



## RISING STAR

Recognizing staff under the age of 40 at PACDC member organizations

# Amanda Garayua, HACE

### Growing a Career by Helping Others

A North Philly native, Amanda Garayua started with HACE 12 years ago as an Administrative Assistant. During her time with the organization, she has worked her way up through the ranks to Housing Services Program Manager. "I have always liked working with people, and the exposure as an administrative assistant showed me that this [type of work] is something I would really like. Now as a manager, I get a glimpse into the development side. It will be a learning curve, but I want to know more about how we build."

As a Housing Services Program Manager, Garayua oversees a staff of seven, works to make sure her department meets its goals for funding, ensures data is being entered correctly, and focuses on achieving positive outcomes for the communities they serve. This year, her department added rental assistance, an individual development account savings match program, and certification as a VITA tax preparation site in conjunction with such existing programs as home-buyer counseling, energy assistance and conservation, tenant counseling, and tax lien counseling. These programs make HACE a one-stop shop for the needs of its community. Garayua's time-management skills and eagerness to learn have enabled her success and growth as she oversees many different initiatives. "If there was free training, I took it," she said.

Garayua did not always have the education to help her move up the ladder. However, her organization not only recognized her drive and ability but also helped her gain the education necessary to accompany the experience she has accumulated. She is currently working toward her associate's degree in social behavior and has her eye set on completing her bachelor's degree shortly thereafter.

"My goal is HACE's goal: to promote home ownership and financial wellness and prevent homelessness," said Garayua. She believes that



Garayua providing free information for housing resources during VITA tax preparation hours at HACE's main office. PHOTO COURTESY OF HACE.

credit is the foundation for prosperity because it affects every facet of your life, from pursuing educational opportunities, to purchasing utility and cable services without a deposit, to being approved for quality insurance and loan products at affordable rates, and sometimes to getting a job. For this reason, she helped create HACE's Credit Academy.

"Amanda embodies the new wave of Housing Counseling professionals in that she is energetic and fully integrates her personal community perspectives and professional skills in her counseling work to achieve results. Specifically, her work toward improving the delivery of services to low-income individuals is a true mark of leadership that is needed to effect change for the improvement of housing opportunities in urban communities and to support equitable development in appreciating neighborhoods," says Maria Gonzalez, President of HACE.

*Congratulations to Amanda Garayua on being named a PACDC Rising Star Award winner for 2021!*