

Attorney Richard Rodriguez Recognized By The CEMDPCD Foundation For His Work as a Disability Rights Advocate

On March 12, 2023 Attorney Richard Rodriguez was recognized by the CEMDPCD Foundation (Cambiando el Mundo de Personas con Discapacidad/ Changing the World of People with Disabilities) for his work as a disability rights advocate. Attorney Rodriguez was unexpectedly surprised with the award, after giving a presentation to a group of parents caring for children with special needs. His presentation educated them about his role as the ADA (American Disabilities Act) Coordinator for the City of Lawrence.

As a disabled person himself, Attorney Rodriguez was a product of Special Education and overcame many obstacles to get his college education. Speaking as a disability rights advocate, he said, "I want to serve as a voice and role model to people dealing with disabilities." He added, "Advocacy for people with disabilities is a cause that is near and dear to my heart."

Attorney Rodriguez was recently named by Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena as the ADA Coordinator for the City of Lawrence. He is responsible for ensuring the City's compliance with the Americans with Disability Act. As the past Chairman to the Lawrence Commission on Disability, he was instrumental in passing City ordinances that benefited the disabled, such as increasing the fine for illegal parking in a handicapped space from \$100 to \$300.

In 2016, Gov. Charlie Baker named Attorney Rodriguez to the Governor's Advisory Board of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, a position he continues to serve in. He is also a member of the Haverhill based Asperger Works advisory board.

CEMDPCD Director Raquel Quezada said "The Foundation always honors those who have worked to make a better world for those with disabilities. Today we had the honor of recognizing the lawyer and ADA Coordinator for the City of Lawrence



Attorney Richard Rodriguez and CEMDPCD Director Raquel Quezada

Richard Rodriguez."

In expressing his appreciation, Attorney Rodriguez commented, "Thank you CEMDPCD Foundation and Director Raquel Quezada, for your recognition of my work as a Disability Rights Advocate. I look forward to continuing working with your organization to make a better world for those with disabilities."

"As we celebrate the 33rd anniversary of the ADA, "I want to personally thank Mayor Brian DePena for his outstanding leadership and commitment to serving individuals with disabilities and their families. With the Mayor's support, Lawrence has become a better place for people with disabilities to live, work and receive appropriate services."

The CEMDPCD Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization whose focus is to educate parents of special needs children with what services and programs are available for them to become more inclusive in society. You can reach ADA Coordinator Rodriguez at Richard.Rodriguez@CityofLawrence.com. His office is located in the Lawrence City Hall, Room 104, 200 Common Street.