



2018 Community Leader Family Award



Denise and Miguel Santos

Denise Góñez-Santos and Miguel Santos are a dynamic couple that have spent countless hours giving of themselves in support of this City and its residents. Led by their faith and bound to this region by a love of its people, their 30 year marriage is a true partnership; a story of give and take that has produced two wonderful sons, Jacob and Lucas. Together, they have positively impacted the lives of thousands of WNYers.

Denise is the Executive Director of the Regional Bilingual Education – Resource Network West, which is run out of Erie1BOCES. There, she leads efforts to empower educators, parents, and community members to help limited English Proficient/English Language Learners (LEP/ELLs) better succeed in school. A former teacher and Principal, she is passionate about education and works to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunities and supports they need to achieve. She is active in the Hispanic and larger Buffalo communities, and has been recognized many times for her efforts on behalf of others. Denise volunteers with the Center for Elder Law and Justice, and she is an instructor at Christ the King Seminary, teaching Cultural Diversity. She is also a proud supporter of Miguel’s ministry as a Deacon at Holy Cross Church and in the Diocese of Buffalo.

Miguel is a Consumer Advocate with National Grid, where he assists the elderly, disabled, and life-support needs of low-income customers. When difficulty strikes, Miguel coordinates with social service agencies to ensure the needs of vulnerable citizens are met. He was honored by both the company and the Erie County Domestic Violence Center for his foresight in training customer service

representatives to refer clients that indicated they were in personal danger, such as victims of domestic violence. A first responder with the Community Emergency Response team of the Red Cross, he was part of a team that went to Puerto Rico after hurricane Hugo and worked in New York following the 9/11 attack. Like Denise, he is active in support of the community, serving on many charitable, business, and government committees and boards. Miguel is also a chaplain at the Erie County Holding Center.

There is no better fit for the Family Award than this couple. The NFJC is proud to award Denise Góñez-Santos and Miguel Santos with the 2018 Community Leader Family Award.



"...a just community begins with me!"

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