



el valor

REY B. GONZALEZ

President and Chief Executive Officer

Rey B. Gonzalez recently became the President and Chief Executive Officer of El Valor after thirty years of serving as chair of its board of directors. Prior to coming to El Valor, Rey was the Vice President for Legislative and Community Affairs at ComEd, an Exelon Company that delivers electricity to approximately 3.8 million residential and business customers across northern Illinois. In addition to building and stewarding relationships with statewide legislators and community organizations, Rey was involved with Exelon's national external diversity initiatives. Prior to this position, Rey was the vice president of Corporate Diversity for Exelon Corporation. Before joining Exelon in 2002, Rey served as vice president of Diversity for the McDonald's Corporation. His primary responsibilities included the management and development of national External Diversity Partnerships, including philanthropy and employment.

Prior to joining corporate American, Rey was the Regional Midwest Director of the National Council of La Raza and worked at the Chicago Urban League helping women and minorities acquire work in the building and construction trades. Within three years at the Urban League, Rey had placed more than 2,500 women and minorities in skilled high paying jobs. Providing opportunities for the advancement of Latinos and minorities continued throughout his time in leadership positions at the corporate level.

During his tenure as chair of El Valor's board of directors, Rey connected the organization to national leaders in corporations, government, universities, media and the community. He was present early on when El Valor was a very small organization housed in a building in desperate need of repair. Through Rey's leadership, El Valor flourished and became one among the largest 25 Hispanic-serving organizations in the country.

El Valor has been known for innovation. It was model of bilingual, bicultural rehabilitation in the state of Illinois and started the first computer programming training center for people with disabilities. El Valor built the first intermediate care facility in the state; initiated the Tocar El Futuro/Touch the Future early childhood education model; and developed an international public awareness campaign on the importance of early childhood development, Parents As First Teachers. Under Rey's leadership, three Children & Family Centers have been built, each that works annually with thousands of families from the Chicagoland area.

Rey developed one of the integral parts of Tocar El Futuro, the university partnership component known as Leadership through Education. He initiated this component because, as he stated "One of the primary reasons more Latinos are not promoted within corporations, public education systems, and government is due to the lack of credentials. El Valor, in partnership with universities and colleges, can bridge the need our community has to further its education and the need society has for workers to be better trained and educated in order to provide leadership in various domains." This simple idea led to more than 650 working people, primarily from the Latino community, earning their degrees right in the community at El Valor Children & Family Centers.

Rey has received many accolades throughout the years for his tireless work in advocating for the community. Rey has been ranked among the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in America, received the U.S. Hispanic Hero Award from the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute and has a Children & Center named in his honor on the southeast side of Chicago. Further, Rey has two scholarships awarded annual in his name as the Rey B. Gonzalez Scholarship. Although he is honored to be recognized, Rey contends it doesn't make him any type of hero. "It's something I'm proud of," he said. "It's an acknowledgment of 40 years working in the community. It's a very nice honor, especially to my children, my relatives and friends. But there are a lot of unsung heroes throughout the country."

Rey is the co-founder and a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, a Chicago-based national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes education, civic participation and leadership development for Latinos and other similarly disenfranchised groups. He also serves on the board of directors for Mt. Sinai Hospital and American Stem Association.

Rey and his wife, Hilda, have four children, Rey, Daniel, Adam, and Rachel as well as a beautiful granddaughter.