



## Maria & Jim: "This is my Idea of America"

Maria Marroquin (former day worker, Executive Director of Day Worker Center of Mountain View): "I came here for economic reasons, with my son. I sold pots and pans, I sorted clothes in a second-hand clothes store, but my life changed when I came to the Day Worker Center.

"First I found work cleaning houses. When I came here, it was hard to understand that now I needed to do the work that in Mexico I paid for. When I finally got work and I finished the job, I felt like a heroine, that I'm really strong, I'm a survivor. I felt that I was powerful, that I was capable of changing my life.

"More importantly, I became passionate about the day workers. I saw how they struggle, and how they suffer. It's like the waters parted for me. I began coming to the Center to give the workers rides to work, and started to volunteer in the office. I helped to organize the workers, to keep a list. I got involved with community activism, and started going to City Council meetings.

"At one point, I took English classes at a school that is supported by Philanthropic Ventures. Now, they are one of the foundations that supports us, and I am Executive Director of the Center. It's a small world.

"My story isn't unique. This could be repeated many, many times, thanks to organizations like the Day Worker Center, and the opportunities that they provide."

Jim (Day Worker Center volunteer, retired businessman): "There's a lot of wasted effort and money in nonprofits, when compared with the results. But that's not true of the Day Worker Center.

"I've met a lot of nice people at the Center, and I've seen them struggle and face challenges, and succeed.

"This is my idea of America — how America can work."