



## COMMUNITY LEADER

*Given to dedicated neighborhood volunteers*

# Felicita Miranda, Fairhill

PHOTO CREDIT: DARRYL COBB.

### Advocating for Children and Fairhill for Four Decades

Since she moved to Philadelphia from New York in 1976, Felicity Miranda has been a tireless advocate for children and families in her community. She felt that life in New York moved too fast and appreciated that in Philadelphia you could know and feel the community.

Before the Rivera Recreation Center and Mann Older Adult Center in the Fairhill neighborhood closed for renovations, Miranda had spent every day there for the past 25 years. At the center, people could come to get breakfast, play dominoes, exercise, and connect with others to get help and various supportive services.

Miranda got her start in advocacy when the local Catholic schools wouldn't let her enroll her children, and so she had to enroll them in public schools. That was when she saw the need to get involved. "I feel like I have the need to help people," said Miranda. "When I see a problem, I get involved."

Over the years, Miranda watched the community change and saw the need for someone to help mediate between the community and those making decisions for them. As more Latino and Spanish-speaking people and families moved into the neighborhood, Miranda bridged the gap between the two languages and cultures. Her special focus has been on children and their schools. Miranda states that her favorite accomplishment is the advocacy she did for non-English speaking children in the schools. She noticed that the children were getting into trouble with staff and the police simply because they did not share a common language and the children were being unheard. Motivated by empathy and her desire to help people, she scheduled meetings with principals at the schools to advocate for the children and families who couldn't speak for themselves. "Children have a weight to carry that isn't theirs," says Miranda.



Miranda attends HACE's Fiesta Caribeña in 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF HACE.

"Felicita is a thread across generations," says Stasia Monteiro, Neighborhood Advisory Committee Program Director at HACE. "She is passionate about youth and families and has served on numerous committees and in neighborhood planning sessions to ensure that community safety and livability are forefront priorities. . . . Despite having lost both her husband and her son in early 2020, Felicity has not skipped a beat in her dedication to and love for making her neighborhood a better place." For over four years, Miranda has served on the HACE Neighborhood Advisory Subcommittee, including being the inaugural chairperson of the group.

*PACDC congratulates Felicity Miranda as one of our 2021 Community Leader Awardees.*