



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg speaks at ceremony recognizing recipients of the 2010 Sloan Public Service Award.

DJJ Director of Programs Sonia Galarza Receives Prestigious 2010 Sloan Public Service Award

On Tuesday, March 9th, Sonia Galarza, DJJ’s Director of Programs, was honored as a recipient of the prestigious 2010 Alfred P. Sloan Public Service Award. Ms. Galarza is one of just six New York City employees to receive the award this year.

The awards, the leading independent honor for City employees, are presented each year by the Fund for the City of New York and recognize outstanding civil servants whose professionalism, commitment and accomplishments embody the efficiency and spirit of New York City and its government. In addition to DJJ’s Sonia Galarza, this year’s winners included employees from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Sanitation, Kings County Hospital, Department of Education and the independent Brooklyn Library system.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Mary McCormick, President of the Fund for the City of New York, presided over an award ceremony on Tuesday night at historic Cooper Union. Paul Joskow, President of the Sloan Foundation, Commissioners of numerous City agencies; other dignitaries; as well as hundreds of family members, friends and colleagues attended the event to celebrate the achievements of the outstanding professionals.

On Wednesday, the Department’s Central Office hosted an afternoon ceremony and reception that members of the Fund’s Executive Board, and DJJ and ACS staff attended to honor Ms. Galarza. Several of Galarza’s colleagues from DJJ and city government spoke about their work with the popular Director of Programs. In addition, she was presented with a framed illustration commemorating her award. ACS Executive Deputy Commissioner Laurence Busching and DJJ First Deputy Commissioner Judith Pincus spoke of the commitment and contributions made by Sonia Galarza throughout her 25-year record of service to the Department.

“She’s a force of nature. She doesn’t sit at her desk and simply make phone calls. She galvanizes everyone on her staff and her partners, she works the system,” said Harriet Taub, Executive Director of Materials for the Arts at the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs. “She finds solutions when there are roadblocks and bureaucratic inertia. She represents what’s great about being a public servant.”

DJJ Commissioner John B. Mattingly said, "Sonia Galarza is a shining example of a professional who has treated her job as a mission to reach young people who came into contact with the juvenile justice system. By going above and beyond, she has undoubtedly made a difference in many lives. We applaud all she has done for young people and their families."

“The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice has always been custody and care, but I have never seen it that way. I see our mission as planting seeds and making a difference in our residents’ lives, with the hope that they do not end up on Riker’s Island or six-feet under,” Director Galarza said. “What began as a job 25 years ago has become my mission in life. It is a life of service to the children of New York City. This is the highest form of work one can do in this world.”

Sonia Galarza presently serves as Director of Program at DJJ where, over her distinguished 25-year career, she has touched the lives of thousands of children through her counsel, care and innovative programming. In addition to enthusiastic and supportive partnerships she has developed with staff throughout the agency, she credits her success to creative programs that introduce the young people she serves to new and positive ways of thinking. These programs have included themes such as dance, journalism, a basketball tournament, swimming instruction, painting, business skills training, financial literacy and countless others.

Sonia Galarza is the third DJJ staff member in four years to receive the prestigious Sloan Public Service Award. Ombudsman Ralph Simmons and Secretary to the Executive Director of Horizon Juvenile Center Joya Ramirez, the Department’s 2007 and 2008 Sloan honorees, attended the Cooper Union and DJJ ceremonies to congratulate Ms Galarza on her achievement.

