

Drive to Succeed

My father, a retired Air Force Colonel, promised me a car if I maintained a 4.0 grade point average. I graduated in the top of my class, expecting a new Mustang or Camaro. But instead he gave me a used sedan with “U.S. Government” painted on the doors, a plastic interior, and no radio. He said it had a “4-60 air conditioner,” because, to cool off, you could roll down all four windows and go 60 mph. Then he hugged me and said, “I just gave you a push to help get you where you want to go.”



Linda Jimenez

Linda Jimenez is accustomed to making the most of whatever opportunities life offers en route to her goals and dreams. In early childhood, she was diagnosed with degenerative osteoarthritis and to had wear a leg brace, use crutches, or be confined to a wheelchair.

“I could not engage with classmates on the playground, nor could I attend class outings, because, at that time, the buses were not handicap accessible,” she recalls. “But I didn’t want to just sit and cry about my predicament, so the alternative for me was to begin engaging in continuous learning.”

While other children enjoyed playing during recess, for instance, Jimenez became a voracious reader. She learned the art of public speaking and won numerous awards, including the state high school debate tournament.

Jimenez went on to complete her undergraduate studies in just three years and finished law school by commuting three hours each day, while pregnant and holding down a job. She passed the bar exam on her first

attempt—while monitoring her labor contractions. Seven hours later, she gave birth.

Jimenez credits her parents with her inspiration and miraculous drive. “I personally witnessed their leadership in overcoming bias, prejudice, and discrimination as members of a minority class. My father was the first Hispanic in his neighborhood to graduate from high school, the first Hispanic from Texas to earn his pilot wings from the United States Air Force, and the first Hispanic to graduate from Texas A&M University with a degree in electrical engineering.

“My mother was orphaned at an early age and never went beyond eighth grade, but she was committed to a life of service and purpose while helping raise three siblings and several cousins taken in by her aunt and uncle. My parents continue to encourage me to dream bigger dreams while never forgetting my roots or those who helped me achieve success.”

Big dreams invite bigger responsibilities. As the company’s new Chief Diversity Officer and Staff Vice President for Workforce

“I want to be a team player who helps that ordinary team deliver extraordinary results.”

Inclusion and Mobilization, Jimenez leads a fully integrated function around the development and execution of corporate-wide strategies to leverage the impact of workforce, workplace, and marketplace diversity for WellPoint.

In nominating Jimenez for the Eagle Award, Wellpoint’s immediate past Vice President of Workplace Culture and Chief Diversity Officer, David Casey, praised her. “I frequently reach out to her for her perspective,” said Casey. “Linda truly is the embodiment of the character of an Eagle—dignity, integrity, honor, and a higher standard of leadership.”

In 2007, Jimenez established the Healthy Helpings Food Drive in recognition of National Hunger Awareness Day. The initiative has benefited more than 200 regional food banks by collecting and donating tens of thousands of pounds of food. “I want to be a team player,” explains Jimenez, “who helps that ordinary team deliver extraordinary results.” To generate those kinds of results, she says that people need to believe in their ability to succeed and avoid complacency.

“When we stop thinking, we stop questioning and dreaming,” she adds, which is why she is so passionate about continuous learning, reflection, and inquiry. “Take your work and life experience and make them your learning lab,” Jimenez recommends.

CareerFOCUS Magazine[™] and the National Eagle Leadership Institute[®] salute 2009 Eagle Award winner Linda Jimenez.

Nominating Company
WellPoint, Inc.

Current Position
Chief Diversity Officer, Staff Vice President
for Workforce Inclusion & Mobilization

Professional Milestones

- Management of the Diversity and Workplace Culture Ambassador Program
- Management of WellPoint Associate Resource Groups
- Established the Healthy Helpings Food Drive

Community Leadership

- Active member, Blue Cross Blue Shield Diversity Alliance
- Founding Board member, National Diversity Council
- Active member, Society for Human Resource Management

Leadership Principle
Believe in your ability to succeed.

Education/Training

- Bachelor of Arts, University of Texas at Austin
- Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Texas at Austin School of Law

Birthplace
San Antonio, Texas

Current Home
Avon, Indiana

The Leadership Promise at WellPoint

WellPoint leaders make a difference in our organization by living our values, inspiring our associates, and delivering results that simplify the connection between healthcare and value.

High performers at WellPoint are recognized and rewarded with challenging assignments and opportunities for personal and professional development.

Internally, leaders are developed through our Executive Excellence program and Leadership Excellence program. Programs like our Health Insurance Professionals Program and internal mentoring programs also serve as career-accelerator opportunities for our future leadership. Externally we continue to identify new, high-potential diverse talent for our company through association partnerships with groups like NBMBAA, ROMBA, AAMBA, NSHMBA, and The Consortium.

At WellPoint, we know that the strength of our leadership will be the driving force in achieving our mission of improving the lives of the people we serve and the health of our communities.