



A Conference for Young Latinas

featuring

Connie P. Oriente, MHS

Saturday, January 29, 2011

8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Elmhurst College, Illinois



[www.LatinaConference.org](http://www.LatinaConference.org)

# Introduction



The AAUW (American Association of University Women), founded 130 years ago, has over 100,000 members. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. Dare to Dream: Get Educated! seeks to fulfill the AAUW mission by encouraging the education and self development of the young Latinas who attend this conference, and to promote and enable a positive educational vision for each of them.

We sincerely thank the AAUW, AAUW-IL, Inc and four AAUW area branches: Elmhurst, Lombard, Downers Grove and Wheaton-Glen Ellyn for their contributions of funding, time and skills.

AAUW Breaking through Barriers for Women and Girls: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

Programs			
Keynote Session		Closing Session	
Zumba	Tanya M. Robinson	Greeting & Letter Exchange	Rocio Cárdenas
Welcome	Rocio Cárdenas	Soñadoras High School Clubs	Susan Szymanski
Keynote	Connie P. Oriente	Send Off	Connie P. Oriente
Conference Instructions	Dorothy Valintis		

**Thank you to all who worked so hard to make this dream a reality!**

Betsy Aldred  
 John Back  
 Connie Baker  
 Kathy Brenniman  
 Rocio Cárdenas  
 Monica E. Coca  
 Elizabeth Colon  
 Tenia Davis  
 Rosemarie Dressander  
 Dr. Lourdes Ferrer  
 Rita Gonzalez  
 Cindy Grau  
 Sara Hernandez

Carmen Higgins  
 Jennifer Jordan  
 Rosie Kusch  
 Marcia Lagerwey  
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 Sandra Avila Lopez  
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 Kathy Willis  
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# Soñadoras,

Thank you for being here! I am happy to participate with you in one of my favorite events. The conference today brings together so many wonderful women to share their dreams. This is the third conference we have hosted and I can honestly tell you that I leave inspired and energized every time I attend. I am inspired by the Latinas you will hear from today who have all made their dreams a reality. I am inspired by your presence on this Saturday morning, by your eagerness to learn and to share your own dreams. I am also inspired by the mothers here today, many who have had to take time away from work and other pressing demands to support you. I assure you that when you leave today, you will take with you some of the contagious energy this conference generates.

I hope that along with this special energy, you walk out of here seeing yourself the way we see you – as special, promising young women, willing to dream big and work hard to achieve those dreams. Take advantage of all of the opportunities you will have today to learn and ask questions. Most importantly, I hope you leave here with an even firmer grasp of the importance of dreaming. Remember, you have to Dare to Dream!

Rocio Cárdenas

President, Dare to Dream: Get Educated!

Girls	Mothers/Mentors
<p>08:30 AM — Registration, Breakfast &amp; Zumba in HC *</p> <p>09:15 AM — Welcome &amp; Keynote in HC</p> <p>09:50 AM — Organize to Groups/Tours</p> <p>10:35 AM — Workshop A: Careers &amp; Campus Life in HC &amp; Circle Hall Classrooms</p> <p>11:25 AM — Move</p> <p>11:35 AM — Lunch in Cafeteria</p> <p>12:05 PM — Move</p> <p>12:15 PM — Workshop B (&amp; Letters): Careers &amp; Campus Life in HC &amp; Circle Hall Classrooms</p> <p>01:15 PM — Move</p> <p>01:25 PM — Strategies in HC &amp; Circle Hall Classrooms</p> <p>02:30 PM — Break</p> <p>02:40 PM — Closing: School Organization Ideas in HC</p>	<p>08:30 AM — Registration &amp; Breakfast in HC*</p> <p>09:15 AM — Welcome &amp; Keynote in HC</p> <p>10:00 AM — Break</p> <p>10:10 AM — Dr. Lourdes Ferrer in HC</p> <p>11:15 AM — Break</p> <p>11:25 AM — College Prep Panel in HC</p> <p>12:40 PM — Lunch in Cafeteria</p> <p>01:10 PM — Career Panel in HC</p> <p>03:00 PM — Closing : School Organization Ideas in HC</p> <p>* HC = Hammerschmidt Chapel</p>



**Dare to Dream: Get Educated!**

**P.O. Box 328**

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**630-808-3533**

**Info@LatinaConference.org**

**www.LatinaConference.org**

## Speakers



### Connie P. Oriente, MHS

is a mom, teacher, educational staff developer, educational consultant and motivational speaker. She was recently named a “Symetra Hero in the Classroom” and has been nominated multiple times for the Golden Apple Award and the Disney American Teacher’s Award.

Connie was born Maria del Consuelo Palomo in rural Ohio’s Sandusky County, where her parents worked as migrant workers. Ms. Oriente often tells the story of overcoming great odds as the middle child among thirteen -- eighth from the top! She struggled academically while her family struggled financially. Connie managed to be the first daughter/sister in her family to attend college and graduate with a four year degree. Ironically, she was inspired by teachers who seemed to lack confidence in her ability to “amount to anything.” Connie did what everyone else told her she couldn’t, working more than 30 hours a week to support her schooling. She graduated from St. Xavier University with a B.A. degree and later earned a Masters Degree from Governor State University.

Ms. Oriente is a 28 year veteran teacher, mentor and valued colleague at Jerling Jr. High School in Orland Park, IL.



### Rocio Cárdenas

is the President of Dare to Dream: Get Educated! She graduated from Stanford University in 2006 with a Political Science degree and is a manager with a large industrial supply company in Elmhurst, IL.



### Tanya M. Robinson

is a certified Zumba instructor. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science/ International Relations from Northern Illinois University and a masters degree in International Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University. Tanya is also the proud owner of THE NINES ([www.thegsemp.com](http://www.thegsemp.com)), a company specializing in event planning, marketing and public relations.

## Colleges



### College of DuPage [www.cod.edu](http://www.cod.edu)

The third-largest single-campus community college in the nation and the second-largest institution of higher education in Illinois.

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Anna Gay

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Corina Crosier  
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(630) 942-3794  
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### Elmhurst College [www.elmhurst.edu](http://www.elmhurst.edu)

A private college founded 1871, ranking among the best regional institutions of higher learning in the Midwest, according to “America’s Best Colleges,” the annual survey by *U.S. News and World Report*. *The Princeton Review* also lists Elmhurst among the best in the Midwest, citing its “excellent” internships, “gorgeous” campus and “intimate academic experience.”

‘What College Ought to Be’

Rolando Chacon

Admissions Counselor  
(630) 617-3633  
[chaconr@elmhurst.edu](mailto:chaconr@elmhurst.edu)



### Illinois Institute of Technology [www.iit.edu](http://www.iit.edu)

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‘Curiosiity’

Tanya Cabrera

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Leticia Moreno  
Financial Aid Counselor  
(312) 567-3422  
[lmoreno2@iit.edu](mailto:lmoreno2@iit.edu)

Thank you to our interpreters Angel Gonzalez and Magdalena Vera-Farrag and to our photographer Rose Skegg [www.roseskegg.com](http://www.roseskegg.com)

# Career Panel Speakers

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**Cyndy Abenante** is a Lombard Police Lieutenant, instructor for the Citizens Policy Academy, Suburban Law Enforcement Academy, and Rape Aggression Defense Systems for Women. She is recognized for her work with troubled youth.

**Susan Avalos** was one of a handful of Hispanic students out of 1,000 in high school, but involvement in class and community projects opened the door to attending college. Since graduation from Loyola University's dental hygiene program, she has worked with Colgate Oral Pharmaceuticals, taught Dental Hygiene at UIC Dental School for the past 8 years, and served on the Board of Directors for College of Lake County. She has enjoyed a successful and diverse career as a RDH (registered dental hygienist) for 22 years.

**Marisol Becerra** is a DePaul senior Public Policy major and an Environmental Studies Ph.D. applicant. At age 13, she exposed the toxins of a coal-fired power plant in her community and launched Little Village's Environmental Justice Organization youth branch. She is one of 1,000 students recognized as a 2007 Gates Millennium Scholar and has a full scholarship to cover her degree to the doctoral level.

**Elizabeth Colon** is president and founder of Metaphrasis Language & Cultural Solutions, Inc., which offers interpreters, document translation, training and consultancy services to hospitals, schools and businesses to bridge language barriers between their clients.

**Tenia Davis** is Vice President of Human Resources at Harpo Inc. She oversees the talent management, leadership development, employee/labor relations, diversity, and compensation/benefits of all employees of The Oprah Winfrey Show/Foundation, Harpo Films, Harpo Studios, Oprah & Friends Radio, Oprah.com Development, and The Oprah Store.

**Lourdes Duarte**, keynote speaker for the 2009 Dare to Dream Conference, is co-anchor of WGN Evening News from 5-6 pm and host of Adelante Chicago, bi-weekly Saturdays from 6:30-7 am. Lourdes has won several awards and two Emmys for her journalistic work.

**Dora Garcia** is an accounting graduate of DePaul University, employed as an accountant at SWC Technology Partners in Oak Brook, thanks to the support of Teen Parent Connection, which mentored her through her teen pregnancy. She is now the mother of two.

**Rita Gonzalez** founded the non-profit Hispanics United of DuPage, worked against gang activity, won the largest ever discrimination lawsuit against the government and propelled herself as a political activist into winning election to the DuPage County Board in 2008.

**Carmen Higgins** is a mother of 13-year old twins and the Westchester Public Library Outreach Coordinator who develops and oversees outreach programs to targeted audiences. She provides front-line services to the public.

**Rosie Kusch** is a Project Electrical Engineer with JL Meece Engineering in Coal City. She is a computer electrical engineer working in power plants and petrochemical plants. Rosie encourages engineering for girls, transforming ideas into reality, and knowledge giving power.

**Argentina Leyva** is a bi-lingual chemical engineer at Argonne National Labs, researching and developing separation of spent nuclear fuel. She is also a world-renowned portrait and wedding photographer. You can visit her website at [www.argentineleyva.com](http://www.argentineleyva.com).

**Laura Mitacek, J.D.**, a former DuPage County Assistant State's Attorney, is now a solo practitioner, concentrating in criminal defense. As a former chemist for two different crime labs, she has testified in court as an expert witness in criminal cases, then learned to try cases.

**Maria Noyola** is Administrative Assistant to the Principal of Spring Brook Middle School, using her A.S. degree from COD as she registers new families, orders supplies, translates, calls in subs, and provides data of 8<sup>th</sup> graders for their transition to high school. She recently was selected to be part of District U-46's Hispanic Leadership Institute to increase parents' participation in school activities.

**Connie Oriente** is a teacher, educational staff developer/consultant and motivational speaker. She is a 28 year veteran teacher and mentor at Jerling Junior High School in Orland Park, nominated multiple times for Golden Apple and Disney Outstanding Teacher Awards.

**Maria Rodriguez** overcame poverty and domestic violence in Mexico to receive her GED in ESL, obtain a COD Associates Degree and Benedictine University M.S. and become a psychologist and counselor in behavioral health at Aurora's Family Counseling Services.

**Nancy Rodriguez, R.N.** is a wellness educator and Certified Diabetic Educator who earned her M.S. at Loyola University. She is CEO and President of the LIDERr Wellness Foundation, a Latino organization that provides diabetes education and counseling for families.

**Jackie Camacho Ruiz** is the Make-It-Happen Director of JJR Marketing Consultants and author of The Little Book of Business Secrets That Work! As well as being a successful entrepreneur in marketing, sales and business communications, Jackie is also a newspaper columnist, radio host and TV guest.

**Eva Sanchez**, a native of Guatemala City, came to the US at age 17 in the early 1980's. Without forgetting her origin, she has made every effort possible to overcome language and cultural barriers by educating herself and fully embracing the North American culture, first learning to speak English and then earning a B.S. from Elmhurst College. She is a mother of three college age children and an accomplished Real Estate agent with Coldwell Banker Residential.

**Carmen Simon** came to the USA from Mexico, worked in a factory, obtained a beautician's license, set up practice on her porch, became a US citizen, initiated citizenship drives for others, and became an entrepreneur, purchasing a restaurant and two beauty salons.

**Sylvia Cadena Smith**, who founded and owns Cadena Smith Enterprises, is an educator in instructional design, a consultant, presenter, writer of articles and developer of See-n-Read, a tool for reading fluency and comprehension.

**Vanessa Sierra Stanley** is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist with the University of Chicago Hospitals. Prior to her residency, she did surgical intensive care, cardiac care, and volunteered with Healing, Health and Hope repairing cleft lips and palates and skin grafting of burns for infants and children in Honduras and Nicaragua.

**Joan Velez** is a Police Officer with the Elmhurst Police Department. After serving in the US Air Force, she came to Illinois, received a Criminal Justice Certificate and pursued an A.A. Degree at COD, then transferred to DePaul University, where she graduated with a B.S. in Business Law. There are six Police Officers in her family, but she is the only female.

**K. Eva Weiss** is a recent University of Michigan English Literature graduate and Anthropology PhD applicant. Though Eva was often the only female, and always the only Latina in screenwriting workshops, she became an accomplished television, radio and video producer in a male-dominated field.

# Panel Speakers / Moderators / Facilitators

## Campus Life Panel Speakers

**Raquel Alvarez** is in her fourth year at Illinois Institute of Technology majoring in Civil Engineering.

**Rosalinda Argueta** is International Inside Sales for Latina America for Life Fitness Corporation.

**Crystal Arreola** is a sophomore at West Leyden High School.

**John Back** is the career counselor at West Leyden High School.

**Kassy Carmona** is a sophomore at York High School.

**Corina Crosier** is the Assistant to the ESL Program Manager at COD.

**Anna Gay** is the Nontraditional Career and CTE Grant Coordinator at COD.

**Julia Gonzalez** is in her third year at Illinois Institute of Technology majoring in Physics.

**Perla Hernandez** is a freshman at Willowbrook High School.

**Ruth A. Jimenez** is in her third year at Illinois Institute of Technology majoring in Psychology.

**Rebecca Medina** is a senior at York High School.

**Margaret Mellenthin** is a social worker at Fenton High School.

**Pricilla Palma** is a sophomore at West Leyden High School.

**Mariana Proske** is a School Psychologist Intern at Glenbard West High School.

**Carmengrace Puentes** is a sophomore at Elmhurst College majoring in Sociology.

**Alexis Rosado** is in her first year at the University of Illinois majoring in Human Development and Family Studies.

**Estrella Ruiz** is a freshman at Willowbrook High School.

**Tania Unzueta** is a graduate student in Latin American and Latino Studies at University of Illinois at Chicago and co-founder of the Immigrant Youth Justice League [www.iyjl.org](http://www.iyjl.org)

**Carolina Verdial** is in her third year at Illinois Institute of Technology majoring in Architecture.

**Cindy Zamora** is a counselor at Willowbrook High School.

## Campus Life Moderators

**Caroline Heiney**, AAUW Elmhurst

**Mary Landeros**, AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn

**Ann Hanley**, AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn

**Joyce Tumea**, AAUW Downers Grove

**Julie Villarreal**, Director of General Assistance, Elk Grove Township

**David Villarreal**, Transfer Coordinator at COD

## Career Panel Moderators

**Betsy Aldred**, AAUW Elmhurst

**Sue Balk**, AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn

**Marti Sladek, J.D.**, AAUW Downers Grove

**Gale Wiedman, Ed.D.**, AAUW Lombard

**Jennifer Wilken**, AAUW Downers Grove

**Sara Hernandez**, Dare to Dream Board Member

## Strategies Session Leaders:

**Carmen Leyva-Trotta**, Mannheim Middle School, Melrose Park, D 83

## Strategies Session Facilitators:

**Hilda Islas**, West Chicago Middle School, West Chicago, SD 33

**Gina Crespo**, ELL Coordinator, SDU-46, Elgin

**Caitlin Ericksen**, MacArthur Middle School, Berkeley, SD 87

**Photini Manesiotis**, Northlake Middle School, Berkeley, SD 87

**Karla Kelly, Jasmen Malave**, Indian Trail Junior High School, Addison, SD 4

**Pam Greenagel**, Glenside Middle School, Glendale Heights, SD16

**Trevor Simpson**, Hubble Middle School, Wheaton-Warrenville CUSD 200

**Katy Munro**, Elmhurst Area AAUW

**Emmah Welsh**, Hadley Junior High School, Glen Ellyn, SD 41

**Ramona Osgood**, Churchville Middle School, Elmhurst, CSD 205

**Lisa Edidin, Kate Kasynski, Chris Starzynski**, Marquardt Middle School, Glendale Heights, SD 15

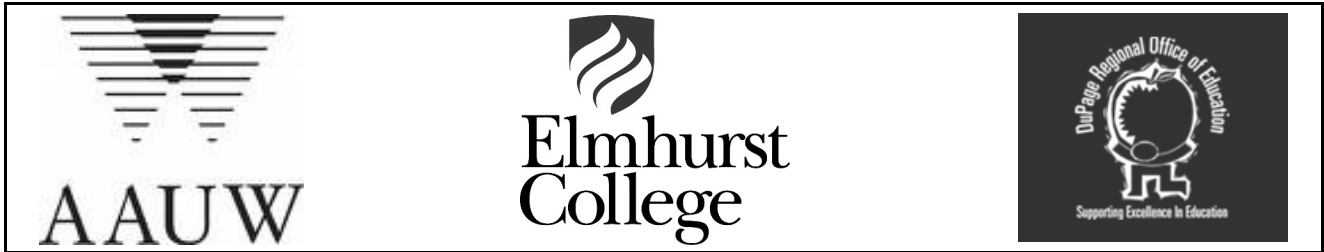
**Erica McKenna, Sarah Humboldt**, Blackhawk Middle School, Bensenville, SD 2

**Colleen Ignacio, Raquel Sanchez**, Hester Junior High School, Franklin Park, SD 84

**Colleen Yerkes, Lauren Fallon**, Jackson Middle School, Villa Park, SD 45

**Kathleen O'Hara**, Holmes Junior High School, Mount Prospect, CCSD 59

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**Donors, Thank You** for your generous support in making this project a reality and giving Latinas in DuPage and surrounding areas the opportunity to Dare to Dream about a promising future, including a college education .

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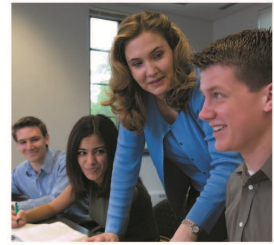
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We thank each and every member for their exceedingly generous contributions of time, talent and energy.

**Thank You!**



*The college guides have spoken—and Elmhurst is among the “best in the Midwest.”*

# TOP COLLEGE

**CHECK OUT “AMERICA’S BEST COLLEGES,”** the influential study by *U.S. News & World Report*. Elmhurst College ranks in the top tier in its category.

**AND DON’T MISS THE PRINCETON REVIEW.** Year after year, it also ranks Elmhurst among the “best in the Midwest.” The *Review’s* analysis is based on the views of some demanding critics: our students. They had great things to say about our faculty (“strong”), internship programs (“excellent”), location (“optimal”), and campus (“gorgeous”).

**“A SMALL COLLEGE WITH A BIG BANG,** Elmhurst has a surprisingly broad variety of solid academic departments,” the *Review* reports. “The end result is a school that prepares students to be ready for the professional world while offering a comfortable place to be away from home yet feel as if you are at home.”

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