

**SOUTHEAST FLORIDA:
LEADING WOMEN IN BUSINESS**

Filling the Gaps

Partnering with individuals, businesses, and humanitarian organizations, Connie Aguiar Perez-Borroto leads **Youth Co-Op** in improving the lives of Florida youths and families through education, employment, and empowerment.

Complex social barriers, such as educational gaps and workforce challenges, often require multifaceted solutions. Nonprofit organization Youth Co-Op has proven this. Its e3 philosophy—which comprises education, employment, and empowerment—gives youths, families, older adults, and immigrants the tools to become self-sufficient. This could mean providing after-school tutoring for a teenager or helping someone in their 60s polish their resume.

Leading the way is Connie Aguiar Perez-Borroto, who became president and CEO in 2020 after over three decades in nonprofit administration—a career inspired by working with Youth Co-Op as a young adult.

“I fell in love with the organization’s mission and knew I was making a difference,” she says. “My belief in the impact that Youth Co-Op makes in the community is the key element and driving force throughout my professional journey.”

Aguiar Perez-Borroto continues, “When

we commit to a mission that changes lives, we transform the world. In the journey to stay true to our purpose, the ripples of our impact are immeasurable when we use our mission as our compass and our vision as the fuel.”

At its founding in 1973, Youth Co-Op originally focused solely on youth services but soon realized that the adolescent’s environment plays a key role in the youth’s life. To make lasting changes, the organization would need to help their families and other significant people in their environment as well. For instance, if Youth Co-Op were to help a struggling high schooler graduate, it may become clear the student is worried because their father can’t find work, or their mother doesn’t know how to rejoin the workforce after being away for 30-plus years.

“We look at our programs and see if we can find any gaps,” says Aguiar Perez-Borroto. “Then, we fill those gaps with grants and donors.”

CRAFTING CONNECTIONS

Committed to bolstering Florida’s economy, Youth Co-Op works in a holistic approach directly with educational institutions, businesses, and organizations while simultaneously providing opportunities for those in its program.

What makes these win-win scenarios possible, Aguiar Perez-Borroto believes, is the dedication of her team, who always ask the question: How would I like to be treated if I were on the other side of this desk?

Whether it’s in the programs provided or the staff’s client service, Youth Co-Op is fueled by meaningful connections. For Aguiar Perez-Borroto, nothing is more motivating than setting an example for her children.

“If you have determination and



POWER IN PARTNERSHIP

Having recently celebrated its 50th year in 2023, the team at Youth Co-Op is seeking ways to expand its humanitarian impact over the next half-century. The organization relies on local and national partnerships to fund its mission of social well-being, and volunteers make its educational and professional contributions possible.

“Youth Co-Op is throughout Florida, and we’re helping individuals and the state as a whole thrive,” says Aguiar Perez-Borroto. **“It’s a great feeling to know exactly how your time and resources are positively impacting the community.”**

persistence, all is possible,” she says. “My immense gratitude goes to my daughters, Sabrina and Samantha, for being the strength behind my path in life. I would not be who I am today had it not been for them.”

Alejandro is an alumni client of Youth Co-Op. When asked about the impact the agency had on his life, Alejandro replied, **“Youth Co-Op changed my life. With their support, I was able to embark on a journey of professional development that led me to work in a challenging position at a Fortune 500 company with a bright future for me and my young family. Thanks to them, the sky is the limit for me.”**



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