

NITA GONZALES' BACKGROUND

**NITA GONZALES, M.Ed., BRINGS OVER TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS OF
DIVERSE
EXPERIENCE:**

*President/CEO of a national model for Chicano/ Mexicano and
Indigenous education, ESCUELA TLATELOLCO*

Secondary Education Teacher, Math, Science, and Political Science

Founder/Director of a Bilingual Day Care Center, CÍRCULO INFANTIL

Professor, University of Colorado, Boulder, Ethnic Studies

Former television and radio producer.

ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Current:

- *Member of Red Earth Women's Alliance*
- *Member of the Chancellor's Minority Advisory Committee at the University of Colorado at Denver*
- *Founding Board Member & current Member of Colorado Latino Forum*
- *Board Member of The Urban Farm*
- *Board Member of Clinica Tepeyac*

Former:

- *Founder and Former Co-Chair of the Chicano/Mexicano Education Coalition.*
- *Commissioner for the Denver Housing Authority.*
- *Board Member of the Alliance for Choice in Education*
- *National Board Member of the MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND (MALDEF)*
- *Former Board Member of the Colorado AIDS Project.*
- *Founder and Past Chair of Denver Youth Employment and Education Task Force.*
- *Founder and past Chair of the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training Contractors' Association.*
- *Board Member of the People of Color Coalition.*
- *Council Member of the Governor's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Planning Council for the Colorado Division of MENTAL Health.*
- *Past Chair of the Crusade For Justice.*

NITA GONZALES, M.Ed.
4882 Elm Ct.
Denver, CO 80221
303-561-1716

Ms. Gonzales, a native of Denver, is the eldest daughter of Rodolfo, Corky, Gonzales and Geraldine Gonzales. She has two children, her son Estanislado A. Gonzales, a musician, and fifteen year old Gabriela Gonzales-Lucero.

Ms. Gonzales is President/CEO of Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios, the forty year old Chicano school founded by her father.

Imagine a high school where students come to class prepared to debate the effects of politics on national security, or the environmental neglect of corporate conglomerates. Imagine a room full of young people engaged in a passionate discussion about the injustices of poverty and the problems with the welfare system. Now...imagine that each of those young people you just pictured, were ready to give up on school at one time-or had been expelled from the public school system. It may seem impossible, but at Escuela Tlatelolco, that's exactly what you'll find.

Housed at its new location at 2949 N. Federal Blvd. In northwest Denver, Escuela Tlatelolco has alumni that boast a 70% rate of undergraduate degrees, 20% with graduate degrees, and 24% who own their own businesses.

In addition to her work with the Escuela, Ms. Gonzales was one of the founders and organizers of the Chicano/Chicano/Mexicano Education Coalition comprised of twenty-three community organizations and groups. She was one of the co-authors of the Coalition's educational plan entitled "**Making Education Work For Chicano/Chicano/Mexicano Students in Denver Public Schools**". Ms. Gonzales continues teaching at the high school, community college, and university levels.

Ms. Gonzales' involvement in the Denver and Colorado communities far transcends the building housing Escuela Tlatelolco. First, she actively cultivates relations between the Chicano and American Indian communities of Denver, creating a curriculum and an environment at Escuela that reminds Chicano youth of their roots in indigenous cultures throughout the hemisphere. She opens Escuela's classrooms and community rooms for meetings, celebrations and ceremonies ranging from Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) to educational and community activities.

Instrumental in the assisting with the creation of the Red Earth Women's Alliance, a coalition of women from a variety of communities, but whose core is Chicana/Indigenous, Ms. Gonzales works collaboratively with TroyLynn Yellow Wood to provide a liberatory model of progress for a different future from a women's perspective. She has also provided essential leadership in the All Nations Alliance (ANA), a coalition of over eighty social justice organizations from Denver-Boulder.

In response to several cases of police and Chicano/Mexicano community conflicts, Ms. Gonzales in 1997 organized “United Families,” a community-based organization to monitor police behavior. Initially developed to watch police interactions with Chicano youth during the annual Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) celebrations in Denver, “United Families” positioned parents, grandparents and other committed community members on street corners along Federal Blvd. to work in concert with police for different events throughout the year.

Ms. Gonzales received her Bachelor’s of Science in Accounting and Masters in Education from Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio. Her professional experience ranges from managing program budgets of up to \$2,500,000 yearly with responsibility for revenue generation and expenditure decisions to developing and implementing curricula and an educational delivery system for Metro-Denver Chicano/Mexicano/Indigenous students and families.

Ms. Gonzales is the recipient of many awards and honors for her work in educational and community empowerment, *2010 Latina Chamber Trailblazer Award, 2008 Colorado Pioneer Women’s Award, 2005 Metropolitan State College Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Award, 2003 Bernie Valdez Award in Education, 2003 Girl Scouts’ Woman of Distinction Award, 2001 Judy Kaufman Award, 1999 Families First Pat Schroeder Award, 1996 Hunt Alternative Fund Individual Leadership award, 1995 U.S. Department of Justice Community Service Award, the 1985, 93, & 95 Benito Juarez Award for Community Service, and the 1992 Cinco de Mayo Civil Rights Award.*

Nita Gonzales continues to work as a community-builder, visionary, and mentor, across color boundaries, across cultures, and across age groups.

“For those who would say these are not our problems, our issues nor our people. I ask, when is the ongoing injury and pain of peoples’ children not our problem? When is the injustice of poverty, violence, and racism not our problem? When is inhumanity not our problem? These are our issues---these are Chicano issues---these are Mexicano issues---these are Latino issues---because we are familia, we are Mestizo, we are indigenous.” Nita J. Gonzales