Brenda Bedolla’s Story

"Corazon has played a major role in my leadership development; Corazon not only taught me the literal meaning of leadership, it taught me how to implement what I was learning into actual programs that would benefit the youth in our communities. Corazon served as a home away from home, where I met lifelong friends and mentors. It has been almost ten years since I first stepped foot in the agency and I still feel at home when I visit. Through Corazon I learned the importance of giving back to our community and embracing where we come from. I learned that we must accept everyone’s differences and diverse backgrounds in order to work together toward a mutual goal. But most importantly, I learned that my passion lies in helping youth who like myself have goals and aspirations of becoming young professionals and role models to others in our community."

Brenda began attending Corazon Community Service in 2007 at the age of 13. During her time with Corazon Brenda actively participated in leadership retreats, lobbying efforts to help increase awareness of the Importance of youth and non-profits, became a youth leader in the grant funded "Choose Respect" program, was a member of "Fuerza de Mujer" youth program, and worked as a youth helper for the Blast after school program located at Cicero West elementary school. Most recently, Brenda worked as an intern for the health department and helped oversee the development of the HERO’Z (Helping Educate Regarding Orientation) program, a gay and straight alliance that helps educate youth ages 14-21 regarding sexual orientation.

Brenda is currently a senior at Northeastern Illinois University double majoring in Sociology and Women & Gender Studies. During her time at NEIU, Brenda has served in an array of leadership position including President of the Student Government Association, Leadership Scholar for the Office of Student Leadership Development, member of the student advisory committee for the Vice President of Student Affairs and Chapter President of her sorority. As a result of all her involvement Brenda has been given the opportunity to travel to various conferences nationwide, with university administrators, to share her experience of being a first generation undocumented college student. Brenda is expected to graduate in May of 2016.