



## **Rose Gallegos**

### **Centro de Cultural de Washington County**

### **Cornelius, Oregon**



As I interviewed with the Encore Fellowship Program Director, I found myself getting excited about looking for new opportunities to expand my skill set. After working for 37 years at Intel, I wanted to find out what it was like to work with a non-profit organization and to give back to my community.

I'm a very enthusiastic individual, highly organized and very dependable. I work at 110% with a can-do attitude in whatever tasks that I am given and I am always motivated to perform beyond expectations. I wanted to take that attitude to a non-profit.

I had many skills to contribute to my fellowship host organization because of my very varied career. I started as a Correctional Officer at the Washington County jail in Hillsboro, Oregon. I leveraged that experience to join corporate life in internal security and then become a first responder and first aid instructor, as well as training other security teams in processes, procedures and first responder skills. I then moved into the badging area and managed all Oregon site employee files. I even was the site's certified locksmith!

One of my roles included managing the Intel Records Retention Center which at that time was located in a warehouse. I've always lived by the rule, work smarter, not harder and one day, while on a cherry picker pulling down a box from the top shelf which was about 18 feet high, I decided to analyze the process and procedures of keeping the thousands and thousands of records that Intel is required to hold for legal reasons. The boxes of records and files were taking up so much real estate in the warehouse plus required a headcount to cover the required work. I saved Intel hundreds of thousands of dollars by creating an electronic sign out/in process and moving the records/boxes to a secured off-site center.

I knew I wanted to try and reconnect with Centro Cultural de Washington County since I had history there. When I moved to the Portland area, I met family members who co-founded Centro Cultural (formerly Los Amigos) in 1972. I also volunteered for Wet Wizards, one of the youth programs at Centro. Coincidentally, my best friend married the Director's brother. Centro Cultural seemed like a perfect match for me!

Given my experience in managing records, when I began with Centro Cultural, my assignment was to create a database that would track all clients, volunteers, classes, students, child care, special events and projects. I found that most of the tracking processes were not setup to provide immediate statistics that the Director needed to apply for grants and contracts or for reporting back to the Board of Directors. Once the database was setup, it simplified the process for reporting purposes.

After creating and monitoring the database, I discovered that the volunteer program needed to be more formalized and expanded. I set up processes and guidelines, an application process, liability waivers, assigning and tracking volunteer hours and tasks in the various programs (including youth and adult education classes, MECHA, a student organization that promotes higher education, culture and history, STEAM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Arts and Math) youth programs), systems for volunteers to assist with large fundraising events and a Friday Senior Program.

I particularly wanted to expand the Senior Program. I organized volunteers of various ages so they could interact with the seniors. It was a priority for me to have the volunteers serve the seniors their lunch. I also volunteered to take on the role of Event Coordinator for Centro's annual gala. I felt proud as we collected more than our goal for fundraising and many officials from the cities of Hillsboro and Forest Grove and councilmen—quite the variety—were there.

It took me awhile to adjust to the difference between corporate and non-profit sectors. I came to understand there was a different work pace and environment in a nonprofit compared from the intense on-call 24/7 culture of business. The nonprofit is lower-key. After 37 years of fast pace, it's been a change to learn to that it is okay to relax a bit. I like it! If this is retirement for me, I can handle this.

It has been a complete turn-around for me. I was a workaholic and went from day to day, paying no attention to the community around me, to being immersed in helping others. I was aware of world events but I chose to mind my own business. I see people a little differently now. Working at Centro, seeing the variety of people, has truly opened my eyes.

Towards the end of my Fellowship, I volunteered to continue to check in and maintain the database. The Executive Director had additional ideas of how to use my expertise and asked if I would like to stay on part-time as Data Strategist and Project Coordinator. I will continue to maintain the Centro Cultural and Prosperidad program databases (Prosperidad is a program of Centro Cultural located in downtown Hillsboro which empowers individuals to realize their economic potential by bridging and enhancing employment services) along with continuing as Volunteer Coordinator. I will also handle the rental process of our main hall, La Plaza and support the Senior Programs on Friday. It certainly seems Centro liked my work!