

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[MEDIA KIT](#)

[MEET OUR WRITERS](#)

[CONTACT](#)



stella & dot

[SHOP FOR A CAUSE >](#)

---

[FEATURED LATINAS](#)

[BEAUTY](#)

[BOOK REVIEWS](#)

[COLLEGE & CAREER](#)

[CONTESTS & PROMOTIONS](#)

[COMMUNITY](#)

[MOVIES & MUSIC](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[HEALTHY LIVING](#)

[IN THE NEWS](#)

[MODERN MOM](#)

[BLOGGER CRUSH](#)

[RECIPES](#)

[FASHION](#)

[TRAVEL](#)

[SHOPPING](#)

[DIY](#)

[ART & CULTURE](#)

---

You are here: [Home](#) / [Community](#) / Community Spotlight: Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)

---

# Community Spotlight: Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)

August 30, 2018 by editor

[+](#) Share / Save [f](#) [t](#) [r](#)



by Linda Castillo

Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN) was founded by attorneys, immigrant rights activists and advocates over 31 years ago in response to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act to assure that immigrants and refugees in Silicon Valley would have a place to land for legal services, receive support on an advocacy level for those that didn't receive amnesty. Over the years, SIREN has grown to include policy analysis and advocacy, community education, legal services, civic engagement and

community and service provider trainings.

I had a chance to speak with SIREN's Executive Director, Maricela Gutiérrez. Maricela's parents came from San Lu s Potos , Mexico over 40 years ago to the Central Valley, California. Growing up in a farm working rural area, she experienced firsthand the economic equity issues that are still apparent today for immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants. She saw the lack of health care, lack of well-paying jobs with benefits and overall lack of resources. She experienced 7 to 8 ICE deportation interactions growing up which formed her view of the world. She always grew up knowing she wanted to do something about it.

As the Executive Director of SIREN, she is overseeing the many different pillars of work to carry out SIREN's mission to empower to empower low-income immigrants and refugees through community education and organizing, leadership development, policy advocacy, civic engagement and legal services.

“(SIREN) has evolved to what it is today by adding more robust legal services, adding a civic engagement component, adding a youth leadership model and we have expanded through the years to now have offices in the Central Valley. That was one of my goals right when I came on about three years ago. I picked the best time to join SIREN when Trump was starting his campaign and getting elected,” Maricela noted.

SIREN's services are more critical now than ever. To that end, SIREN is working to decrease enforcement of ICE and building more sanctuary spaces, community organizing people that are most affected by the issues should be at front and center at the table and be the agents of change. The organization ensures their voices are heard and provides civic engagement avenues to vote and create policy via voter education, registration, voter forums, and providing a progressive voting ballot every year.



“Siren was made for this moment in time. And we have all the elements needed to build immigrant power and build a system of protection for immigrants and refugees and continue to push forward policy change,” said Maricela.

Maricela explained that all of SIREN’s services are accessible and it reduces the barriers by providing high quality services in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Farsi for free or low cost. In addition to serving the Silicon Valley area, many people drive in from other areas including Sacramento, Madera, Hollister, Santa Cruz, Turlock, Watsonville, and Santa Maria. People start lining up in the morning at 7 am for the drop in clinic.

Most immigrants have no right to an appointed attorney in immigration detention and deportation proceedings, even though many have legal avenues to fight their case and given the increased detention under the new administration SIREN is prioritizing building up its Removal Defense work in both Northern and Central California.

“A lot of people are worried about their children if targeted by ICE. I think it provides a sense of relief for them to know what the options are,” said Maricela.

SIREN also runs a free DACA clinic and raises the funds to provide a scholarship to cover the filing fee so

there is no barrier for any young person interested in renewing their DACA. There is also a free citizenship application assistance to process application for free and apply for a stipend to cover \$1000 filing fee.



“Your status doesn’t define who you are, your humanity does. So a label describing your citizenship status is not what is most important. What’s most important is who you are as an individual, your history, your struggles, and what your represent. Your dream and vision of a better world and a world that we are all fighting for is going to be a reality. Maybe not today but tomorrow for sure” Maricela shared this message to all undocumented immigrants, DACA youth and those youth who don’t qualify for DACA.

## **VOTAR PARA GANAR / VOTE TO WIN**

This year SIREN has a campaign “VOTAR PARA GANAR/VOTE TO WIN”. There is an opportunity pass measures and put people in positions where they understand the community, value immigrants and economic impact that they bring to the community. Investing in immigrants is a win-win for everyone.

Maricela noted that the biggest power that we have right now is our young people. Young people are a force seen nationwide demanding change on gun reform, better schools, and decreasing the school to prison pipeline. She stressed that we need to mobilize those young people to come out and vote to continue to be active voters.

“I think the Modern Latina is well-informed, highly educated, a power-house and we are very resourceful. We have the power in our hands. We are active on social media. Get the word out on social media, tag your friends, start tweeting, Facebook,” said Maricela.



Volunteers are always needed to help with the civic engagement work that SIREN is doing in the local areas. They are the backbone of our advocacy work.

Maricela ended the interview on a powerful note stating that “El cambio eres tu! You are the change. That creates a spark to make change in your home with your parents, brothers sisters, and children, then goes out to the community. It’s always micro to macro impact.”

Wednesday, August 29 at 6 PM – 8 PM you can join SIREN to defend and protect immigrant lives!

WE ARE CALLING FOR THE ABOLITION OF ICE AND IMMIGRANT DETENTION, REUNIFICATION OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES, AND PERMANENT LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT ALL IMMIGRANTS.

# ABOLISH ICE SUPPORT DACA RALLY



#SIRENforjustice  
#LiberationforALL

#AbolishICE  
#CleanDreamAct

We are calling for the Abolition of ICE & immigrant & refugee detention, reunification of immigrant children, & permanent legislation to support all immigrants & refugees

**SAN JOSE CITY HALL  
200 E. SANTA CLARA ST., SAN JOSE, CA**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2018 • 6:00 PM**

**[www.siren-bayarea.org](http://www.siren-bayarea.org) • [info@siren-bayarea.org](mailto:info@siren-bayarea.org)**

For more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/447197485771457/>

Note: All images courtesy of <http://www.siren-bayarea.org/>.

**Linda Castillo** is the Founder and Executive Editor of [www.ModernLatina.com](http://www.ModernLatina.com). She writes on topics that empower and inspire Latinas including art, motherhood, green living, culture, travel, and issues transforming the Latino community. Linda has earned a B.S. in Business and a M.S. in Mass Communications from San Jose State University.

Filed Under: **Community**

Tagged With: **Abolish ICE, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN), Services, SIREN, Support DACA**

FOLLOW US!



Search the site ...

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

FREE Modern Latina eNewsletter. Your **privacy** is



guaranteed.

E-mail Address:

Name:

SUBMIT

FEATURED VIDEO

MISS BALA - Official Traile...



#ModernLatinaBookClub



**SPANX**

SHOP LEGGINGS



**GYMBOREE**

today!  
**free shipping**

**SHOP NOW**



**TOMS**

WITH EVERY PRODUCT YOU PURCHASE, TOMS WILL HELP A PERSON IN NEED. ONE FOR ONE.

SHOP + GIVE

### RECENT POSTS

Our Favorite Valentine’s Day Activities by Crafty Chica

Frida Kahlo Passions – A Mexico City Travel Guide

Gina Rodriguez stars in Miss Bala

Leaning in—why are we trying to kill it?

Juana Briones of 19th Century California by Jeanne Farr McDonnell #ModernLatinaBookClub

### CATEGORY TAGS

Art & Culture Beauty Blogger Crush Book Reviews College and Career Community Contests & Promotions DIY Events Fashion Featured Latinas Healthy Living In the News Modern Mom Movies & Music Recipes Shopping Travel

### CATEGORIES

Select Category

### ARCHIVED POSTS

Select Month

Copyright © 2019 · Magazine Pro on Genesis Framework · WordPress · Log in