



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

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**HISPANO
PHILANTHROPIC
SOCIETY**



United Way of North
Central New Mexico

uwncnm.org/hispano-philanthropic-society

AMANDA ARAGON: A BEACON OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE IN NEW MEXICO



Amanda Aragon stands as a beacon of leadership - born and raised in the Land of Enchantment, Amanda's journey is one of resilience, service, and unwavering dedication to her community. From her humble beginnings to her current role as the Founding Executive Director of NewMexicoKidsCAN, Amanda has consistently demonstrated a passion for making a difference and empowering those around her.

Amanda's story is one of firsts. She was the first in her family to graduate from college, earning a degree in international business and Spanish from the University of Tulsa. Armed with knowledge and ambition, she embarked on a corporate career, initially with ConocoPhillips in Houston, Texas. However, her roots called her back home to New Mexico, where she continued her career with ConocoPhillips, ultimately leading the company's philanthropic investment and stakeholder relations for the state.

After six successful years in the energy sector, Amanda felt a pull toward public service, leading her to the New Mexico Public Education Department as the director of strategic outreach. Here, she discovered her true passion for education and recognized the need for broader stakeholder engagement to improve the state's education system. This realization sparked the creation of NewMexicoKidsCAN, an organization dedicated to catalyzing change and ensuring every child in New Mexico has access to a quality education.

As the Founding Executive Director of NewMexicoKidsCAN, Amanda has been instrumental in driving impactful initiatives and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Her leadership has been pivotal in advocating for policy reforms, empowering educators, and amplifying the voices of parents and students across the state. Through her unwavering commitment, Amanda continues to inspire positive change and pave the way for a brighter future for New Mexico's youth.

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Beyond her role with NewMexicoKidsCAN, Amanda is deeply engaged in her community, serving on various boards including Vice Chair for the Voz Collegiate Charter School Governing Board and the Albuquerque Community Foundation Future Fund. Her involvement with organizations such as the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce and the Hispano Philanthropic Society underscores her dedication to uplifting marginalized communities and fostering economic empowerment.

Amanda's journey exemplifies the power of leadership rooted in service and advocacy. Her tireless efforts to effect change in education and community development serve as a testament to her vision and resilience. As New Mexico faces its challenges and embraces its opportunities, Amanda stands as a guiding light, inspiring others to join her in creating a more equitable and prosperous future for all. In her footsteps, we find the promise of a brighter tomorrow, fueled by compassion, determination, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

The Hispano Philanthropic Society promotes Hispanic leadership in philanthropy through recognition, engagement, and development of Hispanic talent to advance cultural prosperity in our community.

Become a member by contributing to our work today!



CATHERINE NICOLAOU: PIONEERING CONNECTIVITY & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Catherine Nicolaou continues to stand out as a trailblazer in the realm of broadband accessibility and community advocacy. As the City of Albuquerque's first Broadband Program Manager, Catherine leads initiatives to bridge the digital divide while championing the voices of all residents. Her journey from bridging the digital divide in the rural landscapes of tribal lands to the forefront of municipal broadband initiatives embodies a spirit of resilience, vision, and unwavering commitment to empowering communities through technology.



Before assuming her pivotal role within the city, Catherine served as the External Affairs and Marketing Manager for Sacred Wind Communications, a rural telecom provider serving tribal lands in New Mexico. Her experience in the telecommunications sector equipped her with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by underserved communities and fueled her passion for leveraging technology to drive positive change.

Catherine's dedication to equity and inclusion extends beyond her professional endeavors. As a member of the FCC's Communications Equity and Diversity Council working group, she played a crucial role in shaping policies to ensure equitable access to telecommunications services for all Americans. Additionally, her involvement in the City of Albuquerque's Information Services Committee underscores her commitment to leveraging technology for the betterment of local communities.

Beyond her advocacy at the municipal and federal levels, Catherine is deeply engaged in the New Mexico community, serving on the boards of esteemed organizations such as the New Mexico Technology Council and the Hispano Philanthropic Society.

CATHERINE NICOLAOU: PIONEERING CONNECTIVITY & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Catherine's commitment to ethical business practices is reflected in her role as a member of the New Mexico Ethics in Business Awards selection committee, where she helped recognize and celebrate organizations that demonstrate integrity and social responsibility.

Catherine's impact and leadership have not gone unnoticed. Her dedication to driving innovation and fostering inclusivity has earned her recognition, including the prestigious Albuquerque Business First's 40 Under 40 Award and the 2024 New Mexico Technology Council Women in Technology Award. These accolades serve as a testament to her tireless efforts in advancing technology, promoting diversity, and empowering communities across New Mexico.

In her role as the City of Albuquerque's Broadband Program Manager, Catherine continues to spearhead initiatives that ensure every resident has access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet. Through her leadership and advocacy, she is not only building bridges between communities and technology but also creating opportunities for economic growth, education, and social equity.

Catherine Nicolaou is more than a leader; she is a catalyst for change, a champion for connectivity, and a beacon of hope for communities striving for a brighter, more connected future. As Albuquerque embraces the digital age, Catherine's unwavering dedication reminds us that technology, when harnessed with purpose and compassion, has the power to transform lives and uplift communities. In her footsteps, we find inspiration and a vision for a more inclusive and connected Albuquerque for generations to come.

