

AmeriCorps Alumni of the Year

Jennifer López

Originally served with Teach For America Los Angeles and currently working as CEO of the Carmen School Network – Milwaukee, WI

With a passion for education and promoting student success, Jennifer López has made a difference for students throughout the country through her initial AmeriCorps service and the subsequent leadership roles she has since held.

Jennifer experienced under-resourced schools while growing up and taught mathematics, science, and Latin American Studies during summer programs for five years starting when she was fifteen, preparing her for two years as an AmeriCorps member with Teach For America Los Angeles. She taught high school math in the Pico Union area of downtown Los Angeles, with many of her students coming in grade levels behind and 98% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. She dedicated her efforts to making sure her students passed the California High School Exit Exam in math to be able to graduate, which had a 52% pass rate statewide. Each year she had at least 99% of her students pass the exam.

Following her AmeriCorps service, she moved to Boston and then Milwaukee, where she was a School Leadership Coach with the nonprofit Schools That Can, then the CEO for St. Anthony Schools. She has been the CEO of the Carmen Schools of Science and Technology since 2019.

This spring, Carmen Schools of Science and Technology were recognized as Milwaukee's Best Non-Selective High School by US World News and Report and earned the distinction of a "Beating the Odds" School by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Additionally, she has helped lead their efforts with their Student Internship Program, providing their students valuable skills and experience in STEM fields, architecture, construction, and other fields to boost their success.

Knowing the impact the COVID-19 could have, she helped develop plans starting in February to provide needed technology to students before school closures required a transition to virtual education and then developed an Emergency Relief Fund to provide assistance to students and their families as the pandemic progressed.

Jennifer continues working to support the growth and development of not only her students, but also provides numerous opportunities for AmeriCorps members with Teach for America Milwaukee to find their own path to making a difference.