The Colorado Health Foundation™



The Colorado Health Foundation Names Tara Bay as the 2023 Dr. Virgilio Licona Community Health Leadership Award Winner

DENVER – The Colorado Health Foundation, yesterday, presented Tara Bay, director of the Adelante Family Resource Center in the San Luis Valley, with the 2023 Dr. Virgilio Licona Community Health Leadership Award. This award celebrates the work of Coloradans who are tackling community health barriers and advancing health equity at both the systems and community level.

Tara has compassionately served clients of the Adelante Family Resource Center for the past 10 years to provide access and support around housing assistance, childcare, skill development and mental health to meet the needs of families in the community, so everyone has the opportunity to thrive and live healthy lives.

“Tara has truly listened to the concerns of her community and used those voices to magnify and address health equity in the San Luis Valley,” said Karen McNeil-Miller, president and CEO of The Colorado Health Foundation. “This is what it’s all about. Celebrating Tara’s passion and dedication to removing barriers to health and well-being – for everyone – is something we are proud to honor and support.”

Working to improve her community has been a continuous journey, and her efforts have resulted in major improvements of the systems that were failing families in the San Luis Valley. Tara has spearheaded numerous initiatives, projects and programs, including:

- Overhauling Adelante’s housing model to a supportive one, forging the Working Together network of social services, and dramatically altering the landscape of family welfare services in all six counties of the San Luis

Valley.

- Implementing the Dependency and Neglect System Reform (DANSR) model of family court as a replacement for the traditional Family Drug Court in the San Luis Valley. The DANSR model allows families to be their own direct advocates and have legal representation.

- Creating the Statewide Supportive Housing Expansion project, which is currently being piloted in the San Luis Valley and various regions across the state of Colorado.

“We all have a special gift, and if we all shared it, imagine what the world would be like,” said Tara Bay. “Everybody matters, and if we’re not taking care of everybody, we’re not taking care of anybody. That’s how I approach my work.”

As the 2023 Dr. Virgilo Licona Community Health Leadership Award winner, Tara was joined by family, friends and community partners at a reception yesterday evening located the Barn at Manzanilla in Alamosa, CO. In addition, The Colorado Health Foundation made a $20,000 donation to the Adelante Family Resource Center in Tara’s name.

Nominations for the Dr. Virgilio Licona Community Health Leadership Award opens annually in the spring. To learn more about the work of Dr. Virgilio Licona, watch this video.

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