



September 2021

Dear Friend,

When Marina Palma came to the United States in 1974, she brought with her a passion for community service learned in her childhood: *“My grandmother taught us that we must share what we have and help others whenever we can. I have always carried forward this mentality. In El Salvador, I was involved in Ecological Brigades and we helped get water to rural communities, establish wells, and build latrines.”*

In the past year, as the pandemic has taken a disproportionate toll on Latino immigrant families, Marina’s commitment to service has been more important than ever. She’s been part of a team of Canal community members, called the Voces del Canal, who have received mentorship and support from Canal Alliance to work alongside staff to provide crucial resources to their families, neighbors, and community.

As Senior Manager of Covid Response, I have had the privilege of working alongside Marina and other community leaders to support Latino families to weather the most devastating effects of the pandemic.

**Will you continue to stand with Canal Alliance and Canal community leaders to support Latino families in Marin? [Please renew your investment by making another generous gift today.](#)**

Marina explains that her relationship with Canal Alliance began just after she arrived in Marin:

*“When I arrived in Marin with my family, I had many needs and I didn’t know who to turn to. This is how I got connected with Canal Alliance and began receiving support. They’ve helped me with rent, therapy, keeping a roof over my head, and becoming a U.S. citizen. Because they helped me improve my life, helped me be safe, and helped my grandchildren, I later got involved as a volunteer with Canal Alliance.*

*Having benefited from all of Canal Alliance’s services, I can explain their services to anyone in the community; because I have been supported by them myself, I know firsthand that they help.”*

**[Please make another gift today](#) to help Canal Alliance support people like Marina to achieve their goals for financial stability, citizenship, and well-being.**

Throughout the pandemic, Marina and her fellow community volunteers have been crucial partners of Canal Alliance. There were already many disparities between the Canal and other neighborhoods in Marin, and those disparities were only worsened by the crisis. Many Canal residents lost their jobs, and most families experienced significant income loss. Those who were able to continue working formed Marin’s essential workforce, and they were much more likely to be exposed to Covid, get sick, and bring the virus home to their families. This was especially devastating, since families in the Canal were far less likely than others in Marin to have access to food, services, and healthcare providers they could trust. Many also lacked space to quarantine, since multiple families often share a single apartment in the Canal.

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**With the help of generous donors like you, and in partnership with community members like Marina, Canal Alliance provided quality, trusted support to Canal families during the worst of the pandemic – and continues to do so today.** We designed our efforts based on feedback from community members about what services were needed and which outreach efforts would be most effective. We trained community members, like Marina, to distribute health information, to work as contact investigators to help stem the spread of the virus, and to directly provide testing. We have provided regular testing and vaccination drives at our office in the heart of the Canal to make it easy for the hardest-hit community in Marin to access services from people they trust.

**While I'm proud of how we've partnered with community members to provide essential services through the worst of the pandemic, I also know that we can't relax now.** So much remains uncertain about what will happen next with this pandemic. How badly will the Delta variant impact the community? How will it affect job loss and in-person education? Will other dangerous strains of Covid-19 sweep through our communities?

Beyond the pandemic, the Canal community also faces disproportionate impacts from environmental crises like sea level rise, public safety power shutoffs, and wildfire smoke, and many families in the Canal face a rising rental debt crisis and fear the possibility of being evicted from their homes.

**What happens in the Canal affects the entire Marin community – the pandemic taught us that no one is safe unless we're all safe.** To ensure that our community is a safe space for everyone, people will need more than vaccinations: they need financial support to keep food on the table and remain housed, they need support to acquire the new skills that jobs in the post-pandemic economy will require, and they need access to health care and academic support to close the opportunity gaps that have been deepened by the pandemic.

**We need your continued support to ensure that we can respond quickly to crises while also providing programs that help Latino immigrants achieve their long-term goals. [Please make a generous gift today.](#)**

I greatly admire Marina for continuing her family's tradition of service. In addition to serving as a community leader, she is currently a board member with San Rafael City Schools. She is also fostering a spirit of service in her grandchildren. She says, *"I take my grandchildren with me when I go door to door handing out information about the vaccine. I take them to help set up for soccer league games. If one of my grandchildren gets involved as a community leader, I would be content."*

I am proud to be part of an organization that continues to support the Canal community with the resources that residents tell us matter most – after all, our clients are the experts on their lives and their needs. I am proud, too, that we are passionate about making a difference by developing strong relationships in the community that are based on trust. Canal Alliance is so effective at what we set out to do because we partner with community members like Marina to create and implement programs and solutions that work best for the people we serve.

**You are also a central partner in our work – Canal Alliance cannot provide the essential services or trusted support that is helping Canal residents to weather this crisis without committed, generous donors like you.**

**[Please make another gift today](#) and help us create a Marin where *everyone* can live, learn, work and succeed.**

Gracias,



Yolanda Oviedo

Senior Manager of COVID Response