

Hello, my name is Ivonn Rivera. I am originally from Oaxaca, Mexico. I have four children and a good husband. I have been living in San Jose, CA for 18 years.

I have been a victim of vandalism in my community. My car's windows were broken five times, but no one was held responsible. Ultimately, my parked car was hit and left unusable. It was so frustrating!

At St. Lucy parish, I met Mr. Thomas Morman, who was a member of the parish organizing group with Silicon Valley Sponsoring Committee. He told me about the work they do to organize and make changes in the community.

Then, I spoke with the team members about the *misas del barrio* the parish had previously done in the parking lots in the neighborhood, which were canceled due to the pandemic.

With support from Bishop Cantú and our pastor, Fr. Rick Rodoni, we restarted the *misas*, held monthly. After each mass we have house meetings where the community shares about needs they are facing.

This helped us become organized and respond to the needs of our neighborhood.

We had a tragedy on September 16 of last year in the neighborhood where I live. A child was hit by a car and lost his life because there was no stop sign, and no crosswalk.

We had an action with more than 250 people marching to the Church to meet with the city officials to ask for stop signs at the school. We were successful! Within two weeks they were posting stop signs and a crosswalk where the children can cross.

Now I am president of the community of the "Cadillac" neighborhood.

We met with the council member of the district where I live, to talk about the insecurity that exists in the neighborhood. On April 26, we took a walk at night in the neighborhood, seeing the darkness and the problems facing the neighborhood. This gave me hope and I realized my voice has power.

The council member is responding to what is important to my community. I have a good relationship with her. She tells me, "Don't give up, Ivonn." She appreciates my leadership.

We are also having the trees in my neighborhood trimmed so there can be better lighting and people can walk more safely. The councilwoman is now working with the housing department to send the building owners a letter asking them to trim the trees that obstruct the lighting.

I always carry in my heart a Scripture passage from Romans 4:20, "He was empowered by faith and gave glory to God." My faith gives me confidence and determination.

I am very happy that my daughter, Lupita, accompanies me today because I want to inspire her to serve her community, where there is much to do. I want to show her that things can be achieved with patience, love and dedication.

To conclude, I thank the Catholic Campaign for Human Development for being a sponsor of the Silicon Valley Sponsoring Committee. Thank you so much for walking with us.