

# IMPACT

Who's *THAT* Girl – 2024 Women of IMPACT



Jessica Pisula, Dedeaux Properties



Catherine Aguilar, Impact Alliances Group



Nzingha Newton, Kids Gardening Center



Cynthia Alvarado-Crawford,  
City of Rialto PRCS



Stephanie Vargas,  
2023 Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholar



# Table of Contents

03 **Who's *THAT* Girl?**

05 **Our IMPACT in Achieving SDG 5**

07 **IMPACT at the Stockbridge Women's Conference**

09 **2024 Women of IMPACT**

**Jessica Pisula**, *Dedeaux Properties*

**Catherine Aguilar**, *Impact Alliances Group*

**Nzingha Newton**, *Kids Gardening Center*

**Cynthia Alvarado-Crawford**, *City of Rialto Parks, Recreation, & Community Services Department (PRCSD)*

**Stephanie Vargas**, *2023 Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholar*

This quarter, we're dedicating  
our pages to celebrating the  
remarkable achievements of  
our **2024 Women of IMPACT**







# Who's *THAT* Girl?

Dedeaux Properties is thrilled to commemorate Women's History Month with the latest edition of our community engagement magazine, IMPACT. This quarter, we're dedicating our pages to celebrating the remarkable achievements of our **2024 Women of IMPACT: Jessica Pisula, Catherine Aguilar, Nzingha Newton, Cynthia Crawford, and Stephanie Vargas.**

These extraordinary women embody the essence of empowerment and resilience, reshaping the landscape of success on their own terms. Through their visionary leadership and unwavering determination, they have ignited IMPACT within their communities and professional spheres. From shattering glass ceilings to driving positive change, they inspire us to think bigger in what we can all do to address social and environmental challenges.

Their stories serve as a testament to the pivotal role women play in driving progress and innovation. Their dedication, passion, and tireless commitment to making a difference are a source of inspiration for us all.

**So, who's *THAT* girl? She's the epitome of strength, courage, and grace—the woman who fearlessly pursues her dreams and lifts others along the way.**

Join us as we honor our 2024 Women of IMPACT and celebrate their incredible contributions in this special edition.

Yours Truly,

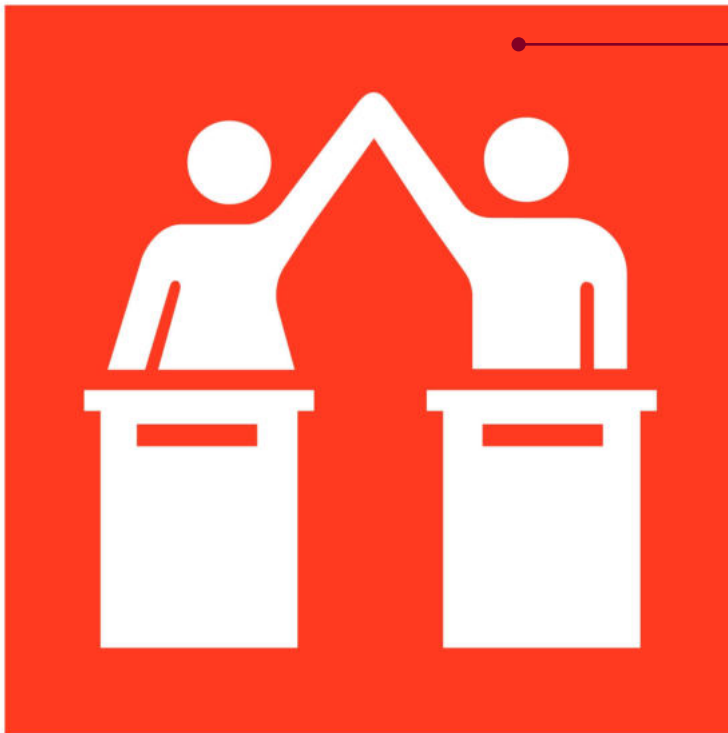


# Our IMPACT in *Achieving* SDG 5

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the United Nations (UN) is **SDG5 – gender equality**.

**SDG-5 is a global goal set to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

## TARGET 5.5



Within this larger goal, there are 9 targets the UN identifies for everyone to take steps towards for gender equality. SDG target 5.5 makes a global call for ensuring women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public forums.

# How has Dedeaux Properties contributed to SDG 5 and this particular target?



**Two women leaders at Dedeaux.**



**Partnered with a woman/minority-owned business for community engagement rooted in Corporate Social & Environmental Responsibility.**

Impact Alliances Group



**Since 2021, approximately 60% of Dedeaux's community engagement efforts were collaborations with women-led programs and initiatives with Cities, Counties, and local non-profits throughout the Inland Empire.**



**50% of the 2023 Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholars were awarded to female students.**

- Stephanie Vargas, *University of Redlands*
- Rakesha Williams, *Inland Carer Education Center*
- Arlene Rodriguez, *Middle College High School*
- Paola Martinez, *Sierra High School*

# Dedeaux's IMPACT at the Stockbridge Women's Leadership Conference



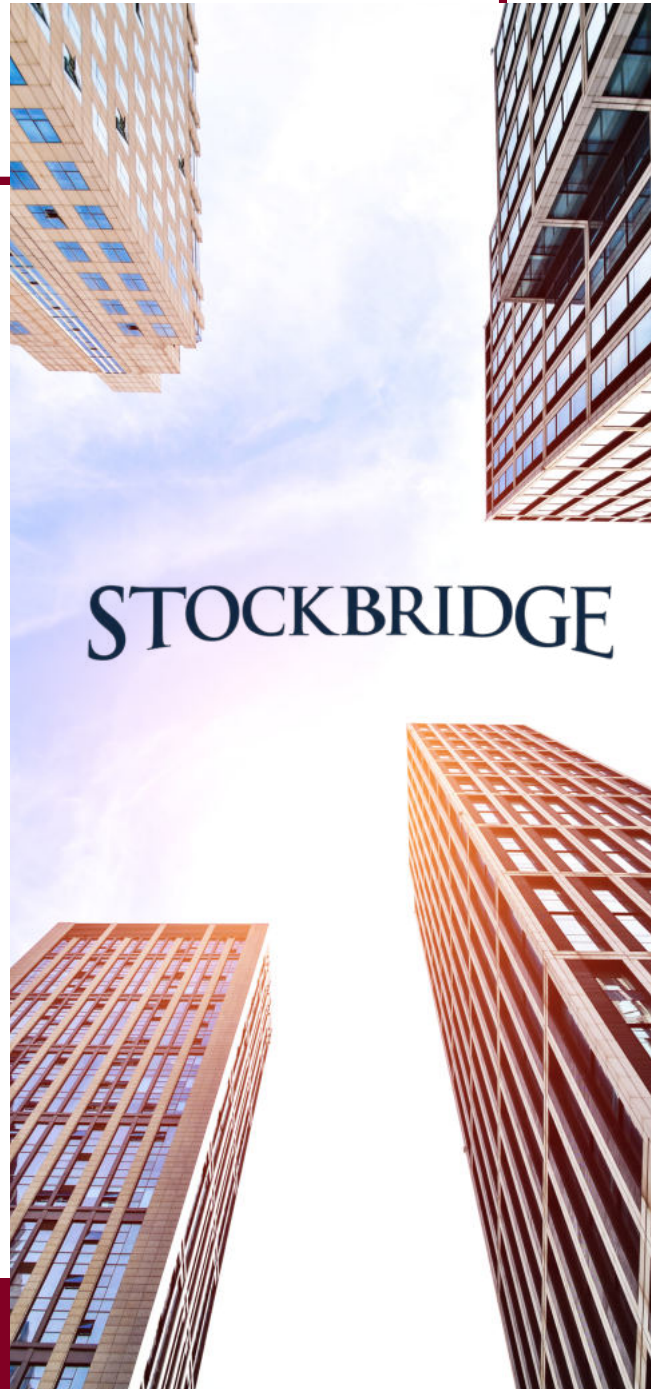
**Brett Dedeaux, Principal in charge at Dedeaux Properties**, is renowned for his insightful approach to leadership and collaboration. In a remarkable display of commitment to gender equality and partnership, Brett participated as one of the guest speakers at the Stockbridge Women's Leadership Conference held in February.

At the conference, Brett shared valuable insights on the power of partnership, highlighting the significance of fostering collaborative relationships to drive innovation and success in the real estate sector. His engagement at the event not only exemplifies Dedeaux Properties' dedication to promoting gender equality, but also demonstrates their commitment to nurturing meaningful partnerships with organizations like Stockbridge.



**Stockbridge, a respected real estate investment management firm, is among Dedeaux Properties' esteemed partners in business.**

Dedeaux Properties participation in the conference symbolizes the strong alliance between the two entities, and emphasizes the shared values of empowering women in leadership roles. Through his involvement, Brett amplifies the message that male leaders have a crucial role to play in championing gender equality and supporting women's advancement in the corporate world.





# Meet our 2024 Women of IMPACT





**DEDEAUX**  
PROPERTIES

# JESSICA



## Jessica Pisula

Dedeaux Properties,  
*Director of Marketing*

Dedeaux Properties is a family-owned business that has over 60 years in successful California real estate, with properties largely in the Inland Empire region. From the founding of the company, Dedeaux's driving purpose has been to create property value that provides aligned benefits to communities, investors, partners, shareholders, tenants, and team members.

What sets Dedeaux properties apart from other developers is the team's efforts to get involved, give back and listen at a local level to understand the needs of the community; and central to achieving this has been the relationships and trust the team has built with communities through active community engagement.

**CONNECT  
& FOLLOW  
JESSICA:**



Jessica Pisula has been a pivotal team member in successfully expanding Dedeaux's level of purpose-driven impact. She has been the driving force at Dedeaux that has put a large focus on diversifying the team's impact-efforts on both a local and global scale through community engagement. Since 2020, Jessica's impact efforts have led to:

- ✓ **Nourishing over 100 community relationships ranging from individual community members, local Inland Empire agencies, Southern California organizations, and City/County departments.**
- ✓ **Expanding Dedeaux's local and global community efforts to create purpose-driven impact across 9 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) areas:**



- ✓ **Distributing over \$300,000 through donations and corporate sponsorships.**

A quote that captures the very essence of Jessica's personal mission and how it's translated to her legacy-work at Dedeaux is from her 1st quarter IMPACT edition leadership letter:

*"One thing that remains the same is our team's commitment to make a purpose driven impact. Because when we create impact with purpose, it causes ripples of meaningful change in our local communities that ultimately extend onwards to the betterment of our global community."*

Jessica has grown with the team for about a decade, and currently serves as Dedeaux's Director of Marketing. Join Dedeaux and Impact Alliances group in celebrating Jessica's journey and her contributions. We are beyond proud to have Jessica not just an amazing colleague, but a true woman of IMPACT.



## Impact and Engagement:

# Jessica Pisula's Community Vision for IMPACT

**Dedeaux Properties:** First of all – big congratulations. We are so thrilled that we get to celebrate you as one of the 2024 women of IMPACT. You've breathed life into so many different impact-areas for our team – ranging from sustainability, health & wellness, and reducing inequalities to name a few.

It's inspiring because your community-focused efforts hasn't just made a meaningful difference for Dedeaux Properties, but it has positively impacted individuals, organizations, local agencies, and our global community.

**Jessica Pisula:** Aw thank you! It's been an incredible journey of evolution and intentional pursuit of legacy impact work. I've loved it, and Impact Alliances Group has been a HUGE driving force behind much of our engagement and the relationships we continue to build in the communities in which we build. I've really appreciated it!

**Dedeaux Properties:** What does being a woman of IMPACT mean to you?

**Jessica Pisula:** Being a woman of impact means understanding that meaningful change doesn't always come from individual achievements



One of the core impact areas Jessica has focused Dedeaux's CSR/CER community engagement efforts on is building sustainable communities (SDG-11). Jessica and IAG worked together to nourish a meaningful corporate partnership with the City of Rialto Parks, Recreation, & Community Services. For this particular impact area in Rialto, the result of the team's partnership with the City led to Dedeaux's active participation in 50% of Rialto's Clean A Park Day events.

Being a woman of impact  
**means understanding**  
that meaningful change  
doesn't always come from  
individual achievements.



like those of renowned figures like Marie Curie or Maya Angelou.

It's about recognizing the power of unity and collaboration in creating significant impact. Whether it's breaking personal barriers or achieving collective goals, working together as a community can lead to transformative change in our world.

**Dedeaux Properties:** Dedeaux Properties is so much more than a family owned business – through community engagement, Dedeaux has expanded its role in society to serve as a community partner and global citizen. And you've been such an integral part of this.

**What are some of the programs and initiatives you've spearheaded at Dedeaux that you're particularly proud of?**

**Jessica Pisula:** We are really proud of the work we've done in community gardens. We are a health driving and health appreciative organization, and so much of what our communities need is fresh and healthy clean food. To support school gardens where the kids can learn science as well as health and wellness is inspiring.

**Dedeaux Properties:** This month is women's history month – a time where we celebrate and honor the women in our lives. Who is the woman that has served as a role model for you, and what traits does she embody that everyone can take inspiration from?

**Jessica Pisula:** Probably my grandmother. She just turned 100 years old and sharp as a tack! She was a steady growing up as my mom was a single working mother. I'd be a completely different person if it wasn't for my grandmother.



*In 2023, Jessica and IAG worked together to nourish a meaningful corporate partnership with the San Bernardino Unified School District. The result of the team's partnership with the City led to Dedeaux serving as a community partner and positively impacting over 4,500 students. Dedeaux gave back to this community through their Dedeaux Youth IMPACT scholarship and served as a corporate sponsor at the San Bernardino Back to School Extravaganza.*

**Dedeaux Properties:** What advice do you have for folks striving to make a meaningful impact in their careers?

**Jessica Pisula:** My advice, especially to women in the business world, is to be brave and confident in speaking up by sharing your unique perspective. Too often, we feel the need to apologize for our presence or our opinions - and that shouldn't be the case.

It's important to recognize the **value of our voices** and to assert ourselves without hesitation. Embrace your strengths, own your achievements, and don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and others.

Organizations thrive when they embrace diverse perspectives and empower individuals to contribute their **unique insights**.





*As a woman of IMPACT, Jessica's commitment to corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSR/CER) has not only inspired her team, but also her industry colleagues. This moment was captured during Dedeaux's corporate volunteering at Feeding America | Riverside San Bernardino earlier this year with IAG and Voit who joined in for the fun!*

# CATHERINE



## Catherine Aguilar

Impact Alliances Group,  
*Founder & CEO*

Catherine Aguilar is the Founder and CEO of Impact Alliances Group (IAG) where she spearheads community engagement and Corporate Social / Environmental Responsibility (CSR/CER) programming for mission-driven brands interested in building their legacy.

**CONNECT  
& FOLLOW  
CATHERINE:**

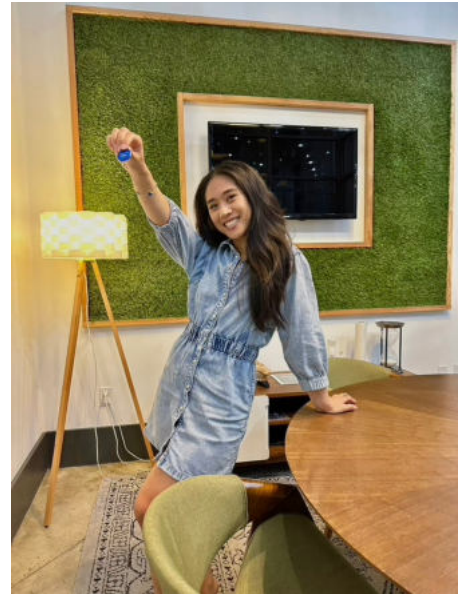




Catherine's journey has created a unique path lined with highly sought-after opportunities including being one of the six selected to serve as a TEDx Speaker for the City of Oxnard, completing fellowships at the United Nations and Environmental Protection Agency, and being part of the top 100 selected to intern at the White House under the Obama Administration.

Catherine serves as Vice Director of Marketing & Membership on the Orange Section of the American Planning Association and is an active Council Member on the Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Entrepreneurship Advisory Council. She also gives guest lectures on Corporate Social / Environmental Responsibility (CSR/CER) at academic institutions including UC Irvine, Loyola Marymount University, Smith College, the Orange County School of Arts. Additionally, she established the IAG IMPACT Scholarship program in 2023.

Dedeaux Properties has been thrilled to partner with Catherine and her team to produce many CSR/CER community engagement efforts throughout the Inland Empire, and is proud to feature her as a woman of IMPACT.



*Catherine celebrating the keys to her first office for Impact Alliances Group! A special milestone that represents unlocking bigger dreams, igniting purpose-driven IMPACT, and building a community passionate about making a difference.*

**50<sup>+</sup>**

**Partnerships**

**15<sup>+</sup>**

**Active Community  
Engagement Regions**

**\$400k<sup>+</sup>**

**Funds Distributed  
To The Community**

**15**

**Published CSR/CER  
Compliance Reports**

**60%**

**Ignited IMPACT Areas of  
The United Nation's SDGs**



Catherine Aguilar:

# Building a Legacy: The Heart of Impactful Leadership

As the Founder and CEO of Impact Alliances Group (IAG), I've always believed that the true measure of success lies in the legacy we leave and the impact we make on the world.

Spearheading community engagement strategies and championing Corporate Social / Environmental Responsibility (CSR/CSR) programming for mission-driven brands, I've dedicated my career to not just building businesses, but fostering enduring legacies that resonate with positive global impact.

Collaborating with Dedeaux Properties has been a remarkable **journey of shared values and visions**, where our combined efforts in the Inland Empire and beyond have not only achieved our CSR/CER goals, but have also amplified our collective impact - paving the way for a sustainable future we are proud to be part of.

I've embarked on a journey not just to lead a company - but to create a movement that leaves a mark on the world.

It's a path that intertwines with the missions of organizations like Dedeaux Properties, where our shared passion for positive global impact and legacy building shines brightly.

At the core of IAG's mission is a steadfast commitment to driving purpose-driven impact through community engagement, CSR, and CER initiatives.

Over the past year, our efforts at IAG have catalyzed over **50** partnerships, activated **15+** community engagement regions across Southern California, raised over **\$400k** in funds, published **15** CSR/CER compliance reports, and ignited impact in **60%** of the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals.

These achievements are not just metrics. They have served as special milestones in my journey to that transcends immediate benefits and seeds long-term change.

My passion to make a lasting impact is fueled by a deep belief in the power of community partnership and sustainable global citizenship. This belief is not only the foundation of my professional endeavors but also a guiding principle in my collaborations, such as the fruitful partnership with Dedeaux Properties. Working together on CSR/CER community engagement efforts throughout the Inland Empire has been a harmonious alignment of values and visions. It's a partnership that exemplifies how shared commitments can amplify the impact and extend the reach of our legacies.

The importance of staying committed to purpose-driven legacy building cannot be overstated. It's about more than just the projects we complete or the funds we raise; it's about the lives we touch, the communities we uplift, and the positive changes we make. This commitment requires a blend of innovation, strategy, and, most importantly, heart. It's about seeing beyond the horizon and understanding that our actions today shape the world for generations to come.

One of the most gratifying aspects of my collaboration with Dedeaux Properties has been the delightful discovery of how closely our work aligns with my passion for supporting mission-driven brands in their legacy-building endeavors.

It's been a revelation to see our shared values in action, manifesting in projects that not only meet our CSR and CER objectives, but also deeply resonate with the broader goals of creating meaningful, lasting impacts.

This synergy has reinforced my belief in the power of aligning with corporate partners who share a common vision for a sustainable and equitable future.

Working alongside Dedeaux, I've witnessed firsthand the exponential potential of combining our strengths to support communities committed to making a difference. This alignment has provided a profound sense of fulfillment, knowing that our collaborative efforts contribute significantly to the legacies we aspire to build and leave behind.

Building a purpose-driven legacy is a journey that demands perseverance, passion, and partnership. It's a journey that I am proud to be on, alongside collaborators like Dedeaux Properties, as we work hand in hand to create a better world.

**Together, we are not just making an impact - we are shaping the future.**



*Catherine is a woman for the world and she has everything it takes to succeed: strong communication and public engagement skills, experience working for the Obama Administration, a collaborative nature, motivation and a deep and abiding passion for public service.*

**Kathleen McCartney**  
President, Smith College





Impact Alliances Group has served as a key player in creating lasting and meaningful IMPACT in Riverside. From promoting health and wellness, to supporting our small local businesses, and being a part of our community's efforts in building a sustainable future through recreational programming - IAG's dedication is truly commendable.

Their remarkable ability to foster purposeful partnerships empowers businesses and organizations to fulfill their corporate social and environmental responsibilities, making them a invaluable force for positive change in our community.

### **Jessica Ortiz**

Recreation Supervisor, City of Riverside







What sets Impact Alliances Group (IAG) apart is their innovative approach to creating meaningful partnerships between businesses and the community.

IAG's ability to connect businesses with opportunities for sponsorships, community programming participation, and volunteering through their partnership with FARSB (Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino) is truly commendable. Our partnership has not only benefited businesses by allowing them to contribute to a noble cause, but it has also strengthened the ties of the broader community that these businesses serve.

I wholeheartedly recommend Impact Alliances Group to anyone seeking to make a real with their business or organization. IAG's work is a testament to what can be achieved when compassion, innovation, and community collaboration come together for a greater purpose.

### **Angela Jugon**

Development Director, FARSB



Impact Alliances Group (IAG) has been instrumental in generating meaningful IMPACT in Rialto across various domains - from promoting health and wellness, to creating a greener more sustainable future for our community through recreational programming.

IAG's ability to foster purposeful partnerships that ignite unity, trust, and lasting impact makes IAG an invaluable asset to any business or organization committed to making a positive difference in their community.

Their dedication to creating a brighter future is truly commendable.

### **Jessica Perez**

Recreation Programmer, City of Rialto



# NZINGHA



## Nzingha Newton

Kids Gardening Center,  
*Founder*

Nzingha Newton grew up in Riverside California, where she learned the importance of farming, gardening, and self-sustainability. In 2017, she became the owner of Kids Gardening Center. Nzingha has worked with the Riverside community to open over 300 gardens that educate children and families. Nzingha found her passion for nourishing the soul and soil, while enriching children's creativity and imagination.

**CONNECT  
& FOLLOW  
NZINGHA:**





In 2021, we joined forces with the City of Riverside to advance our mission of fostering sustainable communities. Our collaboration involved serving as a Pioneer Sponsor for the Riverside Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center (BFYIC) aquaponics garden - the first of its kind in the entire Riverside area! Food security has been a challenge for the homeless and low-income families in Riverside. The aquaponics garden our team sponsored helps provide reliable, healthy, and sustainable food for the local community.

Nzingha is one of the **master gardeners** who utilizes the BFYIC aquaponics garden to teach youth how an aquaponics garden can offer so much more than traditional gardening. Her classes give local youth hands on **exposure** to how new technologies, like aquaponics, can end local and global hunger.

Nzingha hopes to inspire more communities and continue the mission of being a key contributor to ending global hunger. Our team is proud to feature Nzingha as one of our 2024 Women of IMPACT. Our friends at Impact Alliances Group connected with Nzingha to learn more about her current community efforts.

Read on to learn about her impact in the development of sustainable communities, youth, and education.



*Nzingha proudly showcasing her garden.*

**Seeds of the Future:**

# Nzingha Newton's Gardening Revolution

**Dedeaux Properties:** Nzingha – congrats on being selected as one of Dedeaux's featured Women of IMPACT this year!

**Nzingha Newton:** Thank you so much.

**Dedeaux Properties:** The construction of the Riverside BFYIC aquaponics garden is finally complete, and you've been one of the key players utilizing this community resource in your garden classes. Can you shine light on how the aquaponics garden has local youth so far?

**Nzingha Newton:** Our youth in Riverside have already started sharing their new gardening knowledge around our community, and we couldn't be more proud of them. We've utilized the BFYIC aquaponics garden to teach our youth the role gardens play in creating healthy mental, physical, and emotional well-being spaces.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What are some of the special memories with the Riverside BFYIC staff or your students when the aquaponics garden opened?

**Nzingha Newton:** I am a part of a very passionate group of homeschool parents and the day we opened and planted the garden together, everyone came out to support! It was a

tear-jerking experience for me to know that the bonds we started together through our children are unifying, long lasting and genuine.

It's why I'm here. I love being able to unify our community through gardening!

**Dedeaux Properties:** Can you share more about your passion for gardening, and why focusing your community efforts to educating youth on sustainable gardening and food to table best practices has been an important part of your journey?

**Nzingha Newton:** I want people to respect life, individualism, cultural differences and our bodies. I love being able to focus my efforts on our youth because they are our change makers and future leaders.



**Dedeaux Properties:** This month is women's history month – a time where we celebrate and honor the women in our lives. What is one piece of advice from your favorite female role model that everyone can take inspiration from?

**Nzingha Newton:** My role model was my Grandmother (Mama). She passed in 2022, but one of the words of wisdom that she engrained in my heart is this:

There's never a rain that don't stop; and when your head is in the lion's den, you have to wiggle out slowly.

What this advice means is when things get so bad you think you can't go on, pay particular attention because something will break. Once that big break happens, that's your opportunity to climb out, breath, and work towards a new solution.



**Dedeaux Properties:** What advice do you have for folks striving to make a meaningful impact in their local communities?

**Nzingha Newton:** Just get out there and do it! Don't wait for a group of people or a Saturday. Do the things that keep you awake at night about your community. Help the homeless man at your local convenience store even though everyone else keeps walking by. Plant that veggie garden in your elderly neighbor's yard. Bring dinner to a family that is so busy they never eat together. Help the strong person that is always helping others. And keep doing it. Every day. Make it a way of life.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What three words describe the little girl you once were; and what three words describe the woman you are today?

**Nzingha Newton:** As a little girl I would say I was unique, passionate, and curious.

For the woman I am today – I'd say I'm unique, passionate, and brave.

My 14 year old daughter Jazmine says the today I am a woman who is inspirational, hard working, and dedicated.

*Nzingha Newton is the Founder of Kids Gardening Center, and a master gardener who teaches youth at the Riverside Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center.*





*Nzingha and students sharing some of their garden harvests.*





*Nzingha Newton is the Founder of Kids Gardening Center, and a master gardener who teaches youth at the Riverside Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center.*



# CYNTHIA



## Cynthia Alvarado- Crawford

City of Rialto | *Parks,  
Recreation, & Community  
Services Department (PRCSD)*  
*Director of PRCSD,  
City of Rialto*

Meet the vivacious and unstoppable force of FUN and JOY, Cynthia Alvarado! Born in the vibrant City of Guadalajara, Mexico, Cynthia came to the states when she was five. Her infectious energy infiltrated the small town of Lompoc, California. Little did the world know this move would set the stage for an incredible journey filled with passion, dedication, and most importantly FUN!

**CONNECT  
& FOLLOW  
CYNTHIA:**



Cynthia began competitive swimming with the Lompoc Marlins when she was in 4th grade. To everyone's amazement, her talent propelled her to the Junior Olympics and other prestigious age-group competitions by the age of 13. As a high school sophomore, she not only broke a 20-year-old school swimming record, but **she shattered expectations, leaving a legacy that still stands tall today.**

Post-high school, Cynthia navigated her way through Cuesta Community College, wrapping up her swimming career to focus on a new challenge – selecting a career that matched her unwavering desire to help people. Physical therapy was the goal, but fate had other plans. Recreation therapy found her by accident, and turned out to be a field that captured Cynthia's heart with its unique approach to building personal treatment plans based on people's interests. It wasn't just therapy; it was therapy with a side of FUN!

Cynthia's zest for life extends beyond the professional realm. She has a love for cupcakes (vanilla with buttercream frosting, of course), revels in the excitement of popping confetti sticks, and believes the world should be as vibrant as a crayon box - shunning pastels for bold, bright colors.

With an 18-year career in the field of recreation, Cynthia has become a true maestro in orchestrating joy. Starting as a recreation therapist, she ascended through the ranks to fulfill her dream of becoming a Director.

**A public servant at heart, Cynthia passionately advocates for her community, bringing innovative ideas and boundless energy to every endeavor.**

In San Bernardino, Cynthia pioneered a state-of-the-art sensory room for children with disabilities and orchestrated unforgettable City events, leaving an indelible mark on the community. Palm Springs witnessed her transformative leadership, uniting a team to run more efficiently while injecting creativity into the department's veins.

Rialto, however, has truly felt the force of Cynthia's dynamic spirit. She implemented a mentorship program, revamped the department's image with a burst of color, and challenged her team to think outside the box. The result? A floating pumpkin patch, Viva La Fiesta Hispanic Heritage community event, and a range of intergenerational programs that bridge gaps and build connections.

Consistency is Cynthia's forte - creating cohesive environments wherever she goes. Today, **as the Director of Parks and Recreation in Rialto, Cynthia's focus is clear: to bring dynamic opportunities to the community, regardless of socio-economic status.** Success, in her eyes, is measured by the smiles and laughter echoing through the programs and events she supports her team to orchestrate.

## Joyful Journeys:

# Cynthia Alvarado-Crawford's Recreational Innovations

**Dedeaux Properties:** Warm congrats on being selected as one of Dedeaux's featured Women of IMPACT this year – you are the first one in the Rialto region to be nominated for this!

**Cynthia Crawford:** Wow! I am beyond excited and deeply honored to being selected as one of Dedeaux's featured Women of IMPACT this year! To top it off, being the first nominee from the Rialto region makes this recognition even more special.

Representing the beautiful and amazing City of Rialto is a privilege I cherish. It's a community filled with incredible individuals, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase the impact that the women of Rialto can make.

I am grateful for this honor and look forward to contributing to the positive change and inspiration that this recognition brings.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What does being a woman of IMPACT mean to you, and how are these values carried out in the work you do today?

**Cynthia Crawford:** Being a woman of IMPACT is all about cultivating a space where everyone feels not just welcomed,

but empowered to treasure life and its abundant opportunities. It's about embracing the lessons life throws our way with an open heart and, in turn, becoming a source of positivity and growth for both ourselves, and those around us.

In my work, I strive to embody these values by fostering an environment that promotes inclusivity, safety, and personal development. It's not just about individual success, but creating a ripple effect of positive change that touches the lives of everyone involved.

Every day, I'm energized by the prospect of making a difference, no matter how small, and contributing to a community that thrives on shared experiences and mutual support.



*Through Cynthia's role at PRCS, she nourishes purposeful partnerships that ignite purpose-driven impact in her community. In this picture, Cynthia celebrates Medline's donation to the PRCS!*

**Dedeaux Properties:** Our team has done various collaborations with the City of Rialto's Parks, Recreation, and Community Services team for their community IMPACT. Together, we've done several Park Clean-up Days, Easter Eggstravaganza, and Halloween Hijinks.

It's truly been a lot of fun for both Dedeaux and IAG to partner with Rialto in making meaningful IMPACT in both sustainability and health and wellness through recreational programming.

What are some of the local programs and initiatives you've spearheaded that you're particularly proud of?

**Cynthia Crawford:** Oh, let me tell you, the partnership with Dedeaux is like a burst of confetti in the air – colorful, exciting, and full of community magic!

Our Parks and Recreation team is on fire, delivering service levels that shout, "Rialto, get ready for the ultimate destination experience!" I'm beaming with pride, especially for some game-changing programs we've rolled out. First up, the scholarship program – because every kid, regardless of income, deserves a shot at our awesome programs. It's like our way of saying, "Come join the fun! The more, the merrier!"

Second, the Rec n' Roll Mobile Rec Program – our community center on wheels! Imagine the ice cream truck, but for recreation. We're bringing the party straight to affordable housing areas, making sure every family gets a taste of free fun. Third, the amping up of our youth sports opportunities – we're taking some of our

basketball teams to a tournament to show off not just Rialto's skills, but also to build those powerhouse partnerships with our neighboring Cities. Team Rialto is ready to dribble, shoot, and slam-dunk its way to victory!

Now, my absolute favorite has to be the floating pumpkin patch. Picture this: a pool filled with pumpkins, kids splashing around, and families finding their perfect pumpkin while swimming – it's like Halloween met a water park, and the result is pure joy!

**Dedeaux Properties:** What led you to serving as Rialto's Director of PRCS – how has your journey been like?

**Cynthia Crawford:** My love for fun, play, and quality living is what makes me bounce out of bed every morning, and I channel all that energy into the world of parks and recreation

Programs, parks, open spaces – they're not just places; they're canvases of infinite opportunities for play, laughter, and good times. It's not just about destressing. It's about growing, learning, and discovering new dimensions of joy in every corner!

**The fire to serve others? It's fueled by the belief that life is meant to be an adventure.** At the end of the day, I want to be a helping hand, a source of support, and a sprinkle of happiness. But here's the twist – I want it to be FUN! Who said helping others can't be a blast?



So, while we're out here figuring out what "help" looks like, why not toss in some giggles, high-fives, and a splash of spontaneous joy?

## **Igniting unity in the community is so much more than just a catchphrase.**

It's about weaving a tapestry of shared moments, creating memories that make you smile even on a Monday morning.

In my world, commUNITY is like a continuous playdate where everyone's invited, and the only rule is to have a good time. Because let's face it, life is too short for anything less than a FUNtastic adventure!

**Dedeaux Properties:** This month is women's history month – a time where we celebrate and honor the women in our lives. Who is the woman that has served as a role model for you, and what traits does she embody that everyone can take inspiration from?

**Cynthia Crawford:** For me, one standout role model is none other than Frances Hernandez, a powerhouse in the Parks and Recreation industry.

Frances, with her decades of dedication to the field, left an indelible mark on my journey. As the first Hispanic woman I encountered in an executive position, she became a beacon of inspiration - showing me that someone who looked like me could reach the heights I aspired to.



*Cynthia, the selfie queen, strikes again! As the Director of PRCSD, she is always capturing special behind the scenes moments with her team and community members. This was a memory she snapped at the Rialto International Food Festival with the Eisenhower Polynesian Dancers after their haka performance.*





*Cynthia never misses a chance to foster camaraderie through her work with PRCS. In this picture, she sparks some fun with Rialto's Facility & Maintenance Director, Tim!*



*At the Rialto Eggstravaganza, Cynthia set the stage for an extraordinary community giveaway! Ample gift baskets were generously provided by local sponsors for the community to enjoy.*

What set Frances apart was not just her professional achievements, but the invaluable lessons she taught me. She instilled in me the belief that **skills can be taught, but a positive attitude and a kind smile are priceless.**

She was my guide to understanding the essence of customer service – how it should be delivered with heart and authenticity.

Frances helped me find my true path, teaching me to lead with **patience, kindness, and love.** She's a reminder that empowerment comes not just from climbing the ladder, but lifting others up along the way.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What advice do you have for folks striving to make a meaningful impact in their local communities?

**Cynthia Crawford:** If you want change, be the change! It's about strutting the walk. Roll up your sleeves, get in there, and let your actions be the signal of transformation.

And oh, let's talk about finding the good in everything. It's like having a secret sauce for life. Positivity is contagious, and we're the spreaders of that infectious joy.

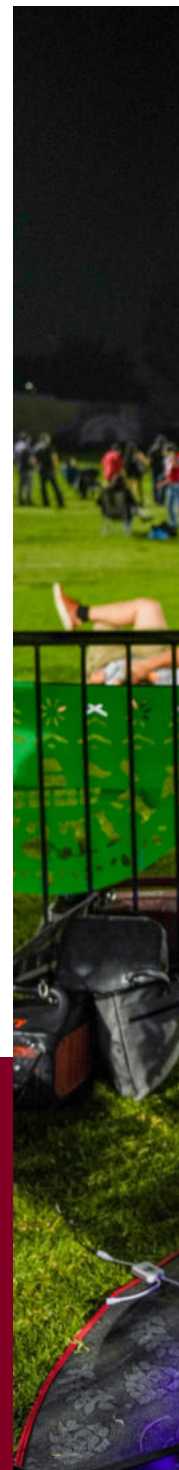
Share it, live it, and watch the world around you light up with good vibes! Everyone has a unique superpower, something they're fantastic at. In this journey called life, it's all about sharing those talents, being a guiding light for others, and helping them discover their own magic. Teaching and growing together is the real game-changer!

**Dedeaux Properties:** What three words describe the little girl you once were; and what three words describe the woman you are today?

**Cynthia Crawford:** As a little girl, I would describe myself as: eager, ambitious, and passionate. I was always excited to explore new things, had big dreams, and approached everything with a fiery passion.

Fast forward to today, and the three words that define the woman I've become are: ambitious, affirming, and resourceful. I've carried that drive from my childhood into adulthood, aiming high and staying committed to my goals. Along the way, I've developed an affirming mindset, always believing in my abilities and encouraging others. Resourcefulness has become a key strength, finding creative solutions and making the most out of every opportunity.

It's incredible to see the evolution from that eager little girl to the ambitious and resourceful woman I am today. The journey has been a mix of determination, positivity, and a continuous quest for growth.





*Cynthia not only leads the Rialto PRCS team, but also gracefully balances her role with motherhood. She loves sharing how she creates unity in the community with her family by bringing them to Rialto's recreational events and programming. This family picture was captured at the Rialto Viva La Fiesta event at Jerry Eaves Park.*



# STEPHANIE



## Stephanie Vargas

2023 Dedeaux Youth  
IMPACT Scholar,  
*Freshman at University  
of Redlands*

Stephanie Vargas is one of our Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholars (DYIS), and we are so proud to feature her as the youngest 2024 Women of IMPACT. Last summer, Stephanie graduated from Indian Springs High School. Through the DYIS scholarship, our team helped contribute to the aspirations of this trailblazer who's focused on making the mental health space more accessible in the Inland Empire. Today, she is a freshman at University of Redlands majoring in Psychology and Business Administration.

**CONNECT  
& FOLLOW  
STEPHANIE:**





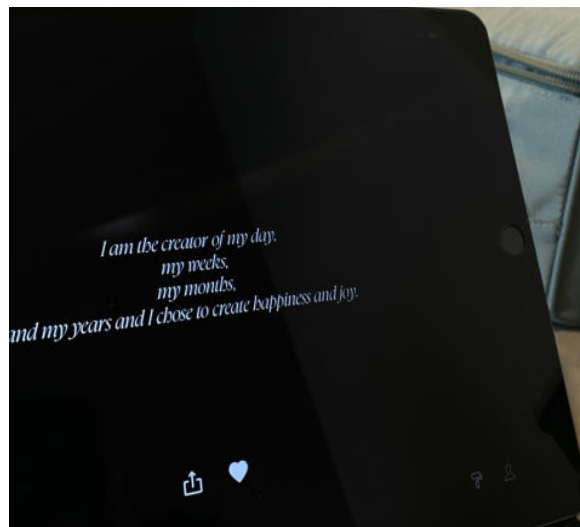
A quality that all Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholars have is that they are unafraid to dream big – and Stephanie exemplifies this courageously. When our partner Impact Alliances Group (IAG) connected with her last year, Stephanie shared about her personal disability, and how her disability served as a source of inspiration to launch towards her dreams of becoming a counseling psychologist.

In her own words, Stephanie shared more on the level of impact she hopes to make with her journey as she pursues higher education:

*"For the longest time, I grew up feeling discouraged and at a disadvantage because I grew up as a person with a disability. **Becoming the representation I wanted growing up can help inspire the younger generation that they too can achieve their bigger dreams.** This means my community will feel more seen and more understood by their stories, which is what a counseling psychologist can provide.*

I've had Latina role models and women role models, but I haven't had any disabled role models. I want little girls to see on TV and on social media other disabled role models and think, 'Oh, she has braces like me!' or 'Oh, she's in a wheelchair just like me. And if she can do it, I can do it too!'

Dive into the journey of Stephanie Vargas, the youngest among our 2024 Women of IMPACT, who is dedicated to improving mental health accessibility in the Inland Empire and empowering individuals with disabilities in her community.



Stephanie's favorite afternoon affirmations before doing homework.

**Voices of Tomorrow:**

# Stephanie Vargas' Path to Mental Health Advocacy

**Dedeaux Properties:** Stephanie – congrats on being selected as one of Dedeaux's featured Women of IMPACT this year!

**Stephanie Vargas:** Thanks so much for choosing me!

**Dedeaux Properties:** You are also one of the youngest featured!

**Stephanie Vargas:** Really? Oh wow – this feels so cool. This is a proud moment for me because it shows that I'm making a real IMPACT at such a young age.

**Dedeaux Properties:** Last time we connected, you shared your excitement on wrapping up your senior year at Indian Springs High School and that you'd be attending University of Redlands. How has your first year in college been like?

**Stephanie Vargas:** The first word that comes to mind is that it's been a very bumpy road.

The bumpiness in my college journey so far is rooted in the adjusting period of transitioning from high school to college as a first generation young Latina.

I went from studying for a few hours to studying for a whole weekend.

I've had to adjust my schedule just to fit family time, me time, and studying time.

Also, I had imposter syndrome the first two months of college because I didn't really see a lot of people of color or any students with disabilities. It made me feel a bit out of place and like I didn't really belong in college.

It's been a lot – but I think I'm adjusting well now that it's my second semester.

**Dedeaux Properties:** How did you increase your confidence to get over the imposter syndrome?

**Stephanie Vargas:** I just reminded myself of why I'm going to college in the first place, and it's to be the representation I've always wanted when I was younger. I'm doing this to be a role model to young Latinas, young women of color, and women with disabilities – because these communities deserve to take up space in higher academia as well.

**Dedeaux Properties:** Yes! That is exactly what you told us in your first IMPACT feature. You shared with IAG in your first IMPACT interview that growing up you have had Latina role models, but not a role model who is a disabled minority that is also passionate about making an IMPACT in the mental health space – and you want to be that representation.

It's awesome to see that this aspiration is still very much in line with your mission, vision, and values that you hold today at Redlands.

**Stephanie Vargas:** Thank you. That is absolutely still the same case.

**Dedeaux Properties:** How has attending college fueled your passion and progress in making mental health more accessible in the Inland Empire?

**Stephanie Vargas:** Attending college has helped me towards my larger IMPACT goals because now I see a new perspective as to where mental health should also be seen. I want to use my education to help make mental health more accessible to micro-communities and empower these communities to stepping into their full sense of belonging.

**Dedeaux Properties:** As an alum of the Dedeaux Youth IMPACT Scholarship, a common trait that all scholars have is that they are unafraid to take their creativity, curiosity, integrity, and higher education to make a difference in this world. Have your bigger dreams evolved since High School – if so, how?

**Stephanie Vargas:** My dreams are still the same. I'm still focused on working my way towards becoming a counseling psychologist and making mental health in the Inland Empire accessible. It's still pretty early in my college career, so I think it ok!

**Dedeaux Properties:** Absolutely!

**Dedeaux Properties:** This month is women's history month – a time where we celebrate and honor the women in our lives. Who is the woman that has served as a role model for you, and what traits does she embody that everyone can take inspiration from?

**Stephanie Vargas:** I have multiple women in my life that embody the traits I hope everyone can look up to.

My mom because she's strong in remaining consistently **resilient**.

My sister because she's **confident**.

My grandmother because she's amazing at creating **unity and togetherness** within our family.

My teachers because they keep me **ambitious** by opening my eyes to new opportunities; and Catherine Aguilar with Impact Alliances Group. She's been a role model who's opened my mind to the possibility of architecting a unique career path. I love looking up to her and seeing a younger minority woman truly thrive at owning her own business, doing things differently, and making a meaningful impact.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What advice do you have for folks striving to make a meaningful impact in their local communities?

**Stephanie Vargas:** My advice would be to remain authentic to yourself. When we're brave enough to be ourselves and honor our own authenticity, it leads us to incredible opportunities.

**Dedeaux Properties:** What three words describe the little girl you once were; and what three words describe the woman you are today?

**Stephanie Vargas:** The little girl I once was... I was ambitious, a knowledge-seeker, and a bit shy.

Today I am a woman who is focused, ambitious, and (still) a knowledge-seeker.



*Enjoying a sunny day on the Redlands University campus.*







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