

# DEKALB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

130 West Lincoln Highway, Ste. 200, DeKalb, IL



## 2023 ATHENA Award Finalist Michelle Bringas



Michelle Bringas celebrates 30 years at Northern Illinois University and was instrumental in establishing the first stand-alone Asian American Resource Center in the northern Illinois region. As the inaugural director for the Asian American Resource Center since 2004, Michelle provides leadership and oversight for the facility, its functions, programs, and services. She serves as a coach and supervisor to the staff and provides professional development opportunities to foster their success at NIU and beyond. Michelle develops collaborative efforts for diverse educational programming and leads Cultural Immersion trips domestically and abroad.

When Michelle started at NIU in 1992, she served as program coordinator for the Latino Resource Center, and later worked with Student Involvement Leadership Development (formerly Programming and Activities). As a result of her service to NIU, Michelle has the opportunity to mentor hundreds of students and NIU alumni.

Prior to NIU, Michelle served as Head Start Teacher with DeKalb 4-C's Community Coordinated Care and then as Youth Guidance Director at a Teen Drop-In Center in Rolling Meadows, where she coordinated a team of volunteers to provide alternative opportunities and life skills for young people involved in gang-related activities.

As a lifelong learner, Michelle has engaged in local, national, and international educational opportunities. Michelle is a three-time graduate of NIU receiving her Bachelor's degree in Family Consumer Nutrition Sciences, with a specialization in Family Social Services; Master's degree in Adult & Higher Education, and completed her doctoral program in Higher Education and Student Affairs in May 2023.

Michelle believes in giving it back and paying it forward. She served on the Board of Directors of DeKalb 4-C's Community Coordinated Care, Oak Crest Retirement Center, and Vice-President of DeKalb Women's Club. Michelle has served as a volunteer with NIU Cares Day, Make a Difference Day, Huskie Pantry, food/toiletry drives, clothing drives, local and international fundraisers. Recently, Michelle completed her first 100-Mile Century Ride with Water Wins and raised \$1000 to build fresh water wells in Nigeria. Michelle enjoys finding beauty in everyday encounters and captures this beauty through nature photography, bicycling, and hiking.

*ATHENA Award Presented By*

