

# Human and Civil Rights Award Winner



## ◆ Lynnette Jimenez ◆

### George I. Sanchez Award



Lynnette Jimenez, an English teacher at R.B. Chamberlin Middle School in Twinsburg, Ohio, is committed to the education of her students in Twinsburg and to students a world away in El Salvador. As an educator dedicated to social change, Lynnette has broken barriers across borders to increase educational opportunities for students facing poverty.

On a trip to El Salvador, Jimenez saw firsthand the country's obstacles and lack of educational opportunities for the economically disadvantaged. She committed to developing an adult and child literacy program to provide the training skills necessary to break the cycle of poverty.

To accomplish this goal, Jimenez had to formulate innovative solutions. She recruited the support of Cleveland Area Churches, and the Swing into Action charity to embark upon this international journey together to improve the lives of students and their communities in El Salvador, and to impact the lives of the students she touches in Ohio. This collaboration allowed Jimenez to lead a team of individuals in Teotepeque, El Salvador to open their first Catholic elementary school: Colegio Católico Misioneros De Cleveland. Over the summer, Jimenez visited other schools in the country to see how they were run and held community open houses, where she spoke to the parents and community members about the benefits and the life-changing opportunities the new school would bring.

Jimenez raised money for the school through writing grants, hosting fundraisers, collecting donations, and buying supplies herself. She wanted to ensure the school had the resources to focus on the holistic role of the teacher practitioner, learn what students and their teachers need, how to motivate them, and most importantly, how to build a support system to address the emotional and social issues like malnutrition and gang violence. From curriculum planning to continuing education, Jimenez plays a vital role and continues to support the principal and her staff at the elementary school.

For the last several summers, to provide cross-cultural learning opportunities, Lynnette has collaborated with former Twinsburg students who have taken an interest in creating bilingual literacy opportunities for the children of El Salvador. She helps her students design lesson plans, and implement character building activities, extracurricular games and community awareness workshops that are put into action to help them better understand the culture and build relationships on an international level through an adaptive and unique learning experience. Jimenez expressed that she cannot put into words what it is like seeing former Twinsburg students connect with her students in El Salvador and make lasting friendships.

Belief in the value of life-long learning has fueled Jimenez's desire to continue her own education. She is pursuing her Ph. D. in Educational On-line Technology at Northcentral University (NCU) noting that, "The knowledge and experience gained from my NCU studies will help me formulate innovative solutions that will provide underprivileged and economically disadvantaged children and adults the freedom to create new life-changing opportunities."