

Gloria Sosa: [00:00:01](#) Yeah. Beautiful. Thank you so much for giving me this, um, third part of the interview. So last time we learned about you and your background and, um, your journey to get at Cal State LA. And, um, I think we stopped at how you actually became Involved with SURGE. So, um, do you wanna pick up there? Yeah, yeah. Um, so, uh, the main person, uh, you know, who helped me to find out about SURGE is actually, uh, one of my old professors. Her name is Dr. Ulchler. She's now retired. Um, but she was my professor when I got my Bachelor's degree. And then when I went back for the master's, I also had her in the program. And, um, she knew about my situation during my bachelor's program and, you know, we, I, I was able to confide with her and she was really nice. What I liked about her was that she was non-judgmental, you know, she, she was always, you know, um, very open and try to help. And, um, she, um, during the master's program, I was working on a thesis, and, um, that's when she told me about SURGE, that there was a group that was starting. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:01:27](#) And so, um, I went ahead and looked for the students, and I was also able to interview some for the, um, for the thesis. And it, it, you know, it was, it was very nice. It was very nice, uh, you know, for me to.

Gloria Sosa: [00:01:43](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:01:44](#) Um, finally be able to meet people that understood exactly what I was going through. Um, because in my, um, cohort, uh, of students who were doing the master's program, I, I mean, maybe I didn't ask, but.

Gloria Sosa: [00:02:02](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:02:02](#) I didn't know of anybody who was in the same situation. So it was just nice to go to SURGE, get to know the students, know that they were going through similar things, and that we could relate with the stories, you know?

Gloria Sosa: [00:02:18](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:02:18](#) For example, of course, you know, you're young and you also wanna go out and everything. And I remember clearly how it was for us to go clubbing and how of course we shared our, our, uh, experiences with getting our Mexican ID out while you are trying to get into a club and, you know, the faces, the reactions that you get or the questions. And it was just nice to, to have someone else that you could relate to. And I think that is what

SURGE was for me, it was a place where I felt like finally I found a group of people that really understand, or that I can relate to. And that made a difference. It made a difference in the way I felt about myself and the way I felt about just, uh, you know, being a student who was trying to make something of herself just like they were.

- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:19](#) Right.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:20](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:21](#) Okay. So it was like finding your community.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:24](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:25](#) Right. So, um, first, what was your thesis about? And you're doing the, um, the master's in social work.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:33](#) In Social work, yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:35](#) What was that thesis about?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:36](#) Oh my gosh. Exactly, exactly? <Laugh>
- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:39](#) Kind of.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:42](#) Hmm. It was basically, it was on, um, understanding, um, the stories of undocumented students.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:03:53](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:03:55](#) Yeah. So it was, uh, I did a few interviews, or I did some interviews and I put 'em together as an oral, uh, history and used That As my, uh, thesis. And I did it mainly more as a personal, a personal experience, you know? going through that and being able to find these students and, you know, made me think, you know, people don't know who we really are. And I know at that time, ideas was coming out . And then they came out with, um, I think there was a magazine, more stuff on, you know, just, uh, being invisible and then finally being seen. And it was, it was around that time when everything was happening. And so, um, I decided to, to do the thesis on that.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:04:46](#) Do you remember who you interviewed?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:04:49](#) Uh, Jorge, Norma, I think I interviewed Luis. Uh, uh, and then there were some other, other students that are no longer there. But yeah, There were quite a few getting their histories. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:05:04](#) So then you have some experience record orAL history? <laugh>. Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:05:09](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:05:10](#) Okay. So it's not your first time, you actually did it on the other side.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:05:14](#) I actually, yes, I actually did it. It was a really stressful time for me, though. Um, if I could go back, I will probably do things different, um, in terms of how I presented the thesis. But it just, it was, it was just, um, personally, I was in a, I could say that I was in a spot where yes, SURGE came at a time where I needed them, but the way, when I met SURGE it was almost towards the end of, of my studies, you know what I mean?

Gloria Sosa: [00:05:53](#) Of your journey yeah.

Speaker 3: [00:05:54](#) And, and so I think it was towards, uh, we started working on the thesis towards the end of the first year. The master's program was two years, so towards the end, we needed to present our ideas. And then that second year was working on it, and SURGE came along during that last year, and I just felt like I was bombarded with so many things. You know, I was bombarded with, um, just the program, the internships, you know, and then having to do the thesis and then my personal life, you know, which was a lot. And so, um, I had a thesis advisor that I had chosen because she was really, really involved in the community, and a lot of people knew her. And so I figured, I think this would be a good match.

Gloria Sosa: [00:06:42](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:06:43](#) Uh, unfortunately it was not a good match. It was, uh, it, it was just, it was not, it was, it was a terrible experience, a horrible experience. And I ended up feeling more defeated than anything else. And like, maybe there was something wrong with me. English is my second language, you know? And I don't consider myself being really strong in writing skills. I will say, for me, you know, if I really wanna open up and share how I really feel, I always go to Spanish, you know, and Spanish is like, how I can really express myself. And, you know, I don't think I was able to connect with the professor the way I thought. And so

because of the way things happened, I was delayed. Um, you know, I didn't finish my thesis on time, and it took me another, so we graduated in June, and I didn't finish my thesis till April of the following year. And by that time, I was just like, como que ya me viado por vencida, do you know what I mean? Yeah. It's like, I'm tired, I'm done. I can't believe I didn't finish like my other colleagues. And so that's when Dr. Ulchler also came in and she was like, my angel. She, she said, I'll be your thesis advisor. And she worked with me. And trust me, when I say she worked with me, it was like, literally like, pushing me because I, I just didn't feel it. I just didn't feel it. I was done. I was just like, I couldn't believe what had happened with the first person, with the first thesis advisor, and then being done and feeling like I, I have nothing. You know? I graduated and I have nothing. Right. Um, and then I got married. I got married after graduation, to be honest. And it was just starting that whole life again. And it was, it was, it was just a lot. So I wish I could go back and dedicate more time, just like how enthusiastic I was at the beginning. Um, and so, but no, it didn't end up being like that, but, you know, it was made, it was done. And, uh, again, um, if there was one thing that I would have wishes that I wish SURGE had been there from the beginning.

- Gloria Sosa: [00:09:12](#) And you found out about SURGE in 2006 as they were forming or after?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:09:19](#) No, as they were forming.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:09:20](#) Okay.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:09:21](#) As they were forming, because I remember that we met at the, at my, um, ex-husband's house where he was living at the moment in Culver City. And we met there to come up with the name.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:09:31](#) Oh, that's true.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:09:32](#) Okay. So to come come up with the need for SURGE.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:09:36](#) They just weren't there before. When, when you were doing your undergrad at Cal State LA?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:09:41](#) No, I don't, I don't remember them being there. I don't remember hearing about it. I, I think, uh, because I was close to the person that helped me to get into Cal State LA and I would touch base with him here and there, and I'm sure he would've told me if there was something that was open.

Gloria Sosa: [00:09:58](#) Yeah.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:09:59](#) At that time, so.

Gloria Sosa: [00:10:00](#) Right. Because They started in 2006.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:10:02](#) Yeah. I mean, it was AB five 40 before.

Gloria Sosa: [00:10:05](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>,

Yadira Ramirez: [00:10:05](#) That's how we were classified. But there was nothing really out there. No. Yeah. So I was surprised that my professor knew about it. But then again, you know, she's always been really involved in, probably 'cause, you know, our, our, um, profession, uh, social work, you know, probably it was just a resource that she, that she had heard of. But again, yes, when I met them, they were just starting, they were just for me. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:10:32](#) Would you mind sharing, why was the, um, first advisor that you picked? So, not helpful.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:10:40](#) Um, you know, I, I realized that, okay, so I had had her as a professor, you know, I had her as a professor in my, um, I think I had her once in my bachelor's, and then I had her, uh, for two classes in the master's program. And I don't wanna say this, but I think sometimes there are professors that are really passionate about what they do, which is basically who she was. You know, she was a Chicana and she was really proud and would do a lot. But then compared to other professors on campus, I could sense that she had her favorites when it comes to students.

Gloria Sosa: [00:11:37](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:11:37](#) You know, so in class, you know, she always would choose the same people, will always admire the same people, acknowledge them. And then when it was somebody new, it was just like, disregard 'em. I was not one of the people that, you know, she, she, you know, really saw as someone who, you know, that she really liked. So I think that was the first thing that I should have. I should have known that, you know, perhaps, you know, this is not gonna work. And then, um, once I, you know, she and I started working, um, I guess it was the way she came across was, or the way I felt towards the requirements that she wanted, or, or how she wanted this was, uh, I started to feel like perhaps I was not good enough, you know, with what she wanted, the language a certain way, written a certain way. And

again, I didn't, I don't think my writing is my strongest. And so I think that was, uh, I don't know if that was disappointing to her, the fact that I was not at that level, because she herself is a research, you know, a researcher.

Gloria Sosa: [00:12:54](#)

Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:12:55](#)

And so, um, then it became, I think it was like, I will bring in the paperwork and she'll be like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. And it was just like, uh, you know? What is this? And, um, I think after that, I got some issues with counter transference where I started like feeling like, oh my gosh, she's just like my mom in many ways, you know? And then it kept on reminding me about that. And so one day I just said, you know what? I don't think this is working out. I was crying, and I said, I don't think this is working out. You know, you remind me a lot of my mother. And she, she became upset. She became upset, and she said, you know, um, that, you know, she was like an icon, you know, that, you know, she was just so good at what she does, and knowing it would be like her and you. It's like, so there was this sense of entitlement and everything, and we just didn't, it just didn't work. It just didn't work. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:02](#)

But then I'm glad that you have your.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:03](#)

Yeah. So then it took, uh, I mean, this was already, we were supposed to be, you know, close to, I mean, I'm not saying we were supposed to be done, but, uh, we were halfway there and it really pushed me back. And then.

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:18](#)

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:18](#)

I didn't really want to do, I, I went into a depression and I didn't really want to do anything. And luckily the school social work worked with me to the point where I, you know, I just said, I, I, I can't do this. So I was able to walk and, um, you know, then I was able to present my thesis. Yeah. But until April, from June to April,

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:41](#)

It's took, uh, two more semesters tonight. Yeah.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:45](#)

Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:46](#)

And quarters, there were. Quarters, like.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:48](#)

No, but I think towards the end they became a semester. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:51](#) Oh, you had experience working a semester?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:53](#) Yeah. Okay. Yeah. It was nicer. <laugh>,

Gloria Sosa: [00:14:57](#) You think they're nicer?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:14:58](#) Yeah. Well, in some ways, because at the same time, it was just too much time in between that with the quarter system, you felt like everything was rushed.

Gloria Sosa: [00:15:08](#) Yeah. Rushed.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:15:08](#) And you didn't have time to be lazy, you know? And with the semester, it's like, I still have time. I still have time, but yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:15:15](#) Yeah. Yeah. Not a fun semester. I feel like I get lazy <laugh>. Yeah.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:15:21](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:15:22](#) Yes. So one thing that you shared is that, uh, you like having that people, and shared the experience of showing your, um, Mexican, your consular, your writing.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:15:32](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:15:33](#) Okay.

Gloria Sosa: [00:15:33](#) Um, when you were clubbing, how was that, how, how did that make you feel with other, it was not only you showing the ID, but it was other

Yadira Ramirez: [00:15:42](#) It was, uh, you know, it was just, uh, an experience, uh, or a feeling of feeling like I belong. You know, like I was not the only one that was different. Um, because all of my friends, the ones that I used to hang out with, you know, were either born here or, you know, they were, um, they had their papers. So that was never an issue. And so, going out, um, I remember specifically one day my friends invited me to go to Santa Barbara, and we were out there and we stayed over. And, you know, we went clubbing out there, and I mean, Santa Barbara, you know, I was away from home. And here they wanted to go clubbing. And here I take out my consular. And then that security went to talk to another security, and that security went to talk to another security. And it's just like, oh my gosh, oh my gosh, what are they gonna say? Are they gonna accept it or not? And da da da da da. And it was just nerve-racking. And, you know, just to feel

isolated in many ways, because my friends were able to go in. I just had to wait outside until they, they said things, uh, are okay, you know, and the way they check and the way they look at you, and, you know, what's this? You know why? So I don't know how it came about in a, in a SURGE meeting, you know, but we just started talking about some of the things that we like to do. And again, we were all in our twenties, so.

Gloria Sosa: [00:17:11](#)

Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:17:12](#)

Going out, having fun is a normal thing. And so everybody we just started talking about, and then la foto que como se mira! You know, it's like they don't even take a nice picture and look at this and how embarrassing. And then we, it went on to how will we use it, you know, to get into clubbing. And it was just finally, someone really knows, you know, someone really knows, because people can tell you, oh, I understand. Or I can imagine. But they can do it here in their head. But they don't know how it feels.

Gloria Sosa: [00:17:50](#)

Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:17:51](#)

How it feels to be there, you know, to have one security go to another one, and then they look at you and they keep on staring at you, and then you're all nervous and, you know, wondering, oh, shoot. Oh, shoot, what's gonna happen? You know? It, it is all these emotions that come in.

Gloria Sosa: [00:18:09](#)

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> Right. Yes. So having your friends as your community make you feel like they knew, they felt it.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:18:19](#)

Yeah. They have felt it. Yeah. Yeah. Which is very different than saying, I can imagine, You know, Very different than saying, oh, I get it, because no, you don't get it. You don't know what the feeling is. Okay.

Gloria Sosa: [00:18:34](#)

Yeah. Until you went to this experiences, then. Yeah.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:18:38](#)

Mm-hmm.

Gloria Sosa: [00:18:39](#)

You cannot relate <laugh>, right?

Gloria Sosa: [00:18:41](#)

Mm-Hmm. Yes. I totally agree with them. That's what we're talking about earlier, right? It just feels so personally. 'Cause it is personal.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:18:48](#)

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.



Gloria Sosa: [00:18:48](#) 'Cause we had gone through the same experiences Yeah. At some point or another, but yes. Yeah, definitely. Yeah. I remember those times. Having a consular. <Laugh>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:18:59](#) Yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:19:00](#) Peeling from the sides, because it looks like a peanut. They just put up plastic over <laugh>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:19:05](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. They don't even wait for you say smile. They're just <laugh>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:19:10](#) Just take it. Yes. Um, so we already talked about how you got involved with SURGE.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:19:18](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:19:19](#) So, um, now tell me, in, in what capacity did, were you involved with them?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:19:26](#) So I went in there as a member. So I, I, again, when I went in there, it was a very small group.

Gloria Sosa: [00:19:34](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:19:35](#) And I remember Jorge, and I remember Jose. I believe Jose was the president at that time. And then after he left, it was Jorge. I was only there that year, you know, that year until I grad, until I finished the thesis with, which was in April of 2007. And then I tried staying connected, uh, as a member. But it was, uh, it was really difficult. You know, I used to live in Inglewood, um, again, uh, not even a year. Married, uh, I was done with school. I was still working at Tolchini's. I would come into work, and that's when I would try, um, to take advantage and participate.

Gloria Sosa: [00:20:22](#) Oh.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:20:23](#) Um, and then in, um, may, I think my, my, uh, work permit came in, and then in June I had my, my green card. And because as soon as I got married, we applied for it. And I had gotten married June, the June before.

Gloria Sosa: [00:20:44](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:20:45](#) And.

Gloria Sosa: [00:20:45](#) So a year after you had.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:20:46](#) Yeah. And then in July I started working, and I went all into it, and I started working for the county. And so it was, uh, it was too much. I couldn't do it anymore.

Gloria Sosa: [00:20:59](#) Right. So after, uh, you, you graduated, you still working on your master's thesis, you're still working at Tolchini's.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:21:06](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:21:07](#) And then from April to June, you're still working at Tolchini's?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:21:11](#) Yes. So I was working there, um, because, uh, you know, they knew me. I knew it was a place I could work, but yes. And I actually stopped working. Um, I think I, no, I think I stopped working that last semester. I'm not even sure if I worked that much, but I was working very little. And the reason for that is because there was a sense of embarrassment, to be honest. Um, a lot of the, the people that came in, I mean, all the people that usually comes into Tolchini's at that time were regulars, right?

Gloria Sosa: [00:21:52](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:21:52](#) We had a lot of people that were regular, uh, customers. And so you get to know them, and they get to know you. And a lot of them knew that I had graduated already With the master's program, and it was like, what are you still doing here? You must really like it here. Like, how dare you be here <laugh> when you have a degree? And so I think at the end, it just became too much that I just decided to, to quit, you know, because I, yeah. I quit because it, it just became too much emotionally. Like, I didn't wanna have to explain to people.

Gloria Sosa: [00:22:27](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:22:27](#) But the feeling that I got was that I, I was doing something wrong, you know? Like, this is where I wanted to be instead of me doing something else. So, no, I think I stopped going to SURGE even before, probably at the beginning of the year, because I did stop working, and my Nina asked me if I could work with her, and my Nina used to clean houses.

Gloria Sosa: [00:22:52](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:22:52](#) And, uh, well, she still does. And I will go with her three times a week to clean houses. And I think I did that for probably March till June till I got to LA county.

Gloria Sosa: [00:23:06](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:23:06](#) Yeah. Yeah. So, yeah. So at SURGE, I only came in as a member. That's it. As a member. And again, decisions were being made, and we, like I said, we met at my ex-husband's house.

Gloria Sosa: [00:23:20](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:23:21](#) And came up with the name and, um, I think it was Jose Beltran that actually came up with, um, you know, the, the SURGE.

Gloria Sosa: [00:23:31](#) And, and do you remember, how was the structure of during the SURGE meetings? Like who did it have, like a head leader or how was the structure?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:23:41](#) Yeah, I remember that there was, uh, a structure there. Jose, again, was the president. I'm not sure if, uh, Jorge was like the vice president or something else, but we did have someone taking notes. I do remember having a certain agenda, um, that the, we were following and at, because all of that was needed in order to create the organization at Cal State LA you know, to be recognized.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:09](#) To make it official, right?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:10](#) Yeah. To make it official, because that is what they, we were trying to do to become official an an official organization.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:17](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:18](#) So all of that was needed.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:20](#) So, um, do you think it was like an egalitarian, um, organization where everyone had like a voice?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:30](#) Yeah. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. It was Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:37](#) Nice.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:37](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And you never hold any, um, leadership roles?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:42](#) No, I don't. I don't remember. No. No.

Speaker 2: [00:24:46](#) But did you participate in any, any activism complaints? Because I know that SURGE got involved with the California Dream Act.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:54](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:24:54](#) Pushing for the Federal Dream Act.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:24:58](#) No, I don't, I didn't get involved that much. Just what was happening on campus.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:04](#) Oh okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:05](#) That was it.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:06](#) Like what?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:06](#) Just on campus? I don't remember. But there were a couple, a couple of things that we, that we did at that time. And then the other, uh, major one that I still remember is, uh, the, um, la marcha que se hizo.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:24](#) Mm-Hmm. The one in 2006?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:29](#) Yeah. La marcha.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:31](#) In May?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:31](#) Um, yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:33](#) Did you, did you participate in that one? Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:35](#) With with SURGE, yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:37](#) With SURGE. Um, but this was, would it be in 2007 then, because.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:42](#) Yeah, I think it was in 2007.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:43](#) Because 2006 it happened. It was that big March in 2006.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:48](#) But the biggest one was the following year.

Gloria Sosa: [00:25:52](#) In 2007.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:25:53](#) Wasn't it? In 2007? Because I remember that I was, I was interviewing for jobs, I was interviewing for jobs, and.

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:04](#) Oh, then it must have been the one in 2007, because the big movement was in 2006.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:26:09](#) Yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:10](#) I mean, after that, the following years there have been marches, uh, in May ever since, not big. Right.

Speaker 3: [00:26:18](#) Pero esa en Mayo, creio que fue.

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:20](#) La mas grande.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:26:20](#) La mas grande.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:26:21](#) Yes. Because I was applying for, I was, I was interviewing for jobs, and I specifically, after the march, I went to a job interview and, you know, um, yeah, I remember.

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:36](#) But, but you went with student members?

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:38](#) Yes. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:26:39](#) How was that experience?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:26:43](#) I think it was my first actual, uh, activist, uh, activism experience. It was, it was really nice. It was really nice to, I guess, to be, uh, speaking up for something that, you know, we wanted.

Gloria Sosa: [00:27:00](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:27:00](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:27:02](#) Did it feel empowering?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:27:04](#) Yeah, it did.

Gloria Sosa: [00:27:04](#) Scary?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:27:05](#) It, it felt, uh, it was empowering to see how many people were there and the impact that they were having. But I will say that it was also scary in some ways. Like, oh my gosh, you know, what about this? And I remember getting interviewed. I was interviewed, I'm not sure it was a radio station, but no era de aqui, estaban las accents escuchaba como español, como que eran España o algo, no me recuerdo, pero la cosa es que me empezaron entrevistarme y luego tambien una señora de canal, she's a well known reporter. She came close to me and we started talking, but then the commotion started with, uh, como

se dice, las pelaeas, y todo que estaba pasado, that everything just got dispersed. Yeah. Yeah.

- Gloria Sosa: [00:28:06](#) And, and they approached you because you were with, um, some students, or why would they?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:28:11](#) We were dressed as with our cap and gowns.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:28:13](#) Oh, okay.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:28:13](#) Yes. We were dressed with our cap and gowns, and we had, uh, signs, you know, students and Cal State LA and, yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:28:22](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Okay. And when they interview you, was that the first time that you shared your story outside your project?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:28:30](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:28:31](#) How did it feel?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:28:32](#) Scary. <laugh> <laugh>. I, I'm telling you, I didn't really wanna talk. It was a group of us, and they approached us, and no one really wanted to say anything. And so I finally did, but it was really scary saying something. I'm like, oh my gosh. But at the same time, it was like, you do have to say something so that they can hear the impact, so that they can know the reason why you're doing this. But it was scary.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:29:00](#) So it was like an inner conflict thing.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:29:02](#) Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:29:03](#) Yeah. And what do you think no one wanted to say anything from your group students?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:29:12](#) I think we were not as passionate maybe as Jose Beltran.<Laugh>. No. I think we were just scared. You know? We were, we were, it was a lot happening. It was just a lot. But I think for me, what made it so amazing was just to see how many people wanted, you know, for this to happen, and how many people were there to support. Um, and there were people of all types, you know? And it was just beautiful to see that this actually mattered to a lot of people that, you know. Yes, in many ways we felt invisible, but, you know, there were people that really wanted us to come out, you know, come out out of

the shadows and Right. And be us. So that is what I'll take from that, from that March. Yeah. It was like.

- Gloria Sosa: [00:30:11](#) And ever since that march, have you been back to any of the marches or participating other kinds of activism?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:30:18](#) I think I participate. I went back to another event. Um, but yeah, that was, that was about it. Yeah.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:30:28](#) So ever since you graduated and left Cal State LA where you haven't been as.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:30:33](#) Not as active in terms of activism. No. I stay active towards, towards, uh, I guess more on the smaller scale. Um, el centro comunidario de las cigles, yes, um, you know, cuando quieren alguna charla, reimplorita en el centro comunidario de la iglesia thst was a parish, uh, before, um, you know, quieren demas {inaudible} lo que es la salud mental and me invitan y voy y doy una charla a mes. Es gratis you know I don't.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:31:10](#) Right.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:31:21](#) So, estabos hecho eso en varias ocasiones mas que nada. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:31:27](#) So you see your education to help others, right?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:31:32](#) Yeah. Or using what I know, you know, what the job is. So the last, um, topic was two weeks ago, and it was on December 10th, and it was on domestic violence.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:31:43](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:31:45](#) And then we have a next one on, you know, sexuality and, you know, what is considered normal. And then, um, we have suicide, and then we're gonna head on.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:31:58](#) I mean, that's your community engagement, that's your activism, right? You're touching people one at a time, maybe.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:32:05](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:32:06](#) But that's still, um, participating. So.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:32:08](#) Yeah!
- Gloria Sosa: [00:32:08](#) So you have been active.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:32:10](#) And even here, you know, here, like I told you before, I, am, um, we all work differently in the field.

Gloria Sosa: [00:32:18](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:32:18](#) You know, some of us are more open than others when it comes to our personal life. But if we think that our personal life will make a difference in a patient, then, you know, we do share.

Gloria Sosa: [00:32:27](#) You share.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:32:28](#) And I've had students, uh, from Cal State LA I had one in particular, you know, a patient that came in, and she was really hesitant about getting services. And, you know, we were talking pretty much about, you know, her going into a master's program and what that meant, and, you know, how was she going to do it? And she was really conflicted. And I decided to share my story with her, and she was actually surprised. And at the same time, uh, felt like, I got this, I can do this now. I know someone who did it. And, you know, what helped us to connect, I think, um, I came into work and I, I came in, con un blusa de manga corita, and she saw my, uh, vacuna <laugh> <laugh>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:33:20](#) Your mark.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:33:21](#) She saw the mark.

Gloria Sosa: [00:33:22](#) Your Mexican Mark <laugh>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:33:24](#) And, um, I went to get, I went to make copies, and I came back and she just said, I have a question for you. Yeah. She's like, are you from Mexico? Were you born? I'm like, yeah, I was. And she's like, uh, and I'm like, how come? She's like, oh, because I, I saw <laugh>. And I'm like, oh, you saw the marca? And she's like, yeah. And that's how she opened up to me. That's how she really opened up on what was going on, and what was really troubling her. And, uh, I didn't know that this could <laugh> <laugh>

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:00](#) That could meant so much, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:02](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:02](#) Definitely.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:04](#) Yeah.



Gloria Sosa: [00:34:04](#) That's crazy. Now you're still, um, in your field, you're an activist as well.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:09](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:09](#) You know, it doesn't have to be like, you're up there in a March.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:13](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:14](#) Holding a sign, to make an impact. And a.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:16](#) There's, uh, an interview actually with UCLA and me.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:19](#) Really?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:20](#) Yeah. I don't know if.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:21](#) Who interviewed you from?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:24](#) Let's see.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:24](#) Was it a student? Was it a?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:26](#) No, it was, um, I don't know, know what it was, but let's see.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:33](#) It was, and it was in recent? Or?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:35](#) No, this was back in 2010.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:43](#) Oh, was it about your work? Uh.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:46](#) Yeah, it was, uh, it was about work.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:34:49](#) Oh, here, it's this. So old <laugh>. Yeah. But if you want to check it out, if you.

Gloria Sosa: [00:34:59](#) Yeah, you can share with me later if you want. So you're not new in this then, <laugh>, you're not new to the interviewing.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:35:08](#) No.

Gloria Sosa: [00:35:09](#) No, you're not.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:35:15](#) Wow. They have so much about <laugh> about you. Yeah. But I'll look for it and I'll send it to you.

Gloria Sosa: [00:35:27](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You, we can, you can share it later. Okay. So let's come back a little to, um, to, to the questions in your activism. So, um, so that was pretty much the first, um, and only organizing, I mean, activists activity that you did with SURGE members.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:35:49](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Well, besides what was happening on campus.

Gloria Sosa: [00:35:54](#) So you participated in a fundraising events that they did?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:35:57](#) Yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:35:58](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:35:58](#) Yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:36:01](#) Do you, do you wanna share a memory about one of those events? Do you remember <laugh>?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:36:11](#) Let's see. No, there was one. I'm not sure what we were doing. I'm not, but I think we were selling something and there was, um, I was surprised to see that this was a movement, not only for Latinos, because I remember that one of the, one of the, um, members Myra Baricio I think? I think she was dating, uh, someone. I'm not sure where exactly from, but he was, uh, Asian.

Gloria Sosa: [00:36:55](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:36:56](#) And then I think it's, I think Ellizabeth had a friend who was, I don't know if he was, uh, from Russia or somewhere like that. And it, it was the first time that I saw, you know, I guess people from a different ethnicity coming over either to help or to be in the same fight because they were also in the same situation.

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:23](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:37:23](#) Do you know what I mean?

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:24](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:37:24](#) It opened my eyes to, to that. And I remember just, uh, being surprised by that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:34](#) Because before you only saw Latinos.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:37:36](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:41](#) And it was during an event on campus.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:37:43](#) We were doing an event. Yes.

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:45](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:37:46](#) Yes. 'cause I remember at Azebo, I remember we were there, what we were doing. I'm not sure. We were selling, we were selling something, but I don't know what it was.

Gloria Sosa: [00:37:58](#) So then you would say that's what it was inclusive.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:38:00](#) Yeah. Yeah. I will say that it was, I mean, I myself didn't know. Uh, but yeah, they, they, they did try to include. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:38:13](#) What about of, um, queer folks?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:38:17](#) I don't remember it. That I don't remember. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:38:20](#) But for the most part, I would say that everybody was welcome. Yeah. Yeah. So, um, can you describe any, um, with any gender in inequity equity practices within the space of the, your shared, you say, what was it like, like were more males, more females? Did they have equal, um, voice, or was there input more value?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:39:01](#) No, I, I just think everybody was important. You know, everyone played a role and we had, uh, a very specific amount. Um, I mean, I think it was equally, uh, females and males. And, um, yes, there were some that were more active, you know, like Peltra and Jorge. Um, and I remember us, the females were a little, you know, either more maybe shy at first, but, um, you know, than, than they were.

Gloria Sosa: [00:39:34](#) And do you think that had to do with personal, um, um, issues, personal struggles? Or was it that it wasn't encouraged of females to participate?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:39:47](#) No, I think it had to do more with the fact that this was all new.

Gloria Sosa: [00:39:51](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:39:52](#) This was all new. And some of us were still, you know, taking our first steps with sort of coming out with, coming out. And I think we were just being, being cautious.

Gloria Sosa: [00:40:03](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:40:04](#) Oh, okay. Yeah. I remember I went to cash for college. I did that twice.

Gloria Sosa: [00:40:09](#) Oh, one of the workshops that they used to do.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:40:11](#) When we went to high schools

Gloria Sosa: [00:40:14](#) Would you like to share some of that?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:40:15](#) Yeah. We went to a high school in Inglewood, actually. And I went with Norma and with, um, Norma. And it was, uh, I think it was Joanna and myself, and we went to, uh, I think it was, is it Inglewood High School? Um, and we went and we participated. Uh, um, nd it was a very nice experience, and then some other time. I remember that one specifically, but I think we had another one. We had two I used.

Gloria Sosa: [00:40:53](#) And what was that? Um, the college for the cash for college. Cash for college. Yeah. What was it? Was it a campaign? A workshop? What was.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:41:03](#) Oh, we did a workshop on basically, um, you know, being undocumented and being able to go to college. And what were the resources? Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:41:14](#) And do you remember, um, the, were there a lot of students?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:41:18](#) No, there were not a lot of students there, but, uh, I think if we had a group of maybe 10, um, you know, but the parents will come in with them and, you know, it was just a, a very, uh, informal meeting towards the end that they just wanted to know more about how we were doing things. But we were there ready to provide any information that they wanted and, you know, to discuss also about our experience. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:41:45](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:41:46](#) Yeah. I remember that. I don't know how that came up. <laugh>, but I remember that. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:41:53](#) Um, so again, try to follow up the questions. <laugh>, what did you learn as an activist student, as an activist student at Cal State LA? And what would you have wanted to learn? So, what did you learn and what would you would like? What would you wanna, um, learn? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:42:17](#) Mm. I think, again, como se dieron las cosas, you know, I was not as active. I would as I would have liked, I, in many ways, um, it was the beginning of SURGE, but it was also the end for me.

Gloria Sosa: [00:42:41](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:42:41](#) As a student. Um, and I, I learned that, uh, I was not alone, you know? And I learned that, um, there were other people that felt the way I did. You know? And that made that, that made a big difference for me. And it made me wanna continue and pursue even more what I, what I wanted to do, and made it seem okay, what I wish I had learned. Um, like, I just didn't know all the details of.

Gloria Sosa: [00:43:16](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:43:16](#) You know, the laws, you know, um, you know, how things actually worked. Uh, um, I just, uh, I, I didn't, and I wish I could have learned more of that. I just, you know, heard about them, let them be, but I was not as, uh, informed politically, I guess, about everything.

Gloria Sosa: [00:43:39](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So you wish you would've been more, um, involved in learning about the policies.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:43:46](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:43:46](#) And stuff?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:43:47](#) If I had, had the time, yes.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:43:49](#) Right Yes. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And did that, did that, um, experience of, of, uh, feeling more included from your community, did that change something at the personal level, outside school, outside the SURGE, outside the SURGE community?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:44:07](#) Well, I think because of SURGE, because of meeting other students and because of what we were doing as a, as a group.

Gloria Sosa: [00:44:14](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:44:14](#) Um, I think it made it a lot more, not that it made it well, I was more open to be able to share my story outside, you know?

Gloria Sosa: [00:44:28](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:44:28](#) So I was able to share my story. Um, during my internship, I was doing an internship at, um, oh my gosh. I was doing an internship working with the Latino community. Um, I forgot the name of the agency, but there, you know, I was able to share, they wanted, um, they had a, next to the building, there was a, um, like a student center, and they were interested in providing information to the students, you know, again, cash for college in some way. And, you know, they also wanted someone who could talk about, um, being a dreamer and what it was like, or being an AB 540 student. And so I invited a friend, uh, who was in the same situation, and we both went and talked. Um, so that was the first time we actually opened up and share our story and share that it is possible to do something. Um, and then from there, I, um, from there, there was, oh, then there was that interview that I did for work. Um, and it was, um, it gave me the courage to do it, you know, based on, um, tambien la experiencia de SURGE.

Gloria Sosa: [00:46:04](#) To do the interview or to share.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:46:07](#) To share the more personal, because I, I did the interview. So my supervisor at the time said, Hey, you know, why don't you get yourself interviewed for this, uh, project and share your story with, uh, them about how you help our community, um, the Latinos that came into that clinic, and how you tried to provide resources, be there for them when it came to their immigration status. Mm. And why don't you share your story as an undocumented student? And so I went to the interview and, um, I did the whole interview with them, and I didn't share anything. Right. And I think they felt like, um, disappointed that there was nothing really special about my interview, <laugh>. And so towards the end, we just finished, and then they said, okay, we're all wrapped up. And I said, oh, but you didn't ask me anything else. They're like, no, that was it. Unless you have something else to share. And I said, I was hesitant, <laugh>. And I said, well, you know, I wanted to share about my experience as a non-documented student and how I myself try to help this, the patients here.

Gloria Sosa: [00:47:26](#) Mm-Hmm.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:47:27](#) How come you didn't tell us us and da, da da. And so we started the whole interview again, <laugh>. And it was selected, it was selected as one of the stories that they wanted to share, um, about.

Gloria Sosa: [00:47:39](#) And let me ask. You, um, what was your, what, what did you wanna do achieve of, um, what was your hope for sharing your

story at this interview and also at the other, um, event that you did with your friend?

- Yadira Ramirez: [00:47:56](#) The event that I did with my friend, it was to get students motivated that they were able to do something, you know, that they don't need to stop. Um, at the interview at work, um, it was getting, so the march was in two, in 2007, right?
- Gloria Sosa: [00:48:22](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:48:22](#) And this was probably 2010, yeah, 2000. It was probably 2010. And the intention there, uh, was at the moment that I came into that clinic, we're talking about the west side and that community, um, or the, my co-workers were mainly 80% Caucasian. And, uh, there were some issues, um, you know, with a couple of them where, you know, they didn't really, I guess were not as open <laugh> to having, you know, um, Latino co-workers or social workers that would come in. And, um, and so it was, um, I wanted to share a part of me where I was vulnerable so that they could understand how things really are, you know, how tough it is for, for someone who is not here.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:49:35](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:49:35](#) Legally, you know, at least if I could say it like that. And, um, so I wanted to create that impact.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:49:44](#) And it, the community that they were serving was mainly, um, you think immigrants?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:49:50](#) No.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:49:51](#) No.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:49:51](#) During that time. Um, I mean, we're talking about closer to Santa Monica. And so, um, at that moment, no, the, the majority of the people that were there that were coming into services, it was mixed. Um, but the majority were, uh, Caucasian, African American, um, Latino and Asian. Um, you know, and other ethnicities were a minority minority. Even when I started working for that agency, uh, it wasn't until I left that we started having More of the, um, Latino, um, co-workers. I clearly remember when I was in an office where, um, I was working with two of my co-workers were white. One was, uh, Filipina, and then I was sitting in that room with them. And then, um, then came, uh, my friend Rosario, you know, who came into work, and she was put in our, in our group. And I was

so happy to have someone else that was like me. <laugh>. <laugh>. Yeah. So little by little.

- Gloria Sosa: [00:51:04](#) It was your friend, uh, also undocumented?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:51:08](#) No. No.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:51:09](#) And she was just your friend?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:51:10](#) Yeah, she became my friend. Doing That.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:51:18](#) Okay. So, um, how did your participation in the student activism constantly shape your personal, professional, political, philosophical growth? How did it shape your activism within the immigrants Right. Movement after graduation? So we touched briefly, um, how to change in your sharing your story. And is there anything else that have, um, that that experience that suit him, caused the influence in any other way in life?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:51:50](#) Just being able to give back and, you know, just being able to be able to share my story and motivate, you know, patients that come in that are students and that are going through that and letting them know that it is possible. You know, or even those students that come in and that, you know, they are documented, they were born here, uh, but they just don't have the motivation. And they're like, well, I don't know what I want, or.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:52:20](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:52:20](#) It's taking me so long. And then being able to share a part of you where you can motivate them as well.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:52:28](#) Nice. Yes. And that's just a recap of what were talking about. Can you describe, uh, the impact that you think, um, SURGE has had on the undocumented youth movement and the immigrants rights movement?
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:52:45](#) I don't know if I can speak, uh, too much of it now.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:52:48](#) Bring your perspective.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:52:49](#) Um, but I think, uh, back then it was, uh, I mean, not every undocumented student wants to participate in it, right?
- Gloria Sosa: [00:53:00](#) Right. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.



Yadira Ramirez: [00:53:01](#) But for those who were open and who were into it, I think it was, it was, uh, it was a place where, or a group where you just, uh, what were able to be yourself, were able to be seen, were able to be counted where you didn't have to be invisible. So it played a, a major role, um, in the students that really wanted, um, a difference. Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:53:37](#) Yeah. I think that it, just finding that community, right?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:53:40](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [00:53:42](#) Made others feel more encouraged.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:53:44](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:53:48](#) Um, um, we're, we're done with the questions, but I do wanna ask you, um, and you touch about, um, how will you get your residency, you started working for the county. Will you mind sharing if, if it's okay with you wouldn't mind sharing, what was that about? I mean, after so long of being in school.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:54:07](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [00:54:08](#) And working in jobs where, um, your, your level of education was questioned of, what were you doing these jobs, if you had a master's degree, how did it feel? How was the shift?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:54:19](#) It was, you know, I think, um, it was a lot of disbelief at the beginning. So, like I said, I left no cheese, and I went to work with my Nina.

Gloria Sosa: [00:54:47](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:54:48](#) Cleaning houses. I helped her with two houses in a specific one, is, um, they are, uh, amazing people, very open and caring, and they are actually, um, writers and.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:55:06](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:55:06](#) Um, I'm sure you've seen some of the movies, but I mean, they were the writers of, uh, for example, Tarzan, you know? Oh, wow. Um, so they were really nice. And I never felt like less than or anything like that.

Gloria Sosa: [00:55:21](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:55:22](#) But then the other couple were, we will go.

Gloria Sosa: [00:55:26](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:55:26](#) Not that they were racist or mean or anything, but just the feeling, the vibe that you got was very different. It was not as welcoming. It was like, we're the boss and you're here to do this job.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:55:42](#) And, um, and so, you know, when I, I was, I was with them for about three, four months. And then after that I told them that, you know, I, I basically said, thank you for the opportunity to allow my Nina, you know, to bring me in to help her. And, you know, that I was actually going to leave or stop working because I had found a job. And they were surprised. And they said, well, where are you going? And I said, oh, I'm going with the county. And they're like, to do what? And I said, oh, I'm actually, I got hired as a psychiatric social worker. And they were just dumbfounded. They were like, oh, we didn't know that you had gone to school.

Gloria Sosa: [00:56:26](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:56:27](#) And I said, yes, I, I do, I actually have a master's degree in social work. And they were really, really surprised. And I noticed that they kind of, after that could, 'cause I still came back, you know, like, I gave like a two week notice. Um, and so I came back and the treatment was very different.

Gloria Sosa: [00:56:47](#) Really?

Yadira Ramirez: [00:56:48](#) Yeah. I could tell that the treatment was more of an equal treatment than just, uh, than just, uh, you know, uh, someone that worked there. Um, the lady was actually a kindergarten teacher.

Gloria Sosa: [00:57:02](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [00:57:03](#) And, um, he was a, a restaurant. He had a restaurant owner. He was a restaurant owner. And so I think, you know, it just made it seem like here I am at, at their level in some ways. I left and I started working with the county and, uh, uh, going from cleaning toilets, you know, cleaning the bathroom to working at an office, you know, and, and providing a different kind of service. It was just like, oh my gosh, I can't believe that I'm doing this. It was scary. It was scary, but it was something that I, I had worked for. And, um, something happened with SURGE. I don't know if it was, there was an event, but something, I don't know if it was Christmas, I'm not sure. But I started working in

July, uh, at the, with the county. And, um, I don't know how it happened, but I remember that there was an event and that I went, and Erika was there, Angie, and she was sitting across from me, and I was just so happy. And I think about this, and I say, oh my gosh, yo creo que que I came across as someone maybe that was, uh, se creía, se creío you know, se me suvio maybe?

- Gloria Sosa: [00:58:30](#) <laugh>
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:58:31](#) Because I went in there and I had my, um, my first pay, I had a paycheck with me, you know? And, um, and I clearly remember that it said like, \$50,000 that I had made \$50,000, or, or it had the amount that I was gonna make a month or something like that. I, that's what I remember. And I showed it to her and I said, look at what I'm gonna be making. And she was very happy for me, but I still remember that time as I couldn't believe.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:59:13](#) Right.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:59:13](#) That me, you know, me.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:59:27](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:59:29](#) Was able to come and, you know, had made it happen and was gonna make, you know, a decent amount of money.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:59:39](#) I mean compared to what you were making.
- Yadira Ramirez: [00:59:40](#) 67And at that moment just seemed a, a lot, you know, a lot. Yeah. Compared to what I was making. I mean, my Nina, she was so, so grateful, and I mean, she was so nice. And, you know, she will pay me, um, half of what she will make, you know, and some of these places only paid her \$150, so, you know, it, it was not a lot that I will get in a week. Maybe in a week I will make \$200. You know? So it was, um, it was, it was just unbelievable, I guess, that I had made it.
- Gloria Sosa: [01:00:21](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.
- Yadira Ramirez: [01:00:21](#) But again, I, I clearly remember showing that to Ika. I, yeah. It was Ika, and then I felt bad. I felt bad for, I kind of felt like I was showing off and, and, and I felt bad that maybe I made her uncomfortable that here, I had made it, you know, and that she was still struggling.
- Gloria Sosa: [01:00:43](#) I don't know if you can understand me.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:00:45](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:00:46](#) But I felt embarrassed and I felt bad afterwards, and I just put it away. And it's something that I still think about, like, how did you do that? Why did you do that? But I guess I was just proud. Right. I was just proud. I just wanted to share. And, and it meant this is how much I'm worth in some ways, you know, or this is what I have worked for all these years.

Gloria Sosa: [01:01:10](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:10](#) And I guess I just wanted to share, and I don't know if I just did it the wrong way.

Gloria Sosa: [01:01:15](#) I mean, who knows. Right?

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:17](#) I don't know what her thoughts are, you know?

Gloria Sosa: [01:01:18](#) Right. We would have to ask Erika what, when she thought about it.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:21](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [01:01:22](#) But I, I mean yeah. Mean you were proud of wanting to share with them because they were more than your friends and were like, your family.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:31](#) Yeah. But you know how things can be, they can be misinterpreted.

Gloria Sosa: [01:01:34](#) True.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:36](#) And everything. Oh, ya se la suvio. Or whatever. But it's still, it's still something that is here, you know, that I still remember that I did. It hasn't gone away. And, you know, from there on, uh, as time went by.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:01:55](#) As time went by, I remember that, um, there is something that I, maybe it's just my personality, I don't know. But once we had a, um, uh, we had an event at work where it was about getting to know your peers, you know, getting to know who they are. And at your first job at my, at the county, yes. So it was more of a, like a little retreat for us to get to know each other.

Gloria Sosa: [01:02:27](#) Mm-Hmm.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:02:27](#) And have that time. And so, you know, the, the boss, the main boss, you know, he basically was asking, you know, who knows, uh, the name of the cleaning personnel, you know, the cleaning staff.

Gloria Sosa: [01:02:42](#) Okay.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:02:43](#) And the only one who knew them was me, was me. You know, I made the time to get to know them, you know. But again, they were two Latina co-workers, you know, again, the, the, the clinic itself transformed towards the end. When I left, we had more Latinas or Latinos working there. Uh, it was more mixed. But at the beginning, when I came in, in, in 2007, it was mainly a Caucasian, you know.

Gloria Sosa: [01:03:14](#) Dominated place.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:03:16](#) Dominated place.

Gloria Sosa: [01:03:17](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:03:17](#) Yeah. So I, I knew who they were. I knew their names. I mean, this was actually given to me by one of them. And this has, um, <laugh>, uh, this was given to me in 2011.

Gloria Sosa: [01:03:30](#) Oh, wow. So that's, that has like been with your client for 11 years.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:03:36](#) Yeah. It's, uh, it was given to me by name, and it was nine. Yeah. So I think, um, again, I'm not sure if it's my personality or if it's a combination of knowing where I come from, you know? Right. And being able to, uh, you know, being able to understand them.

Gloria Sosa: [01:03:57](#) Right.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:03:59](#) Yeah.

Gloria Sosa: [01:04:01](#) Nice. Thank you for sharing that.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:04:03](#) Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Gloria Sosa: [01:04:04](#) Well, we are all done with the questions, officially. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Yadira Ramirez: [01:04:13](#) I think I said it already that I wish had been there from the beginning, you know, because again, when I, uh, when I was

done with the Bachelor's, it was, uh, I went into a deep depression as to, you know, you know, all these things. And I think it would've been really helpful to be able to know that. And the people that I did know, you know, that were.

Gloria Sosa: [01:04:44](#)

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>,

Yadira Ramirez: [01:04:44](#)

Uh, undocumented, or that were in that situation, they didn't wanna talk about it. You know, they, they didn't wanna see themselves as that. Um, because I do have, uh, two, two of my friends that came from the same high school, they were actually the ones that, um, went to Cal State LA first, and that helped me get the job at Tolchini's.

Gloria Sosa: [01:05:05](#)

Mm-Hmm.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:05:06](#)

Um, one of them is actually an anesthesiologist.

Gloria Sosa: [01:05:10](#)

Mm-Hmm.

Yadira Ramirez: [01:05:10](#)

And the other one is an engineer. And, um, but they were not as involved. All they wanted was just, you know, to get ahead. And that's how I understood, you know, that we're all different, you know, but that doesn't mean that we're bad people. Uh, it's just the goal is different. And I myself, uh, needed more, um, a community where I, I felt like I fitted, you know?

Gloria Sosa: [01:05:42](#)

Yeah. Well, thank you so much Yadira, for sharing those memories and your time with me.