinos in the Department, he oftentimes deliberately changed the pronunciation for the non-Spanish speakers by putting the accent in an easier place for them. He would introduce himself as *Heck-tor* putting in the H instead of leaving it silent—and then the last name: *Ah-VEE-lace*. instead of *Ah-vee-LACE*. I used to remind him that he had a name that merited an accent when I heard him Anglicize his last name. He deserved the correct pronunciation back then, and certainly now. The accent on the last syllable describes Hector—strong but a gentleman, confident yet humble, and proud to be Latino with a name that has a distinct noble sound when pronounced properly.

Hector’s family is from the Island of Borinquen. He described himself as a Boricua who had a huge ‘fro that

disappeared over the years and turned into dignified *canas y él ya es un poco calvo*. He grew up in the housing projects of Cleveland. He attended high school at the Seminary, and then received a scholarship from the Jesuits to attend Loyola University where he received his Bachelor degree. Hector later received his Master of Social Work from the University of Chicago in 1997

through a special DCFS program, SWEP—Social Work Education Program. SWEP was a scholarship program from “back in the day” that sent almost every DCFS supervisor to grad school with the goal of upgrading the Department to achieve accreditation. Hector was one of a handful of Latinos who participated, and he was the one who set the bar high for everyone, not just Latinos.

While at DCFS, Hector worked as an Investigator, at the Emergency Shelter, as the Burgos Coordinator in the Office of Litigation Management, as the Assistant Chief of Latino Services, in administration for Operations, collaborated with the beginning of the Education Initiative and most recently in the Clinical Division and with the SACWIS project. Come to think of it, DCFS has gone through so many changes that he probably worked in every division of the Department. He mentored some very fortunate employees. One little boy he took into custody about 35 years ago grew up to work as an investigator, licensing representative, investigator again [he couldn’t tear himself away from DCP!], a supervisor, and graduated with his Master of Social Work degree from the University of Chicago as well. Hector was there for him and inspired him, just like he did for so many of us. I had the honor of working for him for several years and having him as my *jefe*. He taught me so much and was a role

model for me and so many others. He is a great friend, and I enjoyed going to work since we laughed all day just as hard as we worked. Let’s just say that “back in the day” computer security was not what it is now, and we managed to pull a few pranks on our colleagues. The camaraderie was amazing, and yes, DCFS was a fun, enjoyable place to work.

I certainly hope I can convey that Señor Avilés is a true *hombre—a caballero, hombre de familia, un auténtico amigo leal* and *un trabajador social* in the truest sense of the word. He was passionate about his work and showed compassion for the children and families DCFS serves. You just couldn’t say that he “went the extra mile” because he was light-years ahead of everyone else. He is intelligent, analytical, respected and a leader. As the saying goes, “they don’t make them like they used to” and Señor Avilés set the standard for social work from “back in the day.” He inspired us and showed us what we could aspire to be today and in the future.

Forty years at DCFS is amazing. Señor Avilés left the Department quietly after all this time. He never did like the limelight. As we recognize him for his leadership and contributions to DCFS and social work, let’s wish him the best always as he enjoys life with his beloved wife, children and grandchildren. After all, he is an *hombre de familia* and we are grateful for what he gave to DCFS and his colleagues throughout his life. We would not be where we are today without him. He deserves all the happiness in the world.

## Service Milestones (Nov. 2020 thru Oct. 2021)

# Congratulations

### 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Deisy Anaya, Chicago
- Gladys Boyt-López, DeKalb
- Mariella Callegas, Maywood
- Juan Calvillo, Chicago
- Vanessa Flores, Maywood
- Narciso Mendoza, Danville
- David Muñoz, Deerfield
- Enrique Pimentel, Chicago
- Octavio Ponce, Chicago
- Jhomarie Ramos, Chicago
- Mercedes Ramos, Chicago
- Yesenia Robles, Deerfield
- Eulalia Rodríguez, Aurora
- Maribel Rodríguez, Chicago
- Sylvia Torres-Stephens, Chicago
- Marcelita Vargas, Chicago
- Emmie Vega, Chicago

### 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Hector Garcia-González, Aurora
- Darcie Hernández, Aurora
- Sydnie Juárez, Maywood
- Theresa Reyes, Waukegan

### 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Miranda Arenibar, Woodstock

### 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Hermie Bautista, Lincoln
- Denise Flores, Ottawa
- Domillie García, Deerfield
- Emma González, Chicago
- Andrew Martínez, Chicago
- Yanira Sánchez, Chicago
- Desiree Silva (*separated*)

### 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Deborah Folga, Maywood
- Ana González, Chicago

### 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Rosa Maria Molina-Lassalle, Maywood
- Maritza Rosario, Chicago

### 40 YEARS OF SERVICE!

- Hector Avilés, Chicago



### NOTICIAS is

brought to you by the Illinois Department of Children and Family

Services and the Latino Advisory Council. It is distributed to DCFS employees, POS agencies and agencies affiliated with DCFS. The newsletter includes articles pertinent to child welfare, Latino welfare issues and DCFS/POS programs, and strives to be an informative source for staff by providing updates on new child welfare initiatives as well as upcoming events.

It is our hope to continue providing staff with a vehicle for the sharing of information. A major part of this endeavor is you! We are asking for your input, submission of articles and suggestions for improving Noticias. Articles related to your experiences with families and personal stories are also greatly appreciated.

Please submit articles, information about incoming events or news to: Julia Camacho Monzón, Strategic Communications Committee Chair [julia.monzon@illinois.gov](mailto:julia.monzon@illinois.gov)  
1911 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616

### Or to any of the Strategic Communication Committee members:

Julia Camacho Monzón, Editor, Chair; José J. López, Final Editor; Deborah López, Co-Chair; Vanessa Castro, Scribe and Contributing Writer; Evelyn Martinez, Sidney Juárez, and Juanita Calderon, contributing writers and editors.

If you would like more information or would like to participate in one of the LAC subcommittees, please contact Julia Monzón, 2021 LAC Chair at [julia.monzon@illinois.gov](mailto:julia.monzon@illinois.gov) or any LAC member.

### Special thanks to:

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SAFETY FIRST SAFETY ALWAYS

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