

THIN GOLD SHINE



Giselle Avelar began her career on 03/04/2013 at Northwest Central Dispatch System in Arlington Heights. During the first few years, she concentrated on learning how to navigate in her new surroundings. As soon as she was comfortable enough to participate in more than “just what the job requires”, she dove right in. Giselle has worn many different hats at NWCDS for a sustained length of time. From the onset, Giselle joined the Bilingual Team and frequently utilizes her Spanish skills to assist callers. Since 2016, she has served on the Public Education Committee and the Plain Clothes Charity Committee. In 2018, Giselle dove deeper and volunteered to serve on the Dispatch Review Committee in order to enhance her understanding of EMD and EFD protocols. Giselle joined the NWCDS TERT team that same year. In 2019, when Giselle heard the rumblings that NWCDS was procuring a new CAD system, she volunteered right at the start to assist with behind-the-scenes provisioning. Giselle spent many hours inputting data for the new system and then agreed to be on the CAD training team to develop curriculum that would be used to train her peers. While working in that group, Giselle readily volunteered to be one out of twelve people on the team to compile the training materials into a cohesive manual. In 2020, Giselle was the driving force in implementing a Wellness Program and Peer Support Team for the Center.

Aside from required education and certifications, such as EMD, EFD, CPR, and LEADS, Giselle pushes beyond the necessities to strengthen her knowledge base. Giselle opted to become TERT certified and obtained Crisis Associates’ Peer Support certification. Prior to starting her career at NWCDS, Giselle earned Bachelors’ Degrees in Psychology and Law Enforcement. Beginning this past year, she enrolled at Concordia University to earn a Master’s Degree in Clinical Mental Health education. To add more to her plate professionally, Giselle participated on a working group for NENA that researched and created INF-044.1-2021- NENA Peer Support Team Development, Implementation, and Oversight.

As exhibited above, Giselle is a driven person with a focus on helping others. She is an excellent dispatcher who can handle any call that comes her way in two different languages, if need be! While being dedicated to the profession and enhancing her career, it has not been without personal hurdles. Giselle is extremely close to her family and dealt with the heartache of possibly losing her brother. Giselle’s brother has a complicated medical history and needed a pancreas and kidney transplant. After several false starts, Giselle’s brother finally underwent a dual organ transplant in 2020 and is successfully recovering. Imagine coming to work and helping everyone you encounter, but feeling helpless when it comes to saving your own brother. Even through such an emotional obstacle, Giselle came to work and performed well, applied to graduate school, became certified as a peer supporter, and implemented an in-house peer support team as the Team Leader. Her peers voted Giselle NWCDS’ 2020 Telecommunicator of the Year. On 02/10/2021, Giselle received the Denise Amber Lee Foundation’s “Be the Difference Award” after being nominated by one of her co-workers. The reason Giselle’s co-worker nominated her was due to her dedication to NWCDS’s Peer Support Team. She is constantly researching educational opportunities, attending training on her own time to gather resources for NWCDS, conducting monthly Team meetings, reaching out to clinicians for support, editing the Peer Support newsletter, volunteering to paint and redecorate our quiet room, and keeping the Peer Support Team Coordinator in the loop.

After the whirlwind of 2020 with her brother’s medical triumph, new CAD training, and the tapering of COVID, Giselle received some shocking news. She was now in the midst of her own personal health crisis. Even through dealing with a significant life event, Giselle practiced what she preaches and took care of herself. She focused on the things she loves. She spent time with her boyfriend, family and her dogs. While in recovery, Giselle couldn’t stay away from her work family. She continued to proctor the monthly Peer Support Team meetings remotely until she was able to come back to work. She also kept up with her graduate studies at Concordia.

Giselle is a consummate professional. She is an excellent Telecommunicator, has foresight for her future and that of NWCDS, is courageous when overcoming obstacles, and is dedicated to providing quality resources and services for the well-being of her co-workers and the community she serves. Thank you for your consideration.

Nominated by: Ariana Kitty