

“Deja de pensar en las limitaciones, Empieza a pensar en las posibilidades”

Wow, we have done it. Hip, hip, hooray! I want to thank everyone involved in our first virtual gathering broadcast across the state of Wyoming and the Zoom platform. We are in unique times, and the efforts of our school coordinators, workshop leaders, university mentors, media/technology specialists, and volunteers to pull together to present an outstanding virtual conference is a testimony to the passion and tenacity of our WLYC *familia*. You are all fabulous!

It is an honor to serve in my 5th year as the Executive Director of the Wyoming Latina Youth Conference and the 5th year that we make our home at UW, where we are incorporating Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) initiatives. More so, it is a pleasure to work with Founder, Ann Redman, and the board members of the Wyoming Latina Youth Conference (WLYC). The relationships established with the WLYC are priceless and continue to flourish year after year.

The theme of the 2020 virtual conference was “Promoting the Power of Choice: Leadership, Science, and Creativity During COVID-19.” This was a great theme for the 2020 virtual conference since our limitations of meeting face to face represented the demands of COVID-19 policies and regulations. Making opportunities turn into successes for young Latinas is what our work in WLYC is all about! It was great to see many of you during this year’s virtual conference. While there are so many pieces of the WLYC experience that don’t translate well virtually, like the banquet and DJ Dance, I hope you were able to find opportunities to learn, lead, and renew in “somewhat” different ways during our virtual gathering.

In the busy days of the last few months, I am very late in sharing with you that one of our long-time school coordinators, Mario Montaña, from Sheridan High School, is retiring after 21 years of stewardship to WLYC. We honored him with a beautiful plaque and cherish wonderful memories to remember him by. Kathy Good will step up to take leadership.

In summary, the two-day virtual conference, presented on the first night, was *Noche Cultura*, as many artists offered us an audio and visual-described tour of the UW Art Museum-Wyoming of Wyoming, The Latinos in Wyoming Mural, “*Paredes Hablando*,” a photo/art student contest, and a robust viewing of Latina inspired and directed short documentaries. The following day, we had, outstanding workshops in STEM making LED Masks, a keynote speech from Cecilia R. Aragon, with a general session on writing your own narrative, and with knowledgeable healthcare presenter offering a full range of issues that impact our community during COVID-19 and the global pandemic. This unique experience will shape our organization for years to come. We will take the best parts from 2020 virtual conference situation and build it into this year’s 2021 conference. We can’t wait to get together in person next year!

Before we close, Ann and I would like to thank each of you for attending our conference and bringing your community knowledge and positive attitudes to our gathering. You, as student leaders, have the vision, the knowledge, the enthusiasm and the experience to help us pave our way into the future. You are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow, and we could not accomplish what we do without your support and leadership. Our personal respect and thanks go out to all of you, your Parents, Chaperones, Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents! We can't express enough how grateful we are for your support.

As we look to 2021 and what I am confident we all hope will be a better year, the School Coordinators, Interns, and UW-WLYC Steering Committees are diving into our work for the year.



Dr. Cecilia J. Aragón
Executive Director
WLYC



Ann Redman
Founder and Honorary Chair
WLYC

“Stop thinking about the limitations and start thinking about the possibilities”