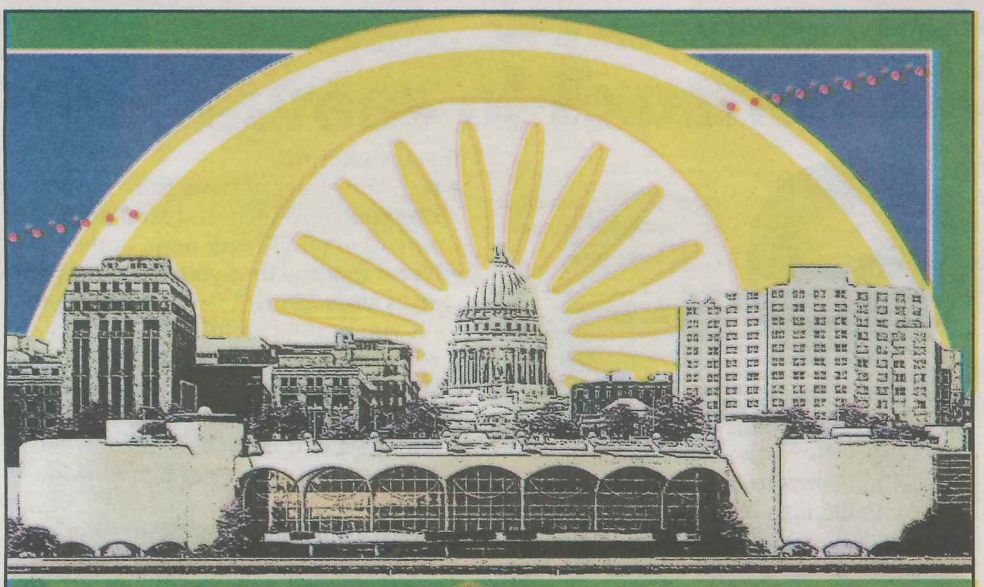

URBAN TREASURES

Celebrating

the selfless people & organizations
who add to the quality of our lives.

Silvia Gomez de Soriano



Silvia Gomez de Soriano was raised in an environment of community service.

"My home when I was young was like the Grand Central Station of Madison," Silvia said. "Everyone came to live at my mom's house for some reason or another. I They helped so many people. So I feel like that just naturally came to me."

In her paid position, Silvia is a bilingual resource specialist at East High School. She does everything possible to make the students feel a part of the school and can equitably access what the school — and community — has to offer.

"I tend to say that they are my children too," Silvia said referring to her students. "I call them, 'Hi Hijo, hi Hija.' My kids see that too. It's really important that our students are seen, that they have people here who look like them, whom they can express themselves whether it is in Spanish, English, Spanglish or however they feel comfortable talking. I want them to know that I am here to support them. And also that they are understood culturally. There are some things that happen that other people might not understand, but I'm like, 'Wait.' I feel that I am that cultural broker where if something is going on, I have to explain to a teacher or a social worker, 'In our culture, this is what happens and this is why this is done. It's different than the American culture.' Being there for our families is super important."

Silvia is also the liaison to Raza United, a student group that dies projects throughout the school year including a Hispanic Heritage Month observance, a fashion show performed before the student body where Raza United members dress up in Quinceañera clothing, volunteer at the Latino Professionals Association banquet so that the students can meet mentors and a Día de los Muertos fundraiser conducted with Ballet Folklorico de Maria Diaz. They also work with younger students

"We go to elementary schools and do reading," Silvia said. "We have them coming up at Emerson and Hawthorne. It's called Si Se Puede Reading. It's kind of like Read Your Heart Out. We read in Spanish and English. We take students to those schools and they read to them in the morning. It is really fun."

In the summer, Silvia facilitates XICANX Institute for Education Self-Determination, a two week-summer program conducted in the evening where students meet Latine professionals and community activists and learn about their culture.

Silvia Gomez de Soriano is our Urban Treasure.

