

**Garden Pathways, Inc.**

*2007 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"*

**Rebecca Rivera, M.D.**



**Dr. Rebecca Rivera** resolutely seeks out opportunity in the middle of difficulty. Rather than her choosing to accept difficult conditions as they exist, Rebecca chooses to accept responsibility for changing them. Her determination and heart for the underserved is changing the plight of low-income Latinas and immigrants throughout Kern County.

Since 1996, Rebecca has been providing compassionate and culturally-competent health care through her practice in obstetrics and gynecology. Known for treating her patients with respect and dignity, Rebecca is committed to mitigating challenges that exacerbate health issues for Latinas, including the reticence to speak about certain topics and potential cultural misunderstanding. By her holding free cancer screenings in underserved areas, Rebecca seeks to reverse the trend in Kern County where there is an abnormally elevated incidence of cervical cancer among Latinas. Rebecca loves to bring life into this world. She has brought great joy to families — celebrating with them the delivery of over 5,000 babies. Co-director of the Bakersfield Center for Women's Health and a member the OB/GYN supervisory committee of Bakersfield Memorial Hospital, Rebecca provides caring and personalized "old-fashioned medicine" for the communities of Bakersfield and Lamont.

Rebecca's commitment to be a facilitator of change extends into her many volunteer activities. Rebecca serves on the board of the Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Her extensive community service includes her chairing of the Freedom from Diabetes Walk of the American Diabetes Association and co-chairing of the Cervical Cancer Prevention Project, the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project, and the Medical Mentorship Program of the CA Latino Medical Association. Throughout her life, including as an undergraduate and medical student at UCLA, Rebecca has taken the time to mentor young women. An active member of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), Rebecca desires to further its mission to educate young women and to improve the future of women. Rebecca has received numerous recognitions for her professional and community service — most recently the 2007 Aztec Corporate Award of the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation.

Born in Lynwood, CA and raised in South Central Los Angeles, an area synonymous with violence and blight, Rebecca found opportunity in the middle of difficult circumstances. She embraces the "second-to-none" work ethic of her "mentors" — her father, a laborer, and her mother, a field worker and a factory laborer — along with their esteem for education and family which they instilled in her at an early age.

Rebecca met her "very patient and understanding husband," Joshua Garza, shortly after she moved to Bakersfield in 1991 to complete her residency training. They have been blessed with four "incredible, polite, kind-hearted, and loving" children, Sterling, Seth, Sydney, and Spencer, ages eight to fourteen. Rebecca aspires to follow her parents' example by placing top priority on her family.