

# Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield

## Audrey Chavez



**Audrey Chavez** has a heart for people. She demonstrates her heart in many practical ways, from purposeful action like feeding the homeless to being an active community member and advocate for the needs, rights, and welfare of others. As a woman of faith, Audrey draws inspiration from Mother Teresa who said, “If you judge people,

you have no time to love them.” Audrey faithfully focuses on the needs of the community and exhibits her dedication and compassion through charitable actions.

One example of how Audrey works out her faith is through the Bakersfield Burrito Project. On Sundays at noon you may find Audrey, along with her husband Martin Chavez and other volunteers, handing out burritos to people—usually homeless—at Weill Park in Bakersfield. Audrey and Martin own and operate Martin’s Meats and Deli Market. They use their business as a resource for the project. Audrey and Martin provide food for many community enriching events. They are truly local symbols of Bakersfield hospitality.

Audrey also is the Executive Director and Founder of Bakersfield’s AIDS Project (BAP). This all-volunteer nonprofit is dedicated to providing compassionate and quality housing and services to those stricken with AIDS, the only such hospice home in Kern County. Audrey saw a need in the community and thought “someone should do something about that” and realized she was ‘someone’ and did it. She is an inspiration. Others feel that somehow she has more hours in her day. “Kern County is lucky to have her.” BAP works in collaboration with other local service

providers, promoting HIV/AIDS awareness throughout Kern County. Audrey established BAP in 1993 in honor and memory of her brother, Ricky R. Montoya.

For still more examples of faith in action, Audrey has served as a board member on the Kern County AIDS Consortium, Kern County HIV/AIDS Advisory Board, Catholic Charities, Catholic Charities Corporate Board, Golden Empire Affordable Housing Inc., and for many years served at St. Joseph’s Parish as Director of Jr. High First Holy Communion and Director of St. Joseph’s HIV/AIDS Ministries. Audrey works to encourage people to draw on humanity as a common bond and to hold all life as sacred.

Audrey has been a vocal advocate for anti-bullying efforts. She is passionate about a safe environment for all students. She is dedicated, compassionate and community-minded. Audrey is truly a pleasure to be around. Her deep self sacrificial caring for people with AIDS comes through in everything she does.

Audrey is a graduate of Shafter High School and married the love of her life, Martin Chavez, in 1985. They have three wonderful children: Martin 26, Roobie 23, and Ericca 20.

