Claudette Soto Biography 2017

Claudette Soto is currently an Owner’s Representative at IFF, a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant, and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income communities and people with disabilities. She has been working in the construction management, architectural, and engineering field for over 15 years. Ms. Soto received a Bachelor of Architecture and a Master Degree in Structural Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology. In 2001, as an undergraduate, Ms. Soto founded a local student lead grassroots organization named VAMOS (Volunteer and Mentor One Summer). VAMOS tries to promote the importance of higher education and STEAM careers to middle school children in the community of Gage Park, Brighton Park, and Back of the Yards through summer enrichment programs and one on one mentoring by IIT university students. VAMOS has now evolved into a year round mentoring program for middle school age through college age students who are seeking higher education or are currently engaged in a college/university program or are graduates of a program. In September of 2017 VAMOS, student mentors, participants and supporters were recognized through a City Council resolution presented by Alderman Raymond Lopez of the 15th Ward.

Ms. Soto currently sits on the Board of Trustees and Governance Committee at Mother McAuley High School, Board Chair of the Rauner Family YMCA, Member of the Back of the Yards Arts and Culture Subcommittee, and the 15th Ward Back of the Yards Working Group. Previously Ms. Soto served on the Fernando Chapa Scholarship Selection Committee at IIT and was an advisor to the Arquitectos Student Chapter also at IIT. She was a TEDx speaker on the topic of “Change Architecture-Change Community” as well as a speaker at the Bishop John R. Gorman Institute for Leadership in Catholic Education on the topic of “Architecture and How it Inspires Learning and Change”. Most recently Ms. Soto was a guest speaker during the 2017 ComEd Solar Spotlight which was held during Hispanic Heritage Month. Ms. Soto is a graduate from the Metropolitan Leadership Institute (MLI). MLI was a year-long training program which incorporated UNO’s 20+ years of community organizing experience towards the development of Hispanic leaders within metropolitan Chicago. She is the proud recipient of a HACIA scholarship and the Joseph Clausen Award for Community Service. Ms. Soto attributes her strong will for success, outspoken demeanor and thirst for change in her community, to the education she received while attending Mother McAuley High School, a single gender high school in Chicago and growing up in the southside community of Gage Park. There she received the confidence to pursue degrees not traditionally pursued by women and to know her voice mattered.

Relevant Links:
http://wgntv.com/2017/10/06/vamos-mentors-students-to-help-them-envision-a-better-future/
https://youtu.be/LYTwjqfCdRk