

# I rise

FOR OUR UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE WHO STILL SEEK SHELTER IN THE SHADOWS WITH VERY VALID, YET PAINFUL REASONS.



*Karina Aquiahuatl Villagran, Mosaic Ambassador*

I rise for our undocumented people whose voices are silenced. Our voices are silenced as soon as we internalize the belief that living in the shadows is our best chance at assimilating. We know this is oppression, but it keeps us relatively safe from deportation, discrimination, prejudice and their ripple effects that wound our families and spirits of life. Essentially, our shelter in the shadows is living fear in silence.

Alike many of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country, I was born on the “wrong” side of the border. My home country is Mexico, Mexico City where I recollect 7 years worth of wonderful countryside memories with my mom’s family. I

also vividly remember my crises of identity when I realized I was the abandoned child in the family. As a single mother and head of the household, my mom worked vehemently with a desperate heart for our reunion. In 2005, “coyotes” brought me over the border, across grasslands and from underground housing networks to my mother-daughter reunion. While we did bond effortlessly, I was well aware of my suppressed resentment toward my mom’s decision; a decision I felt placed me in a deeper crisis of identity than ever before. After many reflections and questions, I have come to understand and respect her valiant decision.

Shortly after making peace with the decision that flipped my world on its head, the 2016 election happened. I could not stop crying. Feelings of betrayal, anxiety and confusion pained my mind and body. Then, everything changed when my dear friend asked me to speak out. You see, I am an immigrant with privilege in this country. DACA temporarily protects me from deportation, and it grants me permission to work here. Most importantly, it gives way for the peace of mind many undocumented immigrants are very likely to never experience. I am an immigrant with privilege.

When my dear friend asked me to advocate and organize for change, it dawned on me that I could no longer remain silenced. Had I rejected her hand for help, I would have done a great injustice to her, my loved ones, our fighters in the shadows, and myself.

I rise for our undocumented people who still seek shelter in the shadows with very valid, yet painful reasons.

