

2021 Hispanic Heritage Month Achiever Award Recipients



WINNERS



Jessica Contreras,
L.C.S.W.C
*Bilingual Social Worker
Johns Hopkins Bayview
Medical Center*

Jessica Contreras has worked at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center for six years as a social worker in the Children's Medical Practice. She is a strong advocate for the Hispanic/Latinx community at Johns Hopkins and co-facilitates the Testimonios Group for Johns Hopkins Centro-Sol, a support group for Latino adults in Baltimore experiencing stress or psychosomatic symptoms due to stress. Additionally, Jessica volunteered for Juntos, a pilot program designed to provide equitable resources and strategies to our Spanish-speaking patients who are admitted to the hospital with COVID-19.

In the community, Jessica was appointed by the governor to be a member of the Springfield Hospital Community Advisory Board, which is a forum to discuss issues facing the health care industry and their effect on the services that Springfield provides. She is well-known and respected within the Latinx community.

Jessica has made it a point to seek out talented social workers to refer for employment within the social work department. She consistently offers her support to colleagues working with patients who have complex medical needs that are exacerbated by language and literacy barriers.



**Nara Lygia de
Macena Sobreira,**
M.D., PH.D.
*Assistant Professor
of Pediatrics
Johns Hopkins
University School
of Medicine*

Nara Lygia de Macena Sobreira is an assistant professor in the McKusick-Nathans Department of Genetic Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Her areas of expertise are rare Mendelian phenotypes, analysis of next-generation sequencing and functional testing of candidate causative variants. She is a co-creator of GeneMatcher, a web-based tool that enables researchers with an interest in the same gene, variant and/or phenotype to be 'matched' electronically. As of Feb. 1, 10,725 individuals from 93 countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, have contributed to GeneMatcher. It has allowed investigators from Hispanic/Latinx countries, some without access to scientific publications, to have equal access to genomic data sharing tools and to freely use them to establish global collaborations.

Since 2015, Nara has had eight

mentees (residents, graduate students, postdocs and faculty) from Brazil in her laboratory. Through these experiences at Johns Hopkins with Nara, each improved their knowledge of genetics and genomics and acquired valuable skills to apply to their careers. She has co-mentored two graduate students from Brazil on their research projects and is mentoring three Brazilian medical genetics residents on their research projects at their home institutions.

In addition to her work as a faculty member, Nara is involved in several Johns Hopkins committees that are focused on serving the Hispanic/Latinx communities. She has been a co-lead of the Patient Care Committee of the Hopkins Familia Hispanic/Latinx Employee Resource Group (ERG) since November 2020, a member of the Hopkins DGM Diversity and Inclusion Committee and a facilitator of the Hopkins Microaggressions Workshop.

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Lizabetha Perez
*Service Representatives
Supervisor,
Pediatric Rehabilitation
Services Call Center
Johns Hopkins All
Children's Hospital*

Lizabetha Perez is a supervisor in the rehab call center, and in the past year provided data to create three bilingual call center positions. She is an advocate for patient access for all patients, including the bilingual population. She has worked with the telecommunications team to more efficiently route bilingual phone calls to bilingual representatives in the call center. When there was an increase in phone call abandonment, Lizabetha quickly resolved the issue by first routing calls to a bilingual representative and, if one was not available, then to an English speaker. In addition to her regular duties, this past year Lizabetha has been instrumental in the Epic build and then rebuild of the scheduling trees. She worked 15–18-hour days to ensure the build was done correctly and patients were scheduled with the correct providers. Baltimore builders recognized her work by giving her an Applause recognition for her extensive dedication.

Lizabetha is an advocate for families in her community and abroad. She has taken in families after hurricanes and is a strong contributor to the community via her children's school and church. Her support of LIHEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance Program) for farmworkers directly impacts the lives of the Hispanic community. In the Tampa Bay area, there are many migrant families. She supports them twice a month with food distribution, clothing, assistance with applications for the government farmworker program and translation.



Mayra Sánchez González, PH.D.
*Assistant Professor of
Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation Johns
Hopkins University
School of Medicine*

Mayra Sánchez González is a counseling psychologist with expertise in rehabilitation psychology. She works with patients and families to manage physical, cognitive, behavioral and emotional problems related to living with or recovering from an injury or illness. As a bilingual rehabilitation psychologist, Mayra has contributed to improving the health, well-being, and independence of diverse older adult populations. Over the past year, she implemented a freely available telehealth self-management support group for Spanish-speaking COVID-19 survivors. She has advocated for Spanish-speaking community members to have access to outpatient rehabilitation psychological services. She has collaborated closely with administrators in the physical medicine and rehabilitation department to coordinate access to care for patients who are enrolled in the Access Partnership Program. This has meant an increase in access to Spanish speakers in our outpatient services. She coordinated arrangements to offer equitable clinical care to Spanish speakers by ensuring proper translation of relevant clinical documents, such as our informed consent forms and clinical assessments.

Over the past two summers, Mayra has facilitated a support group for youth participating in a Summer Scholars Program through Johns Hopkins Centro Sol. This program focuses on exposing Baltimore-based bilingual high school students to the

health care field by offering meaningful opportunities to work with Johns Hopkins faculty. Mayra created a five-week curriculum for the youth, and facilitated weekly group sessions. In the summer of 2021, she created a new support group for parents of youth participating in the Summer Scholars Program. This group was intended to offer parents of bilingual children, who are often immigrants, a space to share their concerns, promote adaptive coping and learn about additional supports in the community. The hope is to integrate a parents' support group in the future to achieve a more holistic support for the Spanish-speaking community.

Mayra has participated in various community virtual chats to discuss relevant mental health-related concerns related to the Spanish-speaking community in Baltimore. Additionally, she has participated in other forums with medical and community providers to share about the challenges faced by Spanish-speaking community members.

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FINALISTS



Michelle Schultz, P.T., D.P.T.
Doctor of Physical Therapy
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

Michelle Schultz, a pediatric physical therapist at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, is of Cuban heritage. As a fluent Spanish speaker, she specifically caters to Hispanic/Latinx families in the community. Most of the patients on her caseload are Spanish speaking, and she has become an official qualified bilingual staff member at Johns Hopkins All Children's. Michelle goes above and beyond to serve as a liaison for families who otherwise may be lost in the medical system. Specifically, she is an expert at providing necessary adaptive equipment for children so they are able to access their environments independently. She has been a key participant in the creation of Charlie's Closet, a free durable medical equipment exchange group.

In 2020, after the loss of one of her identical twin boys three days after birth, Michelle created Landon's Legacy in his honor and hosts recreational events for kids with disabilities. Prior to starting Landon's Legacy, Michelle was on the board of a nonprofit called Charlie's Champs, which provides kids with disabilities with adaptive recreational equipment. She has now linked the two programs so these children have the opportunity to participate in community events with their peers and families.

Michelle is an exemplary model of our JHM core values. She is a leader in her field and has furthered her education and expertise by becoming an assistive technology practitioner. She has been featured twice by Johns Hopkins All Children's marketing team due to her incredible dedication to her job and the disabled community: once for inspiring a child to walk using the "Baby Shark" song and another time for an amazing adaptive sailing event hosted by Landon's Legacy in honor of Landon's first birthday. She enabled 35 families, many of whom were Hispanic, to participate in a safe, adapted, social and recreational event that they had never had an opportunity to do before.



Raysully Bracho-Urbina
Food Service Supervisor
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

Raysully Bracho-Urbina provides exceptional customer service for the food service department, serving health care workers including those who are Hispanic/Latinx. She has received a number of compliments regarding how she prepares food "with love." The exceptional service she provides during our food service operation contributes to the positive frame of mind health care providers need to perform their jobs in medical and support fields throughout the hospital. Our visiting families from the community benefit by receiving positive vibes from Raysully, and those intangible feelings can carry over to their family and contribute to a speedy recovery. She was once described as a "radiant soul."

Raysully goes out of her way to help Spanish-speaking families in the cafeteria understand where everything is located. Many non-English-speaking families may feel anxiety about visiting the cafeteria and not knowing how to properly select their food, but Raysully can spot someone who may be getting anxious or frustrated and quickly defuse a situation with her smile and caring attitude.

Raysully has sent care packages home to Venezuela for her family and friends to support and recognize the hardships that have been going on in her home country. This shows her commitment to improving their lives by sending items that some Venezuelans wouldn't otherwise have easy access to. Some of these necessities, such as deodorant, socks and sandals, have a huge impact on their daily lives. By providing a very high level of customer service in the day-to-day operation of the cafeteria — not just to those who are Hispanic/Latinx, but to all the health care workers, patients, families and guests — Raysully exemplifies the JHM core values by setting the example for others to follow.

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Alexandra Hayman
*Physical Therapist
The Johns Hopkins Hospital*

Alexandra Hayman directly contributes to the improvement in health care for the Hispanic/Latinx patient population through her work as the primary physical therapist in the medical intensive care unit. She is fluent in Spanish, which allows her to connect with her patients more directly and personally. Alexandra became a qualified bilingual staff member, enabling her to go above and beyond to advocate for her patients' needs. She engages with our patients' Hispanic/Latinx culture through her firsthand understanding of tradition and celebrations. She makes sure that Hispanic holidays and traditions are special for each patient, although they may be spending that day in the hospital. Alexandra has been and will continue to be a shining example of advocacy for the Hispanic population.

Alexandra consistently demonstrates her dedication to bettering the lives of others, both in the Hispanic/Latinx community and the community at large, and encourages her co-workers to do the same. During the winter months, she and her sons sold homemade cookies to co-workers, neighbors and friends and donated the proceeds to the Maryland Food Bank. Additionally, she dedicated several of her weekends to volunteering at the Johns Hopkins Hospital COVID-19 vaccination clinic. She was excited by the opportunity to greet individuals arriving to receive their vaccine and share a moment of celebration and hope with them as they received protection against COVID-19. Alexandra serves as a team leader for the American Heart Association Walk, raising funds for heart disease and stroke research. She remains hopeful and encouraging during times of struggle in the community, engages in meaningful conversation and shares her knowledge with others. She is an advocate

for minorities and takes time to educate her peers on social situations pertinent to the Hispanic/Latinx communities.

Additionally, Alexandra leads a research team and is noted to be an outstanding trainer and teacher. She is committed to high-quality care and interactions with others, and develops positive and meaningful relationships with everyone she interacts with. She has had numerous letters/emails sent to her manager and leadership team praising her dedication and compassion in caring for patients in the intensive care unit at some of the most difficult times of their lives. Some words from one of those letters from a medical intensive care unit RN exemplify Alexandra's embodiment of the JHM core values: "She tirelessly gives of herself a heroic energy not only to my patients, but to everyone she works with." He later goes on to say, "When I grow up, I want to be like her."



Marco Montero
*Telecommunications Manager
Sibley Memorial Hospital*

Marco Montero, a manager in the telecommunications department at Sibley Memorial Hospital, is a qualified bilingual staff speaker. He supports patients, in person and over the telephone, helping them to remove barriers to their wellness. Earlier this year, Marco supported Spanish-speaking colleagues who requested help in scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations at Sibley through a designated location in the hospital cafeteria during lunch hour. He offered many lunch hour COVID-19 vaccine education sessions for these colleagues as well. Marco volunteered numerous shifts to help outpatients at Sibley schedule their second dose of the vaccine while in the waiting area of Sibley's vaccine clinic.

Marco's leadership in his management role is exemplary. He will often cover shifts

when needed, serving by example, and provides growth opportunities for staff members. He is a champion for inclusion of all with diverse backgrounds and ideas in goal-setting and in delivery of excellence and compassionate care. His interactions with hospital staff, medical staff, visitors, patients and other members of the community are focused on being helpful to every person, every time, in a true spirit of respect and collegiality.



Jose de la Barra,
*M.B.A., M.S.
Director, Clinical Engineering
Sibley Memorial Hospital*

During fiscal year 2021, Jose de la Barra served as co-chair of the Workforce Subcommittee of the Johns Hopkins Latinx ERG Hopkins Familia. This group serves as a forum for socialization, networking and raising issues by our Latinx colleagues. In April, Jose and the other co-lead hosted a highly successful trivia night for our Latinx ERG.

During the COVID-19 vaccine rollout this year, Jose volunteered to assist Spanish-speaking (limited English-speaking) employees with logging in to MyChart to schedule their vaccination appointments. He also volunteered to help limited English-speaking employees with entering information in VMS about COVID-19 vaccinations received elsewhere.

Jose created and presides over the monthly Johns Hopkins Health System clinical engineering leadership meeting. This group shares best practices and works to harmonize procedures. The group also identifies cost containment and/or saving opportunities pertaining to medical equipment service and repair. Jose created a multiyear medical equipment replacement plan and an alternative equipment maintenance plan for Sibley.