

Submitted/Nominated By:

Name: Edna Ortiz-Martinez
First Last

Organization: Former Caseworker at Alamosa County CPS

Address: 809 20th Street
Street Address Apt/Unit #

Alamosa CO 81101
City State ZIP Code

Primary Phone: 719-588-9303 Email: Edna.martinez@state.co.us

Relationship to Nominee: Volunteer Organization

How did you hear about us? Facebook

If your nominee is not selected, would you like them to be notified that they were nominated? Yes No

If your nominee is selected, can we share a copy of the nomination with them? Yes No

Refer to the Nomination Instructions for Complete Directions

Please remember:

- Each nomination must include:
 1. Nomination Form
 2. Nomination narrative
 3. Two letters of support (additional letters will not be accepted)
- The nomination deadline is **Monday, July 15, 2019 at 5:00 PM (MST)**
- No exceptions!
- All nominations must be complete when submitted
- If you would like feedback on your nomination from a member of the Awards & Selection Committee (not the judges) before formally submitting your nomination, please submit your draft materials by **July 1** via email with a note to that effect.
- Complete nominations must be emailed to DeAnn Acosta, CFRE, deann@afpcc.org.

Thank you for supporting National Philanthropy Day in Colorado

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Questions? Contact DeAnn Acosta: deann@afpcc.org

1. What are the nominee's specific achievements?

At an early age of 8, Mia had been introduced to the experience and benefits in the service of helping others by volunteering with many community organizations in the San Luis Valley as well as throughout the State of Colorado. Mia has dedicated the past 7 years helping children in foster care or kinship placement by helping collect items to help them find some comfort during their transition. In 2012, Mia was inspired to initiate her project because she had witnessed the struggle her younger cousins were having with the transition of moving into kinship placement while their mother went away to rehab for her addiction. One night when Mia slept at her grandmother's, her cousins were crying because their night light had burnt out and they could not sleep. This typical situation sparked concern because although it would seem to not be a big deal however it really affected them. It is a difficult and stressful situation for young children to be in out of home placement, and a situation like this can affect them in ways that we cannot imagine. The smallest comforts provided to these children can make a big difference.

Therefore Mia decided to start her Run 4 Light project where she collected donations and pledges to run a 3K to raise money to purchase Dreamlite Pillowpets for the children in foster care/kinship placement in Conejos County. Mia made appearances in parades and set up information booth at community events throughout the summer of 2012. In September & October 2012, Mia and her sister ran the High Altitude Challenge which consisted of running a 3K for 3 consecutive weeks. With her hard work and dedication, she reached her goal and was able to provide 10 children in foster care with Conejos County CPS with Dreamlite Pillowpets in April 2013. Mia continued with her project and after some research found out that she could help them in many other ways than just night lights. Therefore, she renamed her project to the L.I.G.H.T Project (Lasting Impact of Generosity to Help with Transition).

- In August 2014, Mia and her siblings hosted a school supply drive at the Alamosa Wal-Mart to collect school supplies for Alamosa County CPS where she provided 28 children with back packs and fulfilled each child's required school supply list.

- In December 2015, Mia and her siblings started a coat and toy drive to assist with Christmas gifts and coats for Conejos County CPS where she provided 23 children with coats and an age appropriate Christmas gift. She worked with local businesses and her church to set out collection boxes for a month prior to Christmas to collect these items.

- In April 2016, after talking with CPS she found out that when the children are removed from their homes they are only allowed a trash bag full of clothing and personal items. In some cases they do not have the chance to take any items with them. Therefore, Mia collected donations and asked businesses to sponsor a LIGHT bag where she was able to purchase 10 large duffel bags to provide to Conejos County CPS so that children do not have to carry their stuff in a trash bag.

- In April 2017, Mia and her siblings spent a weekend at the park and soccer fields raising awareness to child abuse by handing out blue pinwheels and information regarding Child Abuse Awareness Month.

- In April 2018, Mia and her siblings hosted a drive at the Alamosa Wal-Mart to put together hygiene kits, feminine products, night lights, coloring books, journals, blankets, stuffed animals, baby items, etc. to provide with the LIGHT bags. Again Mia collected donations and asked businesses to sponsor a bag where she was able to provide Alamosa County CPS with 7 duffel bags, hygiene kits and comfort items to help with the children transition.

-In 2019, Mia is currently working to gather parting items like coloring books, crayons, play doh, journals and hygiene items for teens and children of families transitioning out of Tu Casa Domestic Shelter.

2. What impact has the nominee had on the community through financial contributions and/or volunteerism? What impact has the nominee had on efforts to promote diversity?

When children are removed from home, they look to kinship placements and many of these children often move in with grandparents who live on low fixed incomes who find it difficult to provide some of these items. Therefore, Mia working to help the children find some comfort in their difficult time also helps the family members or foster parents taking them in by providing these items until they can obtain other means to provide for them.

As previously mentioned, Mia was introduced to volunteer service since the age of 8 years old. Mia has helped raise money for several causes such as memorial scholarship and school class/sport fundraisers to purchase equipment, uniforms and camps. Mia has volunteered in community highway clean ups with Wolf Pack Unity; Emcee at Alamosa Senior center Lady's Tea & Fashion Show event; read to children at the Alamosa Library, and helped with pre-school graduation preparation. Mia collected items to provide troops in Afghanistan care packages at Christmas time by volunteering with Cherry Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch. Working with Tu Casa Domestic Violence Shelter, Mia has volunteered at Gingerbread Festival for the families at Christmas time; and Walk A Mile event to raise awareness on sexual abuse. She has helped LaPuente Homeless Shelter with the CropWalk End Hunger event as well as fed families at the Ronald McDonald House in Denver. Mia has been an alter server for her church for the past 7 years, helped as teacher assistant for children religious education classes and retreats; as well as ran for 2016 Fiesta Queen raising approximately \$2700.00 for the church. Mia has had the opportunity to mentor at the Stand-Up and Speak-Out Concert in Colorado Springs in collaboration with G.I.R.L.S. program to help raise awareness in bully prevention. In 2012, Mia was a member of the Torch Club with Boys & Girls Club which is a civic group that provides service to others. She received the helping hands award in 2012 for her unselfish service to others by serving snack, clean up and she lead all youth in sales of jerky sale fundraiser. She also participated in bringing the Harlem Ambassadors to Alamosa which raised over \$5000 for the San Luis Valley Boys and Girls Club. Mia has also helped collect gently used shoes and sport equipment, helped with fundamental sport camps and with pee-wee basketball leagues. Therefore, Mia has volunteered with many agencies and events to promote diversity and raise awareness to many causes.

3. What leadership qualities does the nominee possess that promote philanthropy and/or volunteerism?

At an early age, Mia had a vision on how she would like to help others. With strategic planning, courage to put the plan in motion, gathering the cooperation from those in the community and keeping a positive outlook she has helped her project grow to benefit many children in foster care and kinship placement. Mia has had the opportunity to see life from a different view and sees that not everyone is fortunate to have what many take for granted on a daily. By doing so Mia has developed humility, the ability to look at the big picture to accept differences, listen to others and accept their input and suggestions which also makes her a great team player. Mia has gained the courage and confidence to stand up to help those in need and be a voice to encourage others be open minded. She has become a role model as well as a mentor in her community. She encourages the community, friends and family to get involved. Because of these reasons, I believe that she would be a deserving recipient of the NPD outstanding youth award.

CONEJOS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



April 15, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Mia Garcia. Her commitment to assisting the Department of Social Services and the youth of Conejos County has been invaluable.

Mia has spearheaded several community projects which have assisted the community that we work with. Her generosity and willingness to help out those in need is greatly appreciated. Some highlights of her work include:

In 2012, Mia started her L.I.G.H.T. (Lasting Impact of Generosity to Help with Transition) project which provides resources every year to children in foster care/kinship placements. At that time it was named Run 4 Light where she collected pledges/donation to run a mile in the High Altitude Challenge. In April 2013, she donated Dreamlite Pillowpets to Charles Kuhn and Conejos County DSS for the foster kids. In August 2014, she hosted a school supply drive and donated 28 backpacks and school supplies to Alamosa County DHS. In December 2015, she hosted a toy and coat drive where she provided Conejos County DSS with Toys and Coats. She also donated coats to Alamosa County DHS. In April 2016, she donated duffel bags (LIGHT bags) to Conejos County DSS, In April 2017, she hosted an awareness event where she distributed pinwheels and information regarding Child Abuse Awareness month. In April 2018, she hosted a hygiene kit drive and provided duffel bags (LIGHT bags) with hygiene items to Alamosa County DHS. She is currently working on collecting hygiene items and donations for more duffel bags to donate for this year.

I give Mia my full endorsement as she prepares for her future endeavors and wish her the best of luck in her post-secondary education.

Sincerely,


Nicholas Barela, Director

Conejos County Department of Social Services

**Laura Quinlan
PO Box 823
Antonito, CO 81120
719-580-3889**

July, 5 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to recommend Mia Garcia for Outstanding Youth award. I had the pleasure of having Mia come through my Religious Education Program at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. I have known Mia since she was a young child, and had her in several classes along her Faith Journey all the way through her Confirmation Year.

Some of the tasks we had in my Class included volunteer work. My students had to earn a minimum of 50 hours of Community/Church Service. Mia and her fellow students went above and beyond that requirement and did willingly what I asked them to do. Our program sponsors events around our small community for children such as a Community Halloween Carnival attended by over 400 people. Mia and her classmates helped with decorating, running booths, clean up and making sure the event was a success! Mia has also taken the opportunity to volunteer with my Pre-Eucharist class in helping the teacher with various reading and craft projects. Since April 2012, Mia has served the Lord's table as an alter server. In this capacity, our servers assist our priest during the Eucharistic Celebration. This is just a fraction of the involvement she had in our community. I know of other volunteer work she did with the Pageantry that her family is heavily involved in as well as her community service project LIGHT Project. This family is a family who gives back to the community in any way they can. I truly believe that they have instilled these values in their children, which in my opinion shows the maturity of not only receiving but giving back.

As a student, Mia demonstrated a love of learning and the level of commitment necessary to succeed in college and beyond. As an educator, I am happy to be able to provide this recommendation for such a deserving student. I have great respect for her and truly believe that Mia is a deserving candidate that you will be proud to have representing as your outstanding youth.

I feel certain that you will be just as impressed with Mia as I am. As an educator who is committed to helping deserving students succeed, I strongly encourage you to consider her for this award. Please contact me with any questions and let me know if I can provide any additional information in support of this deserving student. You may reach me at 719-580-3889 or laura.quinlan@imerys.com

Regards,

Laura Quinlan
Our Lady of Guadalupe Confirmation Teacher
Antonito, Colorado 81120
Former Religious Education Coordinator