



## Mentor Appreciation, Oh How Awesome You Are!

In Seussical fashion, Seedling recently honored our amazing volunteer mentors at the **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Mentor Appreciation** luncheon on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Master of ceremony Rob Faubion, an Austin non-profit professional, award-winning journalist and entertainer, delighted the crowd with an “Oh The Places You’ll Go”- inspired tribute to our mentors, highlighting the triumphs and trials mentors may experience each year of their mentoring journey. It was a wonderful feeling for Seedling to thank over 300 dedicated, caring volunteers in person.

*“Oh the places you’ve been as you mentored these years  
The triumphs, the challenges, the laughter, the tears.  
So thanks for the places you’ve been, what you’ve done.  
We are grateful for all of you, each and every one.”*

Our special guest speaker for this event was one of the young people mentored since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade by her Seedling volunteer. Graduating senior Edith Gonzalez shared her mentoring story of 10 years with her Seedling mentor, Martha. “I moved around a lot, changing schools, and she was always there for me.” Edith articulated how her mentoring relationship with Martha evolved over the years, describing moments of growing pains, testing boundaries and building trust. In the end she expressed her sincerest thanks to her mentor and Seedling. Having a positive role model encouraged her to keep striving to succeed in school and life.

This year, our Angels and Advocates Award, which is presented to an individual or entity whose advocacy, support, or public action has made a significant difference in the lives of children and families of the incarcerated, was presented to another young lady who knows firsthand the benefit of having a Seedling mentor when she was in school. Zaira Ruth Garcia is a graduate of the University of Texas, a regular speaker on behalf of Seedling Foundation, a contributor on a national level to developing tools for youth and for service providers about children who have experienced parental incarceration, and an advocate for the rights of immigrant children and their families. All this and only 24 years old. One can only imagine what Zaira is yet to accomplish.

The Seedling staff are already imagining what we can accomplish together next year!  
We look forward to seeing you in the fall.