

## **Michelle Fernandez Named 2026 Charles E. Piper Award Recipient for Outstanding Berwynner**

Berwyn, Illinois — The Berwyn Development Corporation (BDC) is proud to announce Michelle Fernandez, owner of Media Noche Café, as the 2026 recipient of the Charles E. Piper Award for Outstanding Berwynner. The award honors individuals whose business leadership and community contributions have made a meaningful and lasting impact on the economic vitality and spirit of Berwyn.

Born and raised in Chicago, Michelle Fernandez is a Mexican American Latina whose entrepreneurial journey is deeply rooted in family, culture, and community. Encouraged to open Media Noche Café in 2020, Michelle learned the art of Cuban seasoning and cuisine from her husband's grandfather, a Havana native who later opened his own restaurant in Elmwood Park, where Michelle once worked as a waitress.

Today, that multigenerational story lives on at Media Noche Café, where Michelle and her family proudly share the bold, diverse flavors of Cuba with Berwyn residents and visitors alike.

"Michelle embodies the very best of Berwyn's business community - passionate, generous, and deeply invested in the city she serves," said Fabiola Avitia, Chair of the Charles E. Piper Award Committee. "Through Media Noche Café, she has created more than a successful small business; she has built a welcoming space that reflects Berwyn's rich cultural fabric and a genuine commitment to giving back."

The Charles E. Piper Award is presented annually in recognition of outstanding business achievements and meaningful contributions to Berwyn's economic and community vitality. Named for Charles E. Piper, an attorney and one of Berwyn's first residents and businesspersons, the award celebrates Berwyn's "Businessperson of the Year" and their exceptional contribution of time, talent, and treasure to the betterment of the city.

Michelle Fernandez is known throughout the community for her generosity and active involvement. She regularly donates food for local events, participates in Berwyn Development Corporation signature events such as Oktoberfest and the Route 66 Car Show, and is an engaged member of the BDC's Women in Business group. Whether supporting fellow entrepreneurs or helping ensure the success of community events, Michelle consistently shows up for Berwyn.

"Berwyn has supported my family and my business from the very beginning," said Michelle Fernandez. "Receiving the Charles E. Piper Award is incredibly meaningful. I'm proud to be part of a community that celebrates small businesses, culture, and the power of showing up for one another."

Award recipients are nominated by fellow Chamber members and vetted through an Award Committee comprised of members of the Berwyn Development Corporation Board of Directors. Final selection is made through a vote of Chamber members, the majority of whom are local business owners and community organizations.

The Berwyn Development Corporation is a public-private partnership with the City of Berwyn that provides Chamber services and economic development support to local businesses. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the BDC promotes Berwyn as a dynamic destination and advances initiatives that strengthen the local business climate, attract investment, and enhance overall community vitality.

For more information about the Berwyn Development Corporation or the Charles E. Piper Award, please contact Macey Morales, BDC Marketing Manager at [maceym@berwyn.net](mailto:maceym@berwyn.net) or 708-749-6583.