

# 2017 EXCELLENCE IN PARENT ENGAGEMENT AWARDEES

The Excellence in Parent Engagement Award recognizes the extraordinary achievements of community leaders who successfully promote and implement policies or best practices that facilitate opportunities for underserved families to guide, monitor and support their children's education. We congratulate this year's recipients.



## Dr. Sylvia Rousseau

In 2015, the Children's Defense Fund-CA (CDF-CA) enlisted the support of Dr. Sylvia Rousseau in the development of a pilot initiative intended to support parents of current and future Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® program scholars. For over two years Dr. Rousseau has been the lead curriculum developer and advisor on the development and implementation of the CDF Freedom Schools Parent Engagement Institute (PEI) pilot. In addition to her strong commitment and invaluable support, CDF-CA relied on Dr. Sylvia Rousseau's rich expertise in delivering an invigorating, research-based and culturally-responsive curriculum. The asset-based curriculum which demonstrated effective in equipping low-income, immigrant and parents of color with tools to start as early as their child's infancy to create a mindset, expectation, and a home culture that makes it clear that college is available, thus helping to create a pathway to college for their scholars. It is through the love, commitment and active participation of Dr. Sylvia Rousseau that CDF-CA and its partners, Read Lead and Success In Challenges, are able to serve parents in the Lynwood, Compton and Long Beach communities.



## Hugo Enciso

Mr. Hugo Enciso has tirelessly worked to improve and further parent engagement in the ABC Unified School District. He is an advocate for parent involvement in word and deed.

Mr. Enciso has been the Chairperson of the District English Learner Parent Advisory Committee (DELAC) and through his leadership and actions, parents are more informed and confident with providing meaningful input into the school and district plans that are developed. He initiates meetings of the DELAC cabinet to gather and implement ideas, thereby increasing parent knowledge and involvement in order to improve their child's success in school.

An immigrant to the United States at the age of 4, and maintaining his bilingual and biliteracy skills, he is a proponent of the Seal of Biliteracy for students and encourages parents to use their heritage language at home. He organized DELAC cabinet members to attend various Back to School Nights throughout the District as representatives to connect with other English learner parents and encourage their involvement in the various organizations.

Mr. Enciso has served on non-profit boards and volunteered for several organization, and is a well-respected member of his community.



## Hilda Avila

In 2015, Ms. Avila became involved in the Fries Elementary School Parent Center as a volunteer where parent involvement was minimal. As a volunteer, Ms. Avila became further involved, and joined several parent committees including ELAC, SSC, PTO, and others. Her goal was to encourage parents to feel like they were a part of a community and therefore she sought workshops and resources that benefited parents and students in the community. In her search for resources, Ms. Avila has become a workshop facilitator and supported outreach efforts for First 5, United Way Greater Los Angeles, I Heart Wilmington, Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, and so many others. Furthermore, Ms. Avila was recognized by Assembly member Mike Gipson for her perseverance in the school and community, as well as Council member Joe Buscaino as Volunteer of the Year. Her greatest satisfaction and recognition, however is to influence and support families.

Ms. Avila is regarded as an unstoppable parent coordinator volunteer. She is so dedicated to the engagement of families in schools that she attends meetings during her own time and brings new learning to Fries Elementary to share with other parents. She is credited with creating an abundant parent participation and plenty of resources at the school where she volunteered.



## HISTORY OF THE EXCELLENCE IN PARENT ENGAGEMENT AWARDS

Families In Schools established the Excellence in Parent Engagement Award in 2010 to honor the legacy and leadership of Maria Casillas, our founding President. A life-long educator, Maria Casillas is an exemplary role-model and advocate for parent engagement who led Families In Schools from 2000 – 2010.

Inspired by Maria Casillas, the Excellence in Parent Engagement Award recognizes community leaders who make a significant impact in promoting policies or implementing programs that value parents as their child's first teacher and create opportunities for all parents to support their child's education.

Every year, community members nominate leaders for this award to recognize their extraordinary achievement in:

- Advocating for policies that foster parent engagement for underserved families to support their children's education
- Promoting and implementing programs that help parents develop their knowledge and skills on how to support their children's education at home and at school
- Demonstrating leadership, innovation, and collaboration in elevating the voices of parents in schools and communities

These impressive leaders work tirelessly every day to be powerful champions for parents and families throughout our state. They are critical in forging the path for collaboration, partnership, and alliance building needed to support lifelong student success in all of our communities.