

Wifredo “Wifi” Fernandez

Wifredo “Wifi” Fernández is a social entrepreneur and educator. Currently, he is a Public Interest Law Scholar and J.D. Candidate at the University of Miami. Previously, he worked worked in the Division of Innovation & Economic Development at Florida International University, helping lead StartUP FIU, and taught entrepreneurship in the FIU Honors College. He is the Co-Founder and former CEO of The LAB Miami, a leading startup community hub in South Florida. Prior to joining FIU, Wifredo was a Founding Director of The Idea Center at Miami Dade College, a student startup incubator.

He serves on the Board of Trustees of OurKids, which manages the foster youth system of care in Miami-Dade/Monroe counties. He is on the Advisory Board and a Fellow at the University of Miami School of Law's Center for Ethics and Public Service, a guest lecturer in the City Sciences Master's program at Universidad Politecnica de Madrid and is an adviser to the Urban Us fund.

Before moving back to Miami in 2011, Wifi was a Teach For America corps member in Washington, D.C., where he taught five different grade levels of Spanish, Math and Social Studies. He was selected to the inaugural cohort of the Young American Leaders Program at Harvard Business School and is a graduate of the Miami Fellows Leadership Program. His work has been featured in Forbes, USA Today, CBS, Le Figaro and The Atlantic, and was named to The Miami Herald 20 under 40. He holds an M.A. in Teaching from American University and B.A. in Political Science from University of Pennsylvania.

During the summers of 2003 and 2004, Wifi worked at the Venetian Pool as a Lifeguard for two consecutive summers. Growing up in Coral Gables, the Youth Center was Wifi’s second home. It was his after-school destination, where he learned how to woodwork, discovered a knack for ceramics, and thrived as an athlete. His summers were spent exploring the city through Adventure Camp. Throughout his adolescent years, Wifi was a competitive athlete at the Youth Center, earning MVP/Coaches awards in Flag Football, Baseball, Basketball and Soccer (traveling with the Coral Gables Storm). His Youth Center athletic training served as a foundation for Wifi’s sports career at Ransom Everglades and later the University of Pennsylvania. While at Ransom, he earned First Team All-County Honors (2x) and Second Team All-State in Soccer and First Team All-County in Football. He went on to play Football for 2 years at the University of Pennsylvania and played two years of Club Soccer, competing at the national level. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support and encouragement he received from the coaches and counselors at the Youth Center.