

Parish Announcements

Theresa Mendez and Nicki Mendez Dynamic Duo chosen for Women of the Year

In April, the St. Paul VI Women's Society voted Theresa Mendez and Nicki Mendez as its 2023 Women of the Year! They were chosen to receive the honor together because of their close relationship and shared contributions to St. Paul VI and former St. Hugh parishes. They have known each other since at least second grade. Growing up in Cicero, they admit to being "little hooligans" on 50th Ave., where they became best friends. Theresa jokes that Nicki loved Theresa's maiden name, Mendez, so much that Nicki married a Mendez – no relation!

Although living in Cicero, Theresa was drawn to St. Hugh Parish in Lyons, and in 2011, joined its Society of Catholic Women. Nicki followed about a year later. Theresa taught the second-grade Communion class and first-year Religious Ed. She served as secretary and then treasurer of the SCW. Nicki was a second-grade Religious Ed teacher, a Eucharistic minister, and Finance Council member. She was SCW treasurer and then vice president.



Nicki (left) and Theresa raise funds for SPRED.

One of their shared passions is the Special Religious Development, or SPRED, ministry for children and adults with developmental disabilities. They helped start St. Hugh's program. Theresa chaired the program, and Nicki was activity catechist. They continue to be SPRED catechists at St. Paul VI.

For the past year, Theresa and Nicki have co-chaired the Women's Society's Social Commission, or "fun committee," as Nicki calls it. They've planned amazing programs for our monthly gatherings, from a prayer mosaic experience and seasonal crafts to a video they produced of Nicki's recent Holy Land visit, accompanied by food from the region.

Welcome news was announced at the society's May gathering – that the dynamic duo would accept a new challenge: serving as co-presidents for 2 years. This ensures our society of continuity and strong leadership. The icing on the cake: they will also continue chairing the "fun committee!"

Theresa works for the American Property Casualty Insurance Association as the member relations administrative assistant. She is married to Martin Santiago and has three children: Enrico, Marissa, and Jenna.

As an American Cancer Society volunteer, Theresa is the Illinois lead for the Cancer Action Network. She was featured in its video on biomarker testing and a 2019 Sun Times article and video on the Chicago Bears Tackle Cancer Campaign. Theresa has organized Relay for Life and Lights of Hope fundraisers, crochets cancer caps, and donates most of her amazing crocheting and crafting to charity.

Nicki is a credit and collections supervisor at Follett, a library and software company. She married Luis in Germany while he was in the military, after she completed RCIA there and became Catholic. They have three daughters: Christina, Haley, and Erica, who is a prominent voice actress for anime film characters.

Nicki is an Alpha volunteer, parish Finance Council member, and vice president of our St. Vincent de Paul chapter. She is an avid traveler and eBay seller.

Theresa and Nicki, you bring a spirit of joy, faith, and commitment to our society and parish. We treasure your friendship and servant leadership!

Congratulations!