

Gomez Receives CCCU's Young Alumni Award

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GÓMEZ RECEIVES CCCU'S YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Wendy Gómez Matamoros ('12), executive director of Tesoros de Dios, has been awarded the 2023 Young Alumni Award by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU).

The award, which was presented at the 2023 CCCU Presidents Conference in Washington, D.C., is given annually to an individual who has graduated within the last 10 years from a CCCU institution and has exhibited uncommon leadership or achieved notable success in a way that reflects the impact of Christian higher education.

Tesoros de Dios is a Nicaraguan-based Christian nonprofit organization that seeks to help children with disabilities achieve their full potential. Gómez and the staff at Tesoros de Dios support approximately 130 children and teenagers with a host of physical, intellectual, and mental disabilities by providing non-residential therapy and services. Most children come from families in poor living conditions and are often excluded from the culture and community in Managua, Nicaragua.

President Erik Hoekstra is thankful for Gómez and her dedication to serving all of Christ's image-bearers.

"There are more than 185 Christian institutions

within the CCCU, with hundreds of thousands of alumni who are eligible for this award," says Hoekstra. "Of all those alumni, Wendy was selected—and, in my mind, rightly so. The seriousness with which Wendy takes Jesus' call to serve his image-bearers with disabilities is inspiring. She truly lives out Dordt's mission of 'working toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life' every day."

Before she came to Dordt as a student, Gómez volunteered at Tesoros de Dios. Volunteering helped her discover how much she enjoyed serving and



"Without people with disabilities in our community, we're incomplete," says Wendy Gómez Matamoros. "We can't be incomplete; we need all the pieces together."

working with children with disabilities and realize that "there are more opportunities for those with disabilities." The experience led her to pursue a degree at Dordt where she would not

are people with disabilities. He fights and provides for them in miraculous ways, and I am honored that he has chosen me to lead a nonprofit organization in Nicaragua that aligns with his heart for individuals with disabilities," shares Gómez. "As a young woman in nonprofit leadership in a developing country, I am humbled to receive the Young Alumni Award from CCCU, giving all the glory to God for his grace and mercy evident throughout my journey."

Gómez says that being an international student at Dordt gave her the opportunity to discover and strengthen her gifts of teaching, leadership, organization, and service to others. "It also equipped me to do everything from developing behavior plans and annual budgets to leading staff meetings and coordinating emergency food distribution for the glory of God!"

At the 2023 CCCU Presidents Conference, Gómez spoke about how this past year was difficult for non-



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— President Erik Hoekstra

only be professionally trained in special education but also experienced how a faith-based perspective can permeate every area of life. After graduating, she felt called to return to Nicaragua and serve with Tesoros de Dios.

"Over the years, I have witnessed the love our God has for the least of all, which in many places around the world

