

Ruby Rivera, born of Puerto Rican and Guatemalan descent, grew up in Houston's Northside. Despite facing childhood challenges under the poverty line, Ruby's mother ensured she had access to the arts through after-school programs, nurturing her creativity in music, dance, and the arts. As the first in her family to attend a four-year university, Ruby graduated from The University of Texas at Austin. Her love for the arts and supporting students was fused during her time at UT-Austin. Creating equity and access is a core mission for her work in the arts and college and career access.

Driven by her passion for making art accessible to the community, Ruby founded the Texas Salsa Congress. Through this organization, she has curated events across Houston, bringing Salsa and the Arts to youth and families while generating revenue for artists from Houston, Texas, and around the globe. She has accomplished this all while creating a career in college and career access where Ruby has helped thousands of students, especially first-generation students, have a pathway to post-secondary education.

Over nineteen years, the Texas Salsa Congress (TSC) has played a pivotal role in creating partnerships and organizing public events in Houston and its surrounding communities. These events showcase local and world-renowned dancers, performers, musicians, and DJs. Ruby herself has continued to teach Salsa throughout H-Town to ensure that she stays connected with her "why". Teaching Salsa to Houstonians from all corners of Houston has provided the opportunity to carve out space for Salsa and Latin music from across different businesses, parks, and events.

Ruby's dedication to promoting Salsa and the Arts garnered recognition, with the City of Houston proclaiming August 4th as "Salsa Appreciation Day" in her honor. Additionally, March 14th was declared "Texas Salsa Congress Day" for Houston, Texas. In 2021 she received the Pa'Lante Hispanic Heritage award from Harris County Precinct 2. In 2022, Ruby received the Puente Prize from Stages & Sin Muros for her outstanding contributions to the LatinX Arts community. In 2023, she was awarded the Fresh Arts The Space Taking Artists Residency STAR for June.

Ruby's next chapter with the Texas Salsa Congress is to continue cultivating community, collaborating with artists across various multidisciplinary art forms, and creating programming specifically to increase creative placemaking events and youth programming.