

Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences



"Hispanic Heritage Month makes me stop and appreciate all the adversities my ancestors endured so I could succeed. None of my grandparents finished high school. They came to this country to have a better life. They worked hard at any job they could find to give my parents a good life. I hope they are proud of what I have achieved."

Christine Mondragon

Mathematics Teacher, Oak Park and River Forest High School

Christine's journey to becoming a math teacher started at home with her parents. Both her mother and father were teachers. Christine enjoyed math and science classes at school, so she decided to study engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Christine graduated in 1990 with a BS degree in engineering and began to work for the state of Illinois as an environmental engineer. While working as an engineer was interesting, Christine could not ignore her desire to teach, so she made the decision to attend DePaul University. The unique Master's program allowed her to continue working full-time while earning a degree in Secondary Math Education. The positive impact she made while student teaching at Oak Park and River Forest High School led to her being hired immediately as a full-time math teacher there. After 23 years of teaching at this school she continues to be happy with her decision to become a teacher.

In addition to teaching, Christine has been a math team coach for 20 years, earning top titles with her team and qualifying for state regularly. As a teacher, Christine has earned the honor of being selected to present at conferences such as the Metropolitan Mathematics Club of Chicago's Conference of Workshops, Minority Student Achievement Network, and was recently selected by Collegio San Carlo School in Milan to virtually present on Women in STEM. Christine is dedicated to promoting female math students both on the math team and by starting a Women in STEM club for students at Oak Park and River Forest High School.

Christine says "Teaching is hard, rewarding but hard." She thinks teachers need to feel supported from administration, school boards, and the community at large. She believes this can happen with simple gestures like providing time for teachers to collaborate, plan and just breathe. She also thinks it is also important for teachers to feel that their voice is heard in educational decision making.

Lathisms was founded in 2016 in order to showcase the contributions of Latinx and Hispanic mathematicians during Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated in the United States from September 15 and October 15 every year. During this time, we feature/reveal a prominent Latinx/Hispanic mathematician daily. See all the featured mathematical scientists at LATHISMS.ORG.

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