



# INSPIRE

MARCH 2025

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
Lubbock

**WOMEN OF  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS**

ALAN HENRY



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*Congratulations to the  
YWCA Women of Excellence*

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# Recognize and Uplift

## A LETTER FROM THE WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

*Lynn Sanderson*



It is with great honor and joy that we celebrate the 37th Annual Women of Excellence Awards—an event dedicated to recognizing and uplifting women whose influence, guidance, and leadership extend beyond their immediate circles to impact our entire community. These remarkable women have faced challenges, overcome obstacles, and demonstrated that hard work, determination, and a commitment to excellence can truly make a difference.

This year, we honor nine incredible women who embody these qualities, showcasing the power of resilience and leadership. Their stories inspire us all to strive for excellence in our own lives.

The Women of Excellence Awards also serve as a testament to the mission of the YWCA: eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. These ideals are not just a slogan, they are the heartfelt enduring commitment of the YWCA.

The Women of Excellence Awards would not be possible without the dedication of the YWCA staff, board of directors, the incredible Women of Excellence Committee, and the many generous sponsors who support this mission year after year. To all who contribute to this meaningful celebration, I offer my deepest gratitude.

I firmly believe that when we lift each other up, we create a stronger, more empowered community—one where excellence continues to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Sanderson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lynn Sanderson  
2025 Committee Chair  
Women of Excellence

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# Making Excellence Happen

From the dedicated Women of Excellence committee to the incredible entertainer, these individuals are bringing energy, passion, and talent to make the Women of Excellence Awards unforgettable.



## MEET THE COMMITTEE

Lynn Sanderson, Chair

Hannah Fish

Redina Franklin

Karen Gibson

Linda Greenstreet

Lory Ioppolo

Glenda Mathis

Esther Pena

Margaret Randle

Emily Ratcliff

Kerri Schoonvelt

Gail Spivey

Lisa Stane



## MEET HADLIE JO

Hadlie Jo is a rising country music star whose soulful voice leaves an impression you are not likely to forget. She is an all-around talent who brings new life to cover songs, but also writes and produces her own music. Despite having health challenges as a young artist, she has continued to pursue her dreams; impacting the music industry with her fun-loving humor and resonating country lyrics.

She has opened for artists like Scotty McCreery, Larry Gatlin, Aaron Watson, Randall King, Sara Evans, Moe Bandy, and Randy Rogers. In 2023 Hadlie Jo released her debut music video of “This Ole Guitar”. She has just started singing her story and is not slowing down any time soon. Hadlie Jo is an artist you want to follow as she takes the world by storm.



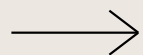
# Meet the Honorees

Each year, the YWCA of Lubbock honors outstanding women who have made a lasting impact in their professions and our community. These leaders, innovators, and changemakers embody excellence, not only through their careers but also in their dedication to service, mentorship, and empowerment.

The 2025 Women of Excellence class features nine remarkable honorees whose influence spans

healthcare, education, the arts, finance, and beyond. From nonprofit leaders to educators, business executives to a rising young leader, each of these women has left an indelible mark on Lubbock and continues to inspire those around them.

Join us as we celebrate their achievements and share their incredible stories.





## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# AMARACHI UCHE-EBOH

Youth Leadership Honoree

**Talkington School for Young Women Leaders**

**A**marachi Uche-Eboh is a name you are going to want to remember. Currently, she is the National FFA champion for her research on anaerobic digestion. The honor is a distinction earned by in-depth research on a significant topic and her impressive ability to present and discuss her findings confidently. It is easy to predict that Amarachi will be a pioneer and will use her curiosity, innovative thinking and thoughtful inquiry to break through any barriers she faces.

With remarkable grace and maturity, Amarachi has already accomplished more than would seem possible. She is an AP Scholar with Distinction which means that she earned a qualifying score on 4 or more AP exams with an average of 4 or higher. Each of those exams is like a college level exam and scoring above 3 gives you college credit. “The maturity, time management, desire and work it takes to reach this level of accomplishment is staggering,” said Jenny Cardelli, AP Testing Coordinator at the Talkington School.

Amarachi has a commitment to service and leadership and is very involved with the National FFA, the Lubbock ISD Superintendent’s Scholars Program, the Texas Girls Collaborative Project the Talkington Model United Nations and the She Space International U.S. Team. She has further distinguished herself as a Texas FFA Ford Leadership Scholar, the Lubbock District FFA Secretary as a founding member of the Talkington FFA chapter. Additionally, she broadened her global perspective as a Yale Young Global Scholar and a Harvard Undergraduate Internal Relations Winter Intensive Scholar and she is a Global Leadership Adventures Community Development Honors Fellow.

“In my 27 years of experience in education Amarachi stands out as an extraordinary individual---a rare jewel poised to make significant contributions to international diplomacy, environmental mitigation or energy and development,” said Michelle Pieniazek, Lubbock ISD Coordinator for Agricultural Education.

There are so many honors and accolades for the work Amarachi has already produced, her resume would rival many professional curriculum vitas. Her biggest challenge may be trying to decide between all of options she will have but Amarachi is not worried. “My career goals and plans will change over the years, and I place all of my intentions to the Lord who will guide me and reveal his purpose as I transition throughout the stages of my life.”

Underlying all of the accomplishment, Amarachi manages to be a well-rounded, incredibly grounded teenager. She was elected Homecoming Queen this year and loves to dance particularly Afrobeats Zumba and Hip Hop. In addition, at age 12, she ranked 37 out of 158 in US Club Open Swimming. When asked how she balances it all Amarachi responded, “I cannot balance all I do by my own strength, it is the grace of God that gives me the strength to do what I do and do it successfully.”



## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# SARAH BEVERS

**Chief Financial Officer  
The United Family**

**S**arah Thompson Bevers serves as Chief Financial Officer at the United Family (dba United Supermarkets), which means she is responsible for the accounting and finance functions of the company operating almost 100 grocery stores in Texas and New Mexico, employing more than 18,000 team members and annual company revenues exceeding \$3 billion. At the same time, she has made an equally impressive mark in her community service and volunteerism efforts.

Sarah is currently a member of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance Board and the Lubbock Methodist Hospital Board, where she served as chairperson. She has served in leadership as a board member of the Salvation Army, YWCA and Junior League. She is not someone that just shows up in boards...Sarah makes a difference. She has annually recruited a team of more than 40 "bellringers" comprised of friend and family members for the Salvation Army's yearly Red Kettle Campaign. In 2022, her team pulled in the third largest fundraising amount during their volunteer shifts and her teams have consistently ranked in the top five volunteer fundraising groups every year she has been involved.

Recognized by business peers for her outstanding professional contributions Sarah is a recipient of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce Twenty Under Forty award and the United Supermarkets Support Team Member of the Year. In recognition of her outstanding community service, she was awarded the Junior League of Lubbock Shining Star in Volunteerism award.

As described by the United Family President Sidney Hopper, "Sarah is curious and insightful. She thinks strategically and understands the importance of long term planning. She is solutions-oriented and her ability to remain calm under pressure and find the right solutions is truly remarkable."

Because The United Family is a wholly owned subsidiary of publicly held Albertsons Companies, Inc., Sarah is responsible for complex federal reporting standards and accounting practices. She has been recognized for her expertise within the larger Albertson's Companies, one of the largest food and drug retailers in the nation. "Despite that prestige, Sarah always made finance fun and understandable when she served as our Finance Chair," noted Glenda Mathis, YWCA of Lubbock CEO.

Born in Austin, Texas, she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting from Texas Christian University and worked for Deloitte Financial Advisory Services, LLP before joining the team at United Supermarkets. She is a licensed Certified Public Accountant and Certified Fraud Examiner. She served as president of her college sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha and continues to support the organization. Sarah met Lubbock native Clayton Bevers while they were students at TCU. After their marriage Sarah joined Clayton in Lubbock, where she began her career with United Supermarkets. They are the proud parents of pre-schoolers Kate and Caroline.





## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# ANNIE CHALEX BOYLE

Professor of Violin, Texas Tech University

**Concertmaster of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra**

**A**nnie Chalex-Boyle was born in Arlington Heights, Illinois and started learning violin as a child. She is a graduate of University of Southern California and The Juilliard School. In addition to being an extraordinary performer, Ms. Boyle is a sought-after teacher who has devoted much of her life to nurturing young performers in West Texas. She is an active participant and teacher in music festivals around the world. Annie is described as a phenomenal violin soloist and chamber musician and her performances have been hailed as “brilliant”, “eloquent and poignant”, and “commanding”.

She is married to John Boyle, also a professor of music at Texas Tech University. Together they have three teenaged daughters: Sage, Mae and Grace. The family made Lubbock “home” in 2011 and are exemplary in promoting music education as an integral part of early childhood development. Annie teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in applied music, chamber music and pedagogy. In addition, Annie’s national teaching experience includes Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Chicago Symphony Youth Orchestra as a chamber coach, Hot Springs Music Festival, DFW WOW Young Artists Program, Midwest Young Artists Chamber Music Program in Wisconsin and Chamber Music Center in Austin. Internationally, she has taught at the Orfeo Music Festival in Italy. She also established the Lake City String Academy in Colorado. When asked about her professional contributions, Annie is quick to point to her pride in working with young musicians and her role as an arts advocate for our youth.

Annie also serves as the concertmaster for Lubbock Symphony which is the highest ranked member of the orchestra. “Ms. Boyle is my right-hand person, liaison colleague and mentor in all aspects of my life as a conductor,” said David Cho, Lubbock Symphony Music Director. She is an important public face of the symphony and regularly performs recitals with her colleagues for patrons who support the arts in our community.

Annie is passionate about using arts as a mechanism for social change. “Music can change the way we communicate with each other and help propel communities to grow together with a common goal of sharing great art.” She is serious about her art and very open about the challenges of trying to balance being a mother, a wife, a woman in academia, while maintaining an international performing and teaching career. It sounds exhausting and impossible but Annie is delightfully present as she explains, “I have learned to give myself grace and doing the best at what I’m doing IN THE MOMENT is all I can do.”

She carries that philosophy forward in many ways because her advice to young women in the workplace who are facing big challenges is “Do it anyways. There will always be a better time, better location, better job, better pay. Bloom where you are planted...you are unique and can make a difference wherever you might be.” Spoken like a true woman of excellence.

## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# KELLY CRISWELL

Deputy Executive Director  
**South Plains Association of Governments**

**M**ost people do not realize the work that goes on behind the scenes to grow communities and strengthen infrastructure. But, if you wanted to know anything about that process, Kelly Criswell would be the one to call. Under her direction, SPAG has assisted rural cities and counties in acquiring numerous infrastructure grants. She led an effort to help five South Plains communities apply for and receive grants from the Texas Department of Agriculture to establish Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) with the goal of helping small businesses create and retain jobs. TDA awarded only seven of those grants in the entire state. Because of Kelly's work, five of those grants were awarded to cities in the SPAG region. Her leadership led to grants from the US Economic Development Administration in excess of \$6.7 million to establish COVID Revolving Loan Funds to assist adversely impacted small businesses. Kelly is responsible for the oversight of the Caprock Business Finance Corporation which operates the SBA 504 Loan program, SPAG LoanStar Fund and SPAG CORE specialty loan programs which cumulatively have a small business portfolio of over \$60 million.

Amazing as it may sound, Kelly began her career at SPAG as a part-time high school student intern where she fell in love with the impact government could have on community quality of life. She went on to Texas Tech, completed her degree and then advanced her understanding and expertise through the Texas Tech Certified Public Manager program in 2011. She is an ardent volunteer serving on Lubbock Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides Walk Committee and on the United Way Program Review and Loaned Executive Committees. She is active at the national and regional levels taking part in advisory roles to understand broader regional issues. She has won numerous awards and recognitions including the "Top 20 under 40" Award from the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

For Kelly--whether she is helping rural communities access water during severe droughts, helping small businesses build new facilities or finding ways to secure housing for elderly and low-income residents--her real success has been in building a team that is dedicated to public service and the local communities they serve. She speaks about finding her own place in the professional world and how important it was to build a network of mentors. "The guidance I received particularly from other women, inspired me to pay it forward by creating supportive environments and opportunities for women in the professional sphere. I am deeply committed to helping women feel empowered and supported, with the hope that they, in turn will mentor and uplift those that follow," she said.

Kelly has one daughter, Sarah, a student at Talkington School for Young Women Leaders.





## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# RHONDA DILLARD

**Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources  
Frenship ISD**

In the 2024 Niche Ratings, Frenship ISD is ranked as the 14th “Best Place to Teach” which puts them in the top one percent of Texas public school districts. As her colleagues attest Rhonda Dillard would never be one to take any credit for that ranking. On the other hand, when your job is the acquisition and development of talented educators and your responsibility includes supervision and support of nine elementary campus principals, it is clear the important role she plays in developing Frenship ISD’s culture of excellence.

Ms. Dillard is a passionate advocate for the importance of quality public education in the lives of children. She has committed more than 40 years to public education serving first in Lubbock ISD and then with Frenship and she is always promoting the importance and joy of being a teacher. She is very proud that two of her daughters went on to become teachers and two granddaughters are special education assistants. She is so committed to developing teachers that she played a key role in developing a new Career and Technology Education (CTE) pathway at Frenship High School to allow students to explore the various roles and responsibilities of being a teacher. Meeting Ms. Dillard would convince anyone that teaching is one of the most noble careers!

Rhonda Dillard is a hard worker. Often the first to arrive and the last to leave, she is a champion at serving others. “Even outside of work hours, she is just a phone call away always ready to lend her support and encouragement.” said Stacy Davis, Principal Crestview Elementary.

In her nomination packet, many spoke of the way Rhonda inspires them, encourages them---how she takes time to listen to their concerns. She recently went through her own health crisis and after several surgeries and against incredible odds, she returned to work with the determination and grace of a warrior. Superintendent Michelle McCord summed it up, “Rhonda’s greatest inspiration for others, including me, is how she lives each day. No one understands better than Rhonda that one never knows what tomorrow will bring. Therefore, she lives each day like it is her last and she does what she is best at: Serving and leading others.”

Born in Plainview and married to Dale Dillard, she received her Bachelor’s degree in education from Texas Tech University and Master of Education from Wayland Baptist. She will be retiring this year after 42 years of service in education to the children, families, and colleagues of our community.

## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# NEDRA HOTCHKINS

Executive Director

**Lubbock Children's Health Clinic**

**B**orn in Enid, Oklahoma and raised throughout Texas and Oklahoma, Ms. Hotchkins graduated from the University of Utah with a Master's in Educational Leadership. Nedra's career is marked by a commitment to service, advocacy and mentorship that she diligently nurtures. She has been honored with the Mary B. DuPree Living Life Award and Sister Called to Serve Award as well as the YWCA Outstanding Achievement Award in 2016 for Social Justice in Salt Lake City, Utah. Each of these recognitions in honor of her dedication to engaging in community for meaningful change.

Ms. Hotchkins is a member of the Women of 100, a past President of the Lubbock Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and former Vice President of the Lubbock Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She is a member of the Junior League of Lubbock and serves on several prominent Boards including the Community Foundation of West Texas, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Covenant Children's Board and Frenship Advisory Board.

In her current role with Lubbock Children's Health Clinic, Nedra's passion is to spread the understanding that healing goes beyond physical treatment. Healing requires a holistic approach that addresses broader social and emotional needs. This strategic approach has expanded the services offered at LCHC and redefined how these services are delivered. The clinic now offers a Food Pantry, Diaper Depot, Mental and Behavioral Health Counseling and a Clothing Closet that provides seasonal clothing for children. These services are free of charge, ensuring that every child, regardless of economic background can have access to the resources needed to thrive. She advocates every day to ensure that every child and family feels seen, valued and cared for and that transforms how we approach community healthcare. She fosters an environment where inclusivity and dignity are the foundations of care regardless of the ability to pay.

"In the last 7 years I have watched this small clinic grow exponentially and its medical outreach to the children in need in East and North Lubbock has no comparison," said Dr. Jessica Gray, former board President of the clinic. These thoughts were echoed by Dr. Amy Thompson of Covenant Health who called out Ms. Hotchkins leadership in developing a comprehensive child wellness program. "Nedra's ability to bring together diverse stakeholders, secure necessary funding and mobilize volunteers has been instrumental in the program's success and positively impacting countless lives."

Nedra is an accomplished speaker and is sought after for her expertise in fostering belonging and inclusivity. She frequently travels across the country with her husband Dr. Bryan Hotchkins, sharing insights on belonging, equity and community engagement. She and Bryan have two children, Ysis and Osiris, both young adults.





## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# LINDSEY MAESTRI

Executive Director

**Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts**

**B**orn in Springdale, Arkansas, Lindsey Maestri joined LHUCA in June 2017, serving as Community Engagement Manager and Interim Director before accepting her current position as Executive Director in December 2018. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Louisiana State University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Arkansas. Lindsey has a background in collaboration and has been a member of the Ireland-based international arts collective, Expanded Draught, for over 10 years. As an artist herself, Lindsey often collaborates with her husband and Texas Tech University sculpture professor, Cody Arnall. Prior to joining the staff of LHUCA, Lindsey was the Executive Director of the Yeiser Art Center in Paducah, KY and Exhibitions and Programs Manager for Tennessee Tech University's Appalachian Center for Craft.

Lindsey has expanded LHUCA's role as the centerpiece of Lubbock's art community. "Under her leadership, the organization developed a robust array of programming including exhibitions, workshops, artist talks and community outreach initiatives," said Elizabeth Grigsby, Lubbock Arts Alliance.

In her time with LHUCA Lindsey has brought in over \$2.6 million in grant funding for the organization and has increased the center's operating budget by 50%. She has grown LHUCA's supporting Membership program from 20 enrollees to an active membership of over 240 through participation in the North American Reciprocal Museum Program which features benefits from over 1000 museums nationwide.

As you might expect, Ms. Maestri is not one to sit on the sidelines. When asked for the advice she would give to young women, her answer is no surprise: "Don't get stuck! Take risks. Move. Make lateral moves. Volunteer. Do what it takes to get to a place you feel valued and you don't dread going to every day."

Lindsey's impact on LHUCA is palpable. Mitzi Ziegner wrote, "She works to inspire her staff and board to make Louise Hopkins Underwood's vision of providing free access to the arts for all---regardless of background, income, education, age, identity or ability level--- a reality every day."

Lindsey was a first generation college student and that posed some of her most challenging obstacles. While her parents and grandparents were incredibly supportive of her desire to pursue higher education, they were ill-equipped to help her navigate the system. She found several mentors along the way to help her understand the logistics of college and the career paths that were available. She encourages everyone to realize the power of mentoring and advocating for young people because you never know how far a little encouragement can take someone.

Lindsey explains the importance of the arts this way, "We all need places to feel and be safe, especially when the world might not look like what we want it to right now. The arts provide that space for so many people to feel accepted or creatively nourished. I want to keep working to make that space for people."

## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# CHIBUZO O'SUOJI, MD

Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist  
TTUHSC

In 2018, she was named TTUHSC Pediatric Department Teacher of the Year. The honor speaks to how approachable Dr. Chibuzo O'Sujoji is about an incredibly complex and challenging area of medicine. It also speaks to the passion Dr. O'Sujoji brings to her work every day. Dr. O'Sujoji will tell you that the incidence of childhood cancer is steadily rising and her goal is to find a cure so that no parent has to hear the words, "your child has cancer".

Dr. O'Sujoji received her undergraduate training and Medical Schooling at the University of Nigeria and did her pediatric residency at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She also received a Master of Science in Clinical Research at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She received Board Certifications in General Pediatrics in 2007 and in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology in 2013.

Dr. O'Sujoji has made a significant impact on pediatric hematology and oncology both locally through her clinic and on a broader scale through her research, case studies and scholarly publications. Her contributions reflect her dedication to improving outcomes for children with complex hematological and oncological conditions as well as in advancing medical knowledge within her field. Her publications on rare conditions bring attention to less common but critical areas of study and her research on innovative treatments using targeted therapies demonstrates her advanced role in applying cutting edge solutions to improve patient outcomes.

Dr. O'Sujoji is a dynamic educator and inspires the next generation of healthcare professionals through her mentorship and lectures. She provides 80% of the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology core curriculum lectures at TTUHSC and ensures the residents receive a comprehensive understanding of complex topics. Part of her mission is to introduce potential physicians to the excitement of finding cures and she does that through the atmosphere created in her clinic. Her involvement in the TTAP Mentorship program and her guidance of resident research projects showcase her dedication to shaping the careers of young physicians and empowers them to pursue their own academic and professional excellence.

Dr. O'Sujoji's excellence extends beyond her clinical practice and classroom. As a mother and wife she maintains a remarkable balance, showing up as a devoted supporter in her children's lives whether it's rebounding basketballs for her son or cheering on her daughter at games.

Dr. O'Sujoji is very open: Being a black female physician with an accent has presented significant challenges. That was not going to stop her. She says she used hard work and a positive attitude, impeccable skill and the result is that patients and parents know she gives the best care possible and in return they have the utmost trust in her. Her professional advice to young women then is simple: You can be whatever you wish to be professionally. It may be difficult but with hard work, you can overcome any challenges that confront you.





## WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE

# RAEGAN HIGGINS SIWATU

**Professor of Mathematics and Associate Vice Provost  
for Faculty Recruitment and Hiring  
Texas Tech University**

**O**n today's American college campuses, only 4% of full professors are African American. Only 1.4% are African American women and when you add in the filter of being a full professor in the mathematical sciences, you can understand why Raegan Higgins Siwatu is such a stand-out honoree. "My journey to achieving this milestone was far from linear, but I was fortunate to be guided and mentored by many remarkable women who paved the way before me." She recently took on the role of President of the Association for Women in Mathematics and for Raegan, it is the perfect platform to inspire young girls and encourage them to pursue math and science endeavors.

Surprising as it may seem, math didn't come easily to Raegan. She was not doing well in her 8th grade math class. Her trajectory changed when her teacher would not let her give up. It would have been easy for the teacher to let her off the hook and shuffle her down a different path. Instead, the teacher was resolute: "you can do this--you just have to work hard." It was the spark for the resilience and determination that characterizes Raegan's work and life today.

Raegan feels passionately that creating a sense of belonging in mathematics must be done early and it requires involvement at every level of the community and especially when girls begin to doubt their math abilities. Now, in her college classrooms, she gets to practice that mentoring philosophy: meeting students where they are, challenging assumptions and offering guidance and encouragement as they navigate their journey to the next step in their lives.

Dr. Siwatu has made remarkable contributions to the field of mathematics with a focus on oscillation and time scales. Her research has significantly advanced the field and offered extensive applications to biology and health care. She has a long list of honors and publications --- all with impressive titles---but perhaps most exciting is the way she approaches teaching. Her classroom is an interactive space where students explore concepts collaboratively and deepen their understanding through active problem-solving. She offers a spark to mathematics that is exciting, engaging and relevant.

Dr. Siwatu has a busy life: wife, mother, professional and community volunteer. As you would expect from an analytical mind, she has a formula: focus on just finding harmony---"the pleasing integration of different parts--- roles and responsibilities --- working together in a way that feels right."

Raegan offers some foundational advice for young women and her answers tell a lot about Raegan herself. Be authentic. Be persistent. Build your village. These are the words of a woman of excellence.





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# WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE

## 2020s

Janelle Barrington Spivey	2024
Ruth Robillard	2024
Nancy Ruth Neal	2024
Misty Lynn Rieber	2024
Shelia Patterson Harris	2024
Pamela Roddy	2024
Julie Doss	2024
Jeye Johnson	2024
Amanda Mead	2024
Betsy Bass	2024
Emily Wilkinson	2023
Lisa Stane	2023
Olivia Boggs	2023
Traci Cheek	2023
Jessica Gray, MD	2023
Murvat Musa	2023
Megan Estrada	2023
Gabriella Contreras	2023
Nanette Deso	2023
Beth Bridges	2022
Sandra Harris	2022
Dina Jeffries	2022
Janice Magness	2022
Melinda Pharies	2022
Dr. Comfort Awotwi Pratt	2022
Lynn Sanderson	2022
Elizabeth Ann Sharp, PhD	2022
Katherine Wells	2022
Ashby Whitaker	2022
Grace Feist	2021
Elizabeth Regner Grigsby	2021
Glenda Grigson	2021
Norma Ritz Johnson	2021
Dr. Patricia Frances Johnson	2021
Stephanie Massengale	2021
Laura Monroe	2021
Dr. Amy Thompson	2021
Katelynn Thompson	2021
Paige Allen	2020
Judge Kara Darnell	2020
Sophie Goforth	2020
Wendy-Adele Humphrey	2020
Latrelle Bright Joy	2020
Michelle McCord	2020
Shirley McReynolds	2020
Sellie Shine	2020
Jaime Wheeler	2020

## 2010s

Brandi Cantrell	2019
Melissa Collier	2019
Terri Duncan	2019
Rebecca Geist	2019
Lisaann Gittner, PhD	2019
Gabriella Ghandour	2019
JoAnn Long, PhD	2019
Melinda Garcia Schalow, MD	2019
Annette Sobel, MD	2019
Karen Thornton	2019
Emilee Acevedo	2018
Jean Caslin	2018
Linda Donahue, PhD	2018
Linda Ferguson	2018
Rebecca (Becky) Garza	2018
Kathy Gilbreath	2018
Shanna Hargrave	2018
Dr. Katharine Hayhoe	2018
Carolyn F. Moore	2018
Lindsay Penrose, PhD	2018
Aliza S. Wong, PhD	2018
Judge Ann-Marie Carruth	2017
Evelyn Davies	2017
Sharmila Dissanaikie, MD	2017
Phebe Ellis-Roach	2017
Kim Flenniken	2017
Candace Bourland Hicks	2017
Anna Jackson	2017
Michelle Kraft	2017
Madeleine Lipetska	2017
Rhosean Asmah	2016
Janie Bush	2016
Abigail Crawford	2016
Berta Fogerson	2016
Linda Greenstreet	2016
Karen Gibson	2016
Emily Lemley	2016
Ann Manning	2016
Sandi Turner	2016
Suzanne Blake	2015
Betty Shewbert Dotts	2015
Lynda Loyce Dutton	2015
Amy Faris	2015
Judge Drue Farmer	2015
Lisa S. Leach	2015
Michelle Pantoya, PhD	2015
Michelle Suzanne Staley	2015
Gail Spivey	2015
Mimi Zumwalt MD	2015
Alona Beesinger	2014
Holly Betenbough	2014
Alejandra Estrada	2014
Lorrie Lushnat	2014
Aretha Marbley, PhD	2014

Carolyn Perry	2014
Ariwan Rakvit MD	2014
Carolyn Simpson	2014
Laura Vinson	2014
Marguerite Fallon, DNP, RN	2013
Karen K. Garza, PhD	2013
Nita Kiesling	2013
Neoka Perez	2013
Mary Jones Saathoff, PhD	2013
Nancy Tucker Sharp	2013
Sindee L. Simon, PhD	2013
*Carolyn Taylor	2013
Merinda K. Condra, JD	2012
Christie Devitt	2012
Michaela Hardin	2012
Louisa Hope-Weeks, PhD	2012
Terri Caldwell	2012
Narissra Maria Punyanunt-Carter, PhD	2012
Lori Rice Spearman, PhD, MT, ASCP	2012
Emily Ratcliff	2012
Diannah Tatum	2012
*Kay Cross	2011
Aimee C. Doane	2011
Yvonne Racz Key	2011
Sarah Jo Lambert	2011
Beth Lawson	2011
Kelly Overley, PhD	2011
Kamlesh Varma, MD	2011
Kitty Harris Wilkes, PhD	2011
Bonnie J. Aycocock	2010
Sharon Hyde Bass	2010
Billie J. Caviel	2010
Mary K. Crites, AIA	2010
Grace Hernandez	2010
Betsy Goebel Jones, EdD	2010
Judge Nancy M. Koenig	2010
Vickie Russell, LMSW	2010
Jade C. Shank	2010

## 2000s

Melinda Corwin, PhD, CCC-SLP	2009
Christina Esperat, RN, PhD, FAAN	2009
*Stacie George	2009
Sally Kipyego	2009
Jennifer McGrew	2009
Margarita Olivárez	2009
Catherine Lee Pope	2009
*Louise Hopkins Underwood	2009
Mitzi Ziegner	2009
Maria Elena Quintanilla	2008
Linda M. Brice, RN, PhD, FNP	2008
Pamela A. Eibeck, PhD	2008
Sharyn Ivory, FACHE, CPHQ	2008
SuzAnn Moore Kirby	2008
Allison Rae Korinek	2008
*LaWanda Sherrod Murfee	2008

# LENCE ACADEMY

Melisa Tatum Roberts	2008	Pat Maines	2001	Monica Baca	1994
Kay Holder Sanford	2008	Judge Judy Parker	2001	*Lou Dunn Diekemper	1994
Adrienne Cozart	2007	Windy Sitton	2001	Sheryl Swoopes	1994
Cynthia Jumper, MD	2007	Linda Suzan Lazarin Thomas	2001	*Nelda Thompson	1994
Nicole Mitchell	2007	Maxine Willingham	2001	Gwendolyn Titus	1994
Beth Pratt	2007	Brenda J. Becknell	2000	*Irene S. Wilson	1994
Kathryn Kinnison Rollo	2007	Brooke Chavez	2000	Jane L. Winer, PhD	1994
Kathy Stocco	2007	Shari Dorris Flynn	2000	*Louise C. Allen	1993
*Mary Nell Strong	2007	*Jean Bledsoe Knight	2000	Sylvia Ashby	1993
Jan Thetford	2007	Carolyn R. McDougal	2000	*Rita P. Harmon	1993
Beena Variyam	2007	Sunanda Mitra, PhD	2000	Susan Singer Hendrick, PhD	1993
Karen Baggerly, MSN, RN	2006	JoAnn Leavey Shroyer, PhD	2000	Katherine Anne Lucas	1993
Linda Gaither	2006	Jane Ann Tustin, RN, MSN, CSN	2000	Mary Tom Riley O'Bar, EdD	1993
Judith Henry, EdD	2006			Sandra Sabatini, PhD, MD	1993
Linda Crawford Hoover, PhD	2006			*Barbara L. Sommerville	1993
Marie Pfarr	2006			Kirsten Storin Doty	1992
Rosa Hernández Sheets, PhD	2006	<b>1990s</b>		*Marjorie C. Kastman	1992
Margaret Vugrin	2006	Elizabeth Valentine Abraham	1999	Carolyn Lanier	1992
Vernita Woods-Holmes	2006	Beverly Chilton, PhD	1999	*Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser, PhD	1992
Karen Worley	2006	Judy Wells Chisholm	1999	Marsha Sharp	1992
Danette Castle	2005	Meghan Paige Fleming	1999	*Margaret Talkington	1992
Nettie Edwards	2005	*Burnis Marie Henderson	1999	Mary Grace Umlauf, RN, PhD	1992
*Conny McDonald Martin	2005	Jan Berry Morris	1999	*Sister Maureen Van der Zee, CSJ	1992
Patti J. Patterson, MD	2005	Catherine A. Ronaghan, MD, FACS	1999	Melanie Weed Barnes	1991
Renée Bergenheier Underwood	2005	*Patsy Landrum Whipple	1999	Michelle Leslie Erickson	1991
Margaret Williams	2005	Reagan Elyse Davis	1998	Jane F. Goldthorn, MD	1991
Susan Ford Wiltshire, PhD	2005	Diane Brown Earl	1998	Reverend Jo Roberts Mann	1991
Katie Megan Akeroyd	2004	Annette Gary, RN, PhD	1998	*Sylvia Martinez-Flores	1991
Geneva B. Boren	2004	Caryl E. Heintz, PhD	1998	*Betty J. Savage Mills	1991
*Gloria Snell Gale	2004	Leigh Keeney McPhaul	1998	*Virginia M. Sowell, PhD	1991
Sara Stalcup McKee	2004	Francina Johanna Proctor	1998	*Helen Wagner Willey	1991
Elma S. Moreno	2004	Dorothy Phea-Norville	1998	Alicia Boswell	1990
Marilyn Phelan, JD	2004	*Peggy Willis-Aarnio	1998	*Glenna Maxey Goodacre	1990
Lugene Lane Pickering	2004	Jitra Subpamongkol Anuras, MD	1997	Eileen McAllister Johnson, PhD	1990
Marianna Shubov, PhD	2004	Christy Michele Badgwell	1997	Yondell Masten, RNC, PhD	1990
Toni Arnett	2003	Ruth Jane Holmes, PhD	1997	Ethel M. McLeod	1990
Margaret Brannon-Randle, MEd	2003	Phyllis Sullivan Jones-Beasley	1997	Shirley Anne McManigal, PhD	1990
Ashley Marie Cartwright	2003	Sherry Sancibrian	1997	*Palma Lancaster Smiley	1990
Alexia E. Green, RN, PhD, FAAN	2003	Marisue Pounders Smith	1997		
Suzanne Adams Beck Liner, MD	2003	Irasema Velasquez	1997		
Rev. Stephanie Schreiner Nash	2003	Kathy Volanty, PhD	1997		
Sharon Young Prather	2003	*Jane O. Burns, PhD	1996	<b>1989</b>	
*Trudy Putteet	2003	Holli Nicole Douglass	1996	Janeen Holmes Gilliam	1989
*Mary Jeanne van Appledorn, PhD	2003	Cassandra L. Henry	1996	Elizabeth G. Haley, PhD	1989
Donna Bacchi, MD, MPH	2002	Paulina M. Jacobo, JD	1996	Marilyn Jantz Dickey	1989
Lady Falls Brown, PhD	2002	Judge Paula Davis Lanehart	1996	*Elizabeth Creson Sisco, JD	1989
Kay Davis	2002	Karin Crider McCay	1996	Teddy L. Langford, RN, PhD	1989
Tina Fuentes	2002	Nancy Jo Patton	1996	Kamie Ethridge	1989
Ione Heartsill	2002	Patricia Yoder Wise, RN, EdD	1996	Yumi Christina Koh	1989
*Joe Love Stogner Nelson	2002	*Louise Willson Arnold	1995		
Alana K. Noble	2002	*Betty L. Baker	1995		
Connie Wharton	2002	Louise T. Cummins	1995		
Janie Landin Ramirez	2001	Tammy D. Barnes Fedynich	1995		
Myrna L. Armstrong, EdD, RN, FAAN	2001	Shaili M. Khandheria	1995		
*Jane O. Burns, PhD	2001	Marian K. Solowy Myers, MD	1995		
Lauren Griffin	2001	*Norma E. Porres, MD	1995		
		*Billie Wolfe	1995		
		*Suzanne Aker	1994		

*\*deceased*

*Congratulations*

**2025**

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CONGRATS  
*Sarah Bevers*

for being awarded  
**The 2025 Women of Excellence Award**

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# A Cup of Sisterhood

## **THE HUMAN BEAN SUPPORTS YWCA WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE**

**O**n October 18th, The Human Bean poured more than just coffee—they poured support into the lives of local women through their Coffee for a Cure event. For one day, 100% of sales from The Human Bean were donated to the YWCA Women's Health Initiative (WHI). The result? A generous contribution of \$3,024.88 that will go far beyond dollars and cents.

For the more than 1,000 women served annually by WHI on the South Plains, this funding translates into life-saving healthcare. Mammograms, biopsies, and cervical cancer screenings are often out of reach for uninsured women, yet WHI

ensures they receive the critical services they need. Even beyond screenings, WHI plays an essential role in helping uninsured women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer by guiding them through the Medicaid application process under the Breast and Cervical Cancer program. As the only contractor for the Texas Healthy Women Breast and Cervical Cancer Services (BCCS) program in the region, WHI stands as a vital safety net for women who might otherwise slip through the cracks.

The YWCA extends its heartfelt gratitude to The Human Bean for turning a daily ritual into a force for good—one cup at a time.

“We meet so many women facing a scary diagnosis who just need help navigating their next steps. Thanks to The Human Bean’s generosity, we can continue providing support and vital health resources to those who need it most.”

ANNE GARCIA,  
WHI Director





# Empowering Young Minds

**The YWCA's Mission to Support Behavioral and Educational Growth**

**A**t the YWCA of Lubbock, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in an environment tailored to their needs. Thanks to the SMART Grant (Supporting Mental Health and Resil-

ency in Texans), our Behavioral and Education Support (BES) program—proudly known as the BESTeam—is making an impact on the children and families we serve.



The SMART Grant has provided invaluable resources, allowing us to:

- Employ a dedicated social worker and six child specialists trained in special needs, behavioral support, and student trauma.
- Partner with Texas Tech for speech therapy and occupational therapy with doctoral students, and the Burkhart Center for Autism.
- Collaborate with the Buckner Family Hope Center to offer family training.
- Construct a specialized classroom and sensory room.
- Provide essential learning materials and fund monthly family events.
- Offer ongoing parent training and monthly parenting tips.

The BES program isn't just about providing resources—it's about changing lives. Take, for example, a single mother of five children, one of whom has special needs. Through support and referrals from our program, she receives in-home training, and her child benefits from teacher training, sensory room access, and specialized materials.

Another family of ten actively participates in our family events, and the parent often reaches out to express gratitude for the support and encouragement received from our team.

YWCA families can be referred to the program by teachers or staff, or they can request to join directly. Our mission is to ensure that every family that needs help knows that we are here for them every step of the way.

## THE IMPACT

*Participants completed the Child Youth Resiliency Measure-Revised (CYRM-R) in November 2024, and a post-test in February 2025.*

Positive findings from the post-test reveal an increase in above average resiliency scores in participants ages 10+. **Above average scores increased from 44.44% to 66.67%.**

Positive findings from the post-test also revealed an increase in above average relational/caregiver resiliency scores in participants ages 10+. **Above average scores increased from 51.16% to 66.67%**



# Congratulations!

**YWCA 2025 Women of Excellence Honoree**

*Lindsey Maestri*

**Thank you for your hard work fostering the arts across our community in your role as Executive Director of LHUCA! Under your leadership, LHUCA has flourished with a vibrant array of programs and strengthened connections with local arts and community organizations. Your compassion, thoughtfulness, and dedication have made a lasting impact!**



# *Congratulations*

TO 2025 WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE



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**OVERCOMER**

**K**aren Kelley is a self-proclaimed breast cancer overcomer (she's not a fan of the term "survivor"). She's also one of the YWCA's most popular teacher's aides among the preschool set. Join her on the playground and you see how they flock to her - her smile and upbeat personality are infectious.



She was very serious, though, when we sat down to talk about her bout of breast cancer. In some senses, Kelley is lucky, her grandmother died of breast cancer when she was a teenager. Because she was very close to her grandmother, it made a big impression on her; so much so that she started getting mammograms when she was 32.

"It was my grandmother on my father's side but after seeing what she went through, I still wanted to be sure it (cancer) was caught early if it came my way," said Kelley.

Karen made the right choice, her cancer was detected via mammogram, her tumor was a scant .1mm in diameter. Like many women, Karen has dense breasts which make self-exams less effective when cancer is small.

Kelley said, "Because my breasts are so dense, they had to do a second mammogram with a 3D machine to confirm the cancer," said Kelley. "I can't emphasize enough how important it is to advocate for yourself and push through any red tape or obstacles that are put in your way when you want additional medical care, it's so important."

As a YWCA employee, Kelley has first-hand knowledge and easy access to the organization's Women's Health Initiative (WHI) program and staff.

Kelley continued, "After I was diagnosed, I went to visit Anne Garcia, who is the YWCA's WHI director. She was able to offer me support as I went through my chemo and radiation treatment and helped me with Medicaid. It meant my family and I didn't have thousands of dollars of debt after I finished all my treatment. She was also just so supportive whenever I needed it!"

Today, Kelley's cancer is in remission and she is moving forward with a double mastectomy.

Kelley smiled and said, "I'm ready to move on with my life and I don't want the cancer to come back. This seems like the best route for me. It has been a long journey and I'm ready for it to be over. I want to spend time with my family and my sweet friends in the YWCA preschool!"

## WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE **THE IMPACT**

WHI Serves **500+** clients annually

Provides financial assistance for over **3,000** breast and cervical cancer screenings, diagnostics and biopsies annually

**25+ Years** of consecutive service to women in **18 counties** in the South Plains

WHI is the **ONLY** Breast and Cervical Medicaid contractor in the South Plains

Maintains collaborations with UMC, Covenant, TTUHSC and **over 150** rural clinics and medical providers



# CONGRATULATIONS

## 2025 WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE

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# *Congratulations to Pediatric Oncologist*

*Chibuzo O'Suoji, M.D.*

Women of Excellence recipient Dr. O'Suoji's work is an exemplary representation of how TTUHSC shapes the future of patient care.

With research that broadens the possibilities of care and education that builds visionary providers, the TTUHSC community strives to constantly advance health care.

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**SATURDAY,  
MAY 3, 2025**



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# Health Her Way

Meredith  
Cunningham

## Empowering Women's Wellness,

*One Insight at a Time*

**W**e've all been there—sitting in the doctor's office, nodding along as the physician explains our illness or injury.

While we smile and say, "Nope, no questions," we still walk out of the office with a furrowed brow because, despite saying we understood what was going on with our bodies, we really don't.





Brooklyn Elbert

Covenant Health is thrilled to announce the launch of *Health Her Way*, a new bi-weekly podcast created for women, by women. Hosted by Meredith Cunningham, Senior Media and Community Relations Manager, and Brooklyn Elbert, Communications Specialist at Covenant Health, this podcast is your go-to source for all things related to women’s health.

“As nonmedical professionals, we know how overwhelming health information can be,” shares Brooklyn Elbert. “Our goal with *Health Her Way* is to break down complex topics in a way that’s easy to understand and truly helpful.”

*Health Her Way* covers a wide range of topics, from managing anxiety and understanding heart health to discussing PCOS, pelvic floor therapy, breast cancer, and more. Each episode features expert insights from Covenant Health’s skilled female specialists, offering valuable information and practical advice tailored to women of all ages.

“Let’s face it,” said Meredith Cunningham, “Being a woman is an incredible yet complex experience. We would all benefit from understanding our bodies better—recognizing signs before issues arise and making the most of our health when we feel our best. No conversation should be off-limits if we want to truly understand our bodies.”

Launching on March 12th, *Health Her Way* is designed to provide a supportive and informative space for women seeking to take charge of their health. Whether you’re navigating specific health concerns or simply looking to stay informed, this podcast will help you make empowered decisions about your well-being.

You can listen to *Health Her Way* wherever you stream your favorite podcasts. Have a topic you’d like us to cover? Reach out to us on Covenant Health’s social media pages—we’d love to hear from you!





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*is to help you*  
**ACHIEVE YOURS**



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*Emily · Linda · Alli · Teri Jo*

*Emily & Linda Team*

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE!

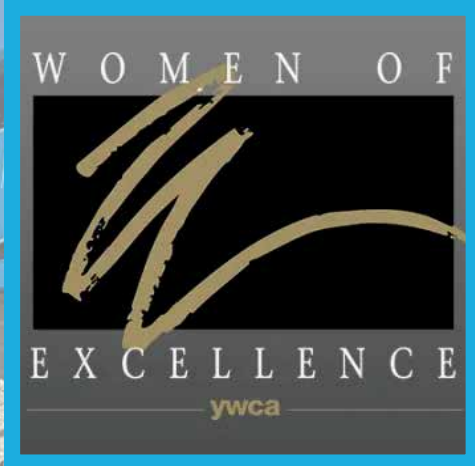
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# OUR VALUES



# OUR PEOPLE



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# Congratulations!

# 2025

## Women of Excellence

**2003**

Margaret  
Brannon Randle

**2005**

Nettie  
Edwards

**2021**

Patricia  
Frances Johnson



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ywca at  
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# OPENING NEW DOORS



**COME SEE US ON APRIL 8 AS WE SHOW OFF PHASE 2 OF OUR YWCA.**

It's been a long time coming but we think you'll agree, we definitely aren't a Kmart anymore.

There's so much to see — be sure to wear comfortable shoes. We will also have our community partners Covenant Health, Upbring and Combest Community Health Central here to answer any questions about their services.

## **THE NEW SPACE FEATURES:**

- 2 Huge Event Rooms with full audio/visual capabilities
- A Splash Pad
- A Party Room
- Outdoor Party Space
- Training Room
- Computer Training Room (Seating up to 60)
- Conference Rooms
- Teen Room (it might make you want to be a teenager again!)
- Art Room
- ABL Lab and Sensory Room
- Indoor Playground Room (great for parties)

Not to mention, all the incredible places we had before.

It's an amazing space for the community and we are so deeply indebted to all of those who helped us make this moment a reality. We are ready to celebrate and hope you will join us.




*Congratulations!*

**NEDRA L. HOTCHKINS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*congratulations*

**2025 WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS**



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*from the Mead Family*

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Women of Excellence**



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*2025 Woman of Excellence*  
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**Nedra L. Hotchkins, M.ED**

*Executive Director  
Lubbock Children's Health Clinic*

---

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Chief Executive Officer



**SHIRLEY BABB**  
Director of Communications



**MICHELLE COOK**  
Director of Human Resources



**REGINA CULVER**  
Director of Child Care



**SHANE MORAN**  
Director of Finance

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jaafar Abdullah | AMEND Together  
Mikey Earnest | Child Care Finance Coordinator  
Shannon Funk | Accounting Manager  
Anne Garcia | Women's Health Initiative Director  
Donna Giovannetti | Marketing Director  
Chris Gonzales | Facilities Manager  
Parker Gore | Director of Health & Recreation  
Christine Harewood | Grant Accountant  
Yessica Jasper | CYD Director

Presley Pharies | Executive Assistant to the CEO  
Cyanne Rodriguez | Preschool Coordinator  
Tammy Schilling | YWCare Director  
Kim Spear | Events Director  
Vanessa Salazar | Training Coordinator  
Jeff Sierra | Food Service Director  
Nick Ramirez | IT Support Technician  
Arcadio Vasquez | Child Care Administrator



## MISSION

The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

## VISION

The YWCA of Lubbock impacts lives daily and advances the power of women and diversity to strengthen our community.

## VALUES

Compassion. Leadership.  
Integrity. Commitment.



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