

Claudia Ratzlaff, MSW, LSW N.J., is the Chief Executive Officer of **AVANZAR** (formerly *The Women's Center*). She began her career as a helping professional as the agency's first outreach services counselor for victims of domestic violence and has served as Supervisor of the Domestic Violence Program, Program Director, Associate Director and for the past 17 years as Executive Director/CEO. Her innovative, dynamic leadership has been instrumental in the evolution of the agency from a grassroots program to a main-stream, highly visible social service organization providing services to the state of New Jersey, Southern New Jersey region and Atlantic County communities.

Claudia is a dedicated professional who believes in empowering individuals and their families to improve their quality of life through offering unconditional positive regard for each individual seeking service. While maintaining the agency's historical commitment to trauma informed, client centered services that focus on the knowledge that every individual possesses the inner ability to achieve positive change, Claudia guided the agency through a re-brand in 2018, changing the name to **AVANZAR** to better reflect the diversity of the population served as well as its wide range of programs and services.

Taking action on the agency's desire to integrate individuals of all races, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic, religions, sexual orientation and physical and intellectual ability into our organization, challenge societies' established use of degradation, stereotypic and hurtful language and behavior with the same commitment they seek to end the use of violence; and to challenge our community to empower our diverse populations to achieve equitable inclusion, Claudia and her team recently launched a Dismantling Racism initiative. The values and intentions of this initiative have been infused into all aspects of the agency's work and plans are underway to grow this work through partnerships with other non-profit and corporate organizations.

A recognized industry leader, Claudia received United Way of Atlantic County's, Henry J. Remeis Partner Agency Executive Director of the Year Award and was inducted into the Atlantic County Women's Hall of Fame for her work in Social Services. She is a graduate of Stockton University, holds a Master in Social Work from Rutgers, the State University and has recently completed Georgetown University's Non Profit Management Executive Certification program. She has served as President of the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence; and holds membership on the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence, Atlantic County Human Services Advisory Council, Youth Services Commission, Atlantic County Homeless Consortium Executive Committee and United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey Public Policy Committee.