

Award: The Aimee Olson Advocate Award
Recipient: Liliana Streber Ramirez
Presenter: Adani Sanchez

I am Adani Sanchez, Client Services Coordinator and I am excited to present the Aimee Olson Advocate of the Year Award to Liliana Streber Ramirez. The Aimee Olson Advocate of the Year Award is given to an individual that demonstrates a commitment to serving consumers and helping them access affordable, quality health care. We provide that assistance, with Liliana's help, through the Consumer Health Hotline where clients can call to ask questions about health care, health insurance, and anything else that might come up in our confusing and sometimes challenging healthcare system. Liliana took the mission behind the Hotline and expanded on it.

Liliana's commitment to quality healthcare goes way back to before she had even heard about Health Care Consumers. As a teenager in Mexico, she became an EMT volunteer for the Mexican Red Cross. Later on, she was the valedictorian of her medical school class. Dr. Streber focused on treating marginalized people. Her work with indigenous and rural populations taught her about the ways that cultural norms and customs can affect health outcomes. She held educational sessions to inform rural families about how to contain the spread of disease and worked toward closing the health literacy gaps in those populations. This work signaled her interest in finding solutions to systemic problems. Through these practical experiences, she gained a unique public health perspective, a bird's eye view of how health affects our communities as a whole in addition to the individual.

All of this she brought to her internship at CCHCC. She sought to continue her work in breaking down barriers to health, particularly in the Latinx community where she saw similar patterns of cultural norms affecting health. In addition to cultural barriers, Liliana also saw the complex US healthcare system as a huge barrier to accessing care.

That's why Liliana chose to develop a campaign that highlighted the benefits available to all kids in Illinois regardless of immigration status. The Medicaid program, accurately named All Kids, provides health insurance for all children under age 19, but due to national rhetoric surrounding immigrants, specifically Latinx immigrants, there has been some hesitancy around applying. Many fear that applying for benefits now might hurt the potential for a change in immigration status later, others worry about providing information to authorities that might be used against them. Liliana attended outreach events and spoke to families directly with all those things in mind, she went to shops

and local businesses sharing the plain-language fact sheet she created to encourage families to apply.

The same thoughtful understanding and concern that she used when speaking to families in the community, she also used to answer the phones or greet clients. Her passion for helping people spilled over into her everyday work when she would get caught up in finding resources for clients that were beyond healthcare. Her dedication, compassion, and commitment to helping people are why she is so deserving of the Aimee Olsen Advocate Award. Thank you for your work, Liliana!!