

## Biography for Carolyn Vazquez



*Carolyn Vazquez*, community advocate, fundraiser and event project manager with more than 2 decades of event planning experience has been an innovative and a resourceful leader of executive level planning teams in Illinois, hosting a variety of multi-faceted professional events.

Carolyn received her Bachelor's degree from Chicago State University and as a Chicago native, has been involved in initiatives to help enhance the lives of others. Carolyn's dynamic outgoing personality assisted her in accepting a new role in the Development/Fundraising field with a natural lean towards event/project management. Later, more experience in marketing and Public Relations landed her an opportunity with the American Liver Foundation as an Event Manager and with Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network as a Community Specialist. Years of professional experience and a "cross-training" of skills provided Carolyn with the ability to weave several different levels of knowledge to assist in leveraging partnerships in the community. Committed to a sense of volunteerism, she served 5 years as the event project manager at Rebuilding Together assisting homeowners with major home improvements to ensure that children were warm, safe and dry. Carolyn was involved, most notably, the Dick Bionde 48-hour Toy Drive, raising over \$20K and collecting more than 35,000 toys for families in need on the Westside of Chicago/West suburban communities. Regionally, she was able to lend assistance in the Central Illinois area with the Peoria Housing Authority. Utilizing solutions-based outreach while raising awareness about health issues and the disparities in many communities. Carolyn has been a leader and driving force within Think ReHemption an organization focused on restorative justice, agricultural advocacy and revitalizing the communities for historically underserved farmers affected by unfair policies and practices. Utilizing the culmination of her skills to advocate, implement and empower communities via innovative initiatives and economic opportunity, Carolyn is a catalyst for change.

As a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. she has been involved in advocacy and awareness for social causes. She is an active member of the United States Racquetball Association ranked for her performance on the court and competes nationally in professional level racquetball tournaments. She is a 6 time gold and 3 time silver medalist in the USA National Singles and US Open competitions. She continues to compete in events and actively serves on the Illinois State Board of Directors in her fifth season as a USRA/Safe Sport certified coach with the Junior Racquetball Team. Carolyn is leading the way for the future of Illinois racquetball, developing youth programs and enhancing academic opportunities through unique fitness experiences. Carolyn has received several awards for her community volunteerism, mentorship and leadership. In 2010 she was named by the Chicago Defender as one of *Chicago's 50 Women of Excellence* and received the *Presidential Leadership Award* for her conference planning management and expertise from the American Multicultural Association of Transplant (AMAT) professionals. Honored by the Chicago Police Department for her involvement in their youth mentoring program "We Care Role Model" program and in 2022 she was awarded a \$1.5M grant from Chicago Mayor Lightfoot to renovate Rainbow Beach as part of the Chicago Community Works Challenge. Carolyn remains passionate about helping the next generation and making a difference.