

Lily Matos, serving education

Beatriz Limón, La Voz 10:57 a.m. MST August 7, 2015

With more than a year in charge of the Pendergast School District, the superintendent feels committed with the education and the motivation to the Latino community.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Lily Matos was born in New York, but she lived in Puerto Rico most of her life where she obtained a degree in Business Administration. In this country, she attended the University of Southern Mississippi, where she expanded her studies in Primary Education, Leadership, and Educational Supervision, accomplishing a Master's and Doctor's degree.

The superintendent feels fulfilled professionally, but as far as family, she declares to be a complete woman. She has a son, Joel who is 37 years old and a computer engineer, and a daughter, Linda who is 24 and is a pharmacist.

For Lily Matos DeBlieux, her principal objective is to serve in education so that the community can make progress. Her leadership theme is: "All decisions will be taken in relation with the best interest of the students."

With more than a year in charge of the Pendergast School District, she mentions feeling "delighted" with the community, the students, and the teachers, board members.

Lily was born in New York, where she attended elementary school and part of high school. In 1973, her family moved to Puerto Rico, where she completed her studies and obtained a degree in Business Administration.

Over the years, she returned to this country, and it was at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she expanded her studies in Primary Education, Leadership, and Educational Supervision, accomplishing a Master's and Doctor's degree.

Lily feels fulfilled professionally, but as far as family, she declares to be a complete woman. She has a son, Joel who is 37 years old and is a computer engineer and a daughter, Linda who is 24 and is a pharmacist.

"I adore my children, but I also have a beautiful granddaughter (Evangeline Lily), who is the love of my life," she affirmed.

In 2014 she was named Superintendent of the Pendergast School District, which covers 13 schools and serves 10,000 students in Avondale, Glendale, and Phoenix.



Lily Matos DeBlieux, superintendent of the Pendergast School District. (Photo: Courtesy Pendergast School District.)

What has education meant in your life?

"It has a tremendous meaning, I come from a poor family; my father attended school up to second grade, my mother always pushed education to break that cycle of poverty. I have progressed with the help of my parents and I had fabulous teachers. I've had a very good life thanks to the studies, where I have also been able to help others."

How do you see the future of the Latino education?

"There are many programs to help the children make progress. We know that all children are capable, it doesn't matter where they come from; they are not different. If we continue giving them education and involving the parents, there will be more results. Of course, we'd like more investment support from the government."

What are the barriers that Latino students face?

"I'd say that they are not barriers, but more likely goals that they have to surpass. We have programs for students that do not speak English, we need to involve the parents so that they read at home and continue supporting their children along with the teachers."

What do you hope for this new school cycle?

"We expect new things in this school cycle. In the schools we are going to start offering English and Spanish classes to children in preschool. Also, we are going to start in three schools, with students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, offering them architecture, medicine, and robotics workshops. These students will have the opportunity to live experiences outside the classrooms."

What is the key to success for the students?

"The key is to work together with the educational system and the parents, continue reading and a priority to education, show them that we want the best for them. Every month we invite the parents to talk to them about a topic related to education and progress, we want them to be aware of their children."

What recommendation can you give in relation with education?

"It's important that the community get involved because the children we educate are the future, they will occupy our positions at work, and it is necessary that they see the good things we are doing; that they observe how the Latino models have made progress."

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ABOUT

Pendergast School District

- Superintendent, Lily Matos DeBlieux
- The district covers 20 square miles
- Serves the communities of Phoenix, Glendale and Avondale
- Serves 12 schools
- Serves 10,000 students
- 72% are Hispanic

ABOUT HER:

Lily Matos DeBlieux

BORN:

New York

EDUCATION:

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in Puerto Rico

Studied Elementary Education at University of Southern Mississippi

She has a Master's and Doctor's degree in Leadership and Educational Supervision

In 2014 she was named Superintendent of the Pendergast School District

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