

## Venita Garvin Valdez



Venita Garvin Valdez is the Chief Executive Officer of the Domestic Abuse Shelter, Inc. serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the Florida Keys from Key Largo to Key West. Venita has been with the Domestic Abuse Shelter, Inc. for thirteen years. A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, she has a B.S. degree in Psychology with a concentration in Mental Health from Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee. She has a Masters degree in Liberal Arts from New York University, New York, New York. Venita has been involved in the domestic violence movement since her first position with the YWCA in Cincinnati, Ohio where she was the Director of the Alice Paul House and the Transitional Housing Center from 1990-1991. She became the Director of the YWCA, Women's Advocacy Program in Richmond, Virginia from 1991- 1995. Venita has experienced a lot of firsts in her lifetime. She was the first woman of color to hold the position of Director for the battered women's program of the YWCA in Cincinnati and Richmond, Virginia. She was the first woman of color to hold the position of CEO for the Domestic Abuse Shelter and the first woman of color to hold the office of President for the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence since the inception of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence in 1977. Venita held the office of President from 2002-2003.

Venita held the position of State President of the Florida Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. from 2008-2010. She has been certified in Cultural Diversity with an emphasis in Women's Issues through the Professional Woman Network, an international consulting firm on women's issues and is one of twenty-one authors featured in the books, *Becoming Your Own Best Friend* and *Life is An Attitude, The Power of Positive Living*. She serves as Secretary for the Business and Professional Women's Foundation in Washington, DC, serves as an advisory board member for the Florida Diversity Council, and a member of the Blue Ridge Institute, a leadership institute for Southeastern Executives with representation in 14 states. Venita also serves as a board member on the International Board of the Professional Woman Network 2010 -2012.

Venita also is benefactor of the internet radio show, *Change Thrivers Radio*. Venita is featured regularly on the show with her titled commentary, *Venita's View*.

Past honors have included Woman of the Year and Employer of the Year, Marathon Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc., President's Award, Southernmost Homeless Assistance League, and National Diversity Council Diversity First Award for her commitment and dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion.

Venita launched her own company, the Garvin Valdez Group, LLC in March 2010. The Garvin Valdez Group is a boutique specializing in grant writing, resource development for non-profits, and professional and personal development seminars for women and young women ages 12 . 16. For the past four years, Venita's signature program in working with young women ages 12 -16 includes the topic on teen dating violence.

