

AWARDS



UNsung HERO AWARD

Maria Ramos

Human Resources Director, United Community Health Center

Born in a small village in Mexico, Maria spent most of her childhood growing up in a community that was underserved in many categories, especially healthcare. She knows and understands the struggles of not having accessible doctors and nurses readily available. This is the reason she loves working at United Community Health Center. She understands the fear and intimidation healthcare can cause to marginalized and under-represented communities. Today, she is in a wonderful spot in her life and is grateful for the position God has placed her in. She is grateful to be in a position where she can spend time with her family and friends, take spontaneous road trips with her husband (no matter how short or far), and serve her community in any way she can. She tries her best to be an advocate for immigrants and under-represented groups, and to be a role model for her children.

Maria is a workwoman, but also a wife, mother, grandmother, and first-generation immigrant. She has encountered the beauties of life that motherhood brings, worked hard to provide for her family, and worked to make her parents proud.

From the Nomination Statement

Someone once said, "a hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." The "something bigger" for Maria Ramos, is service to the community. Maria was one of the first employees of United Community Health Center and even after ten years she continues to be zealous in service to the mission of the health center and the community.

As the HR Director, Maria serves the health center and its patients by finding "just the right people" to fill specific jobs, not an easy task. Once she finds them, she patiently works to welcome and train them to care for the most vulnerable among us.

Her service extends outside the clinic walls to the Storm Lake community. In her personal time, she will act as an interpreter for others who struggle with language barriers. She has been instrumental in developing relationships with the local Police Department and Tyson Foods, which has improved outreach to those in need. She also helped to spearhead a community celebration called "Day of the Child," which is intended as a day for the entire community to come together and celebrate diversity.

Maria takes great pride in being a citizen of the United States and encourages others in her community to do the same, and she has served on the local city planning and zoning committee. She can often be seen meeting with candidates who come through town and asking tough but important questions that us impact all, but especially the low-income and underserved. She also helps with voting registration; her enthusiasm for the democratic process is refreshing and contagious. She has educated many on their responsibility to vote and influenced those who had stopped voting to do so again.

Maria is always finding ways to help our patients who are struggling such as looking for solutions to the high cost of medications and access to transportation to appointments. Maria developed the idea of a "helping hand fund," which is an employee-driven fundraiser to help patients that cannot afford their medications or uncovered urgent medical expenses. Maria is a hero who has given her life to the service of others.