Jennifer Benitez’ Story

Jennifer Benitez has been involved with Corazon since 2016, through her participation in the Fuerza Youth Center. As a participant, Jennifer participated and learned from key life skill programs, which eventually allowed her to take on leadership roles at Corazon.

Currently, Jennifer is a leader at the Fuerza Youth Center, where she comes daily to do homework, eat lunch, participate/lead activities and take part in field trips. The youth center has provided a second home for Jennifer where she has been able to express herself and grow as a young Latina. As part of our core leadership team, she is a part of the Stay In School Initiative program. The program works with high school youth, that participate in monthly workshops with Exelon and United Way. These workshops focus on team building, skill building, networking and personal strength recognition. Participating youth have opportunities to interview for paid internships at Exelon and United Way, as well as a scholarship for high school seniors.

“I’ve learned how to let go of my stoic demeanor and openly express myself. I’ve been able to achieve college readiness and learn how to be a leader. I’m always excited to go to Fuerza and it’s hard for me to imagine a time without it. I always feel academically motivated by Corazon’s staff and I am pushed in my best effort in everything I do.”

Jennifer, a current senior, is very active at her school, J.S. Morton East, where she takes part in the National Honor Society. She has helped in the Class of 2017’s graduation and Cicero Clean-up Day. Jennifer is also involved in Band which makes for a pretty hectic schedule; band camp during the summer, parades, sports during the school year and in-school performances scattered throughout the school year.

She is currently in the college application process and hopes to go to Northwestern University.