

Bender  
of  
Twigs



## Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd

I have known Vanessa since she was a struggling college student at Wichita State. Over the years, I have always come to admire her tenacity and playfulness. She is someone whom you can depend upon and epitomizes the word loyal.

As a colleague, she is supportive and will go over and above for someone who is in need. That may mean taking you out to lunch for a listening session or sending a note of encouragement. As a counselor, the students who were lucky enough to receive her advice and support, have a deep sense of appreciation for her.

Family is another important characteristic that has shaped Vanessa's outlook on her life's work. Her family's migration to the United States was filled with strife and struggle. Learning English by immersion strengthened her desire to be successful in school. As a result, she earned a bachelor's and master's degree from WSU and has spent her entire professional career serving low-income, first-generation, and students with disabilities at Wichita State.

She is truly amazing, and I am so glad to be a colleague and friend. I wish her all the best and congratulate her on becoming an esteemed Bender of the Twigs.

**Larry Ramos**  
Executive Director  
TRIO Talent Search

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When I started at Wichita State University (WSU) in 1994, Vanessa was a student assistant with the Student Support Services program. She was a very hard worker, dedicated to her college courses and her position at SSS. She has brought many students to get help from the TRIO programs over the decades she has studied and worked at WSU.

Vanessa would be an asset to any department or company where she chose to work. She learns quickly, asks questions, and produces accurate data and reports.

After she worked for SSS for more than 15 years, I was happy when she accepted an associate director position with Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP. As my second in charge, she did not disappoint. Vanessa took the lead in supervising more than 30 staffers across the State of Kansas. I was very sad and happy when Vanessa took the position of director of the Disability Support Services program. This was a great opportunity for her, and she excels at helping students.

Vanessa is a very compassionate and caring person, and she is an outstanding example of an alumni who gives back to WSU.

Congratulations Vanessa on achieving Bender of Twigs status. I'm looking forward to the many more achievements you will reach.