

**J. Paul Taylor Social Justice
Community Award**

April 1st, 2022

Recipient of the J. Paul Taylor Social Justice Community Award

Sandra Martinez



Sandra Martinez from Deming, New Mexico, is a CAMP Alumna who received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting in the fall of 2014 from NMSU. Since then, Sandra has dedicated her time to motivate and encourage elementary age students to explore art in all its possibilities as a teacher at Columbus Elementary School, where she teaches 450 kindergarten through fifth grade students weekly! She also oversees the school's afterschool Art Club working closely with engaging and inspiring students in art, and helping students prepare and organize their artwork for art shows.

She remembers the struggles to teach remotely during the peak COVID months, where she and others were responsible for making and distributing 2-week cycle "packets" to students both in hard copy and/or digital formats to reduce the amount of learning loss. As they moved forward the following school year, the district made the technology available to students providing internet and data access and learning devices. Teachers like Sandra stayed in constant communication with students and parents by email, phone calls, and text messages. They were constantly up to date with guidelines and procedures about COVID, even to this day.

A dedicated teacher, Sandra is still a Deming resident who commutes forty minutes to teach at Columbus Elementary School daily. Sandra has worked as an art teacher there for six years and is excited to continue serving that community for many years to come.

Sandra's hobbies include sewing and gardening. As she says, for many years, she topped onions and picked chiles during the harvest season, and now she would like to learn how to grow her own vegetables in her own garden. In her words, "I want to learn the other agricultural side to growing vegetables."

Sandra is one of three siblings to have gone through NMSU CAMP.

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Mariela Muñoz



Mariela Muñoz is from Arrey, NM. Her parents are both farmworkers and have been a great influence to the person that she is today. Her parents always encouraged her to seek a higher level of education, an opportunity that they did not have when they were in Mexico. Mariela was part of the 15th CAMP cohort and for three years, she worked with CAMP as an assistant, while pursuing her degree in Nursing. She chose nursing due to her passion for the medical field and her caring attributes.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was part of a team of first line healthcare providers as a student nurse. She graduated in May of 2021 and began working within a few months as a registered nurse. Entering the nursing field during a pandemic was challenging. Although she has a wonderful support system, she learned the challenges that nurses face daily. Being a nurse has been one of the greatest decisions that she has made. Despite the fact that nursing is emotionally and physically exhausting, she has found her passion in providing quality patient care to her patients at Memorial Medical Center. She is inspired by a phrase that states, "Doctors diagnose, and nurses heal." Mariela is at the beginning of her career and hopes to learn much more and keep having a positive impact on people's lives.