

## MARIA GUAJARDO, PH.D.



Dr. Marie Guajardo is the executive director of the Mayor's Office of Education and Children. Focusing on the first two decades of life, the charge of her office is to champion education advancement for children and youth in Denver. Her leadership initiated and launched the Denver Preschool Program, the 5 by 5 Project, after-school programs citywide and summits on

Multiple Pathways to Graduation. She oversees operations from Head Start to providing high school students an even start to post-secondary education. A licensed child psychologist, in 2005 she received a congressional commendation for her contributions to Latino education. The 5 by 5 Project, spearheaded by Guajardo, is one example of her passion for education and providing opportunities for all children. The Project has impacted many families in the City and County of Denver by providing them with five cultural experiences before they reach the age of five. This free program is available to Denver Head Start families who have children under the age of five, and strives to introduce arts, culture and play to

spark imagination and stimulate creativity and learning. This project is one of the creative and important ways that the Mayor's Office for Education and Children is committed to helping Denver children grow up with the strengths, knowledge and skills necessary to become confident and successful residents. Guajardo's work in education is broad-reaching and impacts the many issues and factors which affect the most invisible in our society. Her empathy and understanding of the plight of the marginalized in society has led her to speak out and advocate in a variety of ways. She conducted research in drop-out prevention, which guided her work at the Colorado Department of Education as the Dropout Prevention Coordinator and co-director of the Colorado Preschool Project. In 2008, she co-chaired the Democratic National Committees Education Initiative. Dr. Guajardo is a national spokesperson on topics of education, leadership and the strength of diversity. She is also a published author. She has received several awards for her efforts and work. However, the biggest reward for her work is the children who receive the educational opportunities that they need and deserve in order to grow, flourish and succeed.

## JEAN AND SAM GUYTON, MLK LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jean and Sam Guyton had a dream. Their dream was and is community building with a goal of creating a better and more inclusive world, even if just one person at a time. Like Dr. King, they knew that this dream would come to fruition not only through their hard work and dedication, but that of many others as well. Born in Mississippi, Sam was influenced by a father who took him to the county jail every Saturday to give gifts of candy and magazines, as well as caring attention to the inmates. Sam was also involved during the years of struggle for integration in the South. Formerly from Massachusetts, Jean gratefully grew up surrounded by international students brought home by her professor father, and she learned awareness of those less fortunate than herself from her mother, who was present at Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and who dedicated much of her life to furthering the cause of justice and equality. Together the Guytons have been involved with years of building community through projects in California, Massachusetts and Colorado. Ten years ago, the law firm Holland & Hart, where Sam was an attorney for 28 years, presented a unique opportunity for them to expand the principles of community, social justice and equality and caring for

others. The Guytons created the Holland & Hart Foundation which brought lawyers, staff, families, alumni and clients together by volunteering in their greater communities. To accomplish this, they encouraged people in the firm who were willing to give freely of their time, talent and energy to meet the unmet needs of others. Today, over 1,000 people in 15 offices in eight states volunteer in dozens of varied projects which better the lives of thousands. Each office chooses their own projects and many of them are financed by their own creative fund raising efforts. Some of the Foundation projects include helping an impoverished school district in Mississippi, folding and distributing over 7,000 pocket flags with an encouraging prayer inside for those in the armed forces over seas, rebuilding homes for the elderly poor and disabled, collecting coats for the homeless, providing weekend food backpacks for needy children, building community gardens, distributing Toys for Tots, gleaning farmer's fields for the food banks, collecting school supplies in the fall and annual food drives which this year brought in over eleven thousand pounds of food for the food banks in the cities where the firm has offices. The Guytons are humbled by this award and share it with the hundreds of dedicated people at Holland & Hart who have helped their dream of building community become a reality.