

¡SI SE PUEDE!

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:01] Hola todos those some Wilmer Valderrama

MR Raquel [00:00:03] And I'm MR Raquel. Hey Wilmer?

Wilmer Valderrama Yeahhhh?

MR Raquel Happy Hispanic Heritage Month!

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:08] Oh, yes. Happy Hispanic is not like the whole thing is not a happy Hispanic Heritage Month. Right. So, like, happy Thanksgiving. I don't think Hispanic Heritage Month. Right.

MR Raquel [00:00:17] Yeah. Yeah, right.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:19] OK, yeah. How do you I'm so curious. How do you spend it like you don't make a turkey.

MR Raquel [00:00:24] Yeah. I would say I baked one turkey every single day for Hispanic Heritage Month.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:29] Is it because it's nice and golden and brown. Exactly.

MR Raquel [00:00:33] Yeah, that's right.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:34] Well how about we start the new tradition by speaking to some more amazing Latina women who have literally changed history with the work they do?

MR Raquel [00:00:43] Yes, I can't think of anything I'd rather do. And luckily, that's exactly what we have planned for today.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:00:50] So who are our incredible guests today?

MR Raquel [00:00:53] Our essential worker this week is Blanca Arroyo, who has been working on California farms for over 20 years and who didn't stop working to feed her family and yours when COVID hit. We were lucky to connect with her and learn what it's really like out there working in the fields. I'm so excited to share her story with all of you.

MR Raquel [00:00:56] who has been working on California farms for over 20 years. And we didn't stop working to feed her family and yours when covid hit. We were so lucky to connect with her and learn what it's really like out there working in the fields. I'm really excited to share her story with all of you.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:01:11] Me too. After Blanca's story, our roundtable truly does not get better than this. We have Mónica Ramírez, the founder and president of Justice for Migrant Women, who advocates for farmworkers and essential workers across a variety of fields and whose open letter about the #MeToo movement helped jump start the Times Up! organization. Along with Monica, we'll speak with the absolute legend, Dolores Huerta. It is nearly impossible to sum up Dolores' impact on this country and the world in such a short amount of time, but we're going to try.

MR Raquel [00:01:49] Señora Huerta has been a labor activist since the 1960s, co-founding the National Farmworkers Association with Cesar Chavez, organizing the Delano grape strike, working to pass numerous pieces of legislation to ensure the basic human rights of migrant workers, and at 91-years old she is still very much in the fight, having founded the Dolores Huerta Foundation in 2002. .

Wilmer Valderrama [00:02:13] My favorite bit of Dolores trivia however is that she is the originator of the call to action, "Si, se puede!"

MR Raquel [00:02:21] Si, se puede.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:02:23] I think I put a little too much sauce, you're supposed to yell.

MR Raquel [00:02:29] Ahhhh, I still can't believe we get to talk to Señora Huerta and Monica- what an huge honor. They both gave us incredible insight into the work that still needs to be done on behalf of farmworkers and immigrants, the unique challenges these essential workers faced these past 2 years, and how we can best support them.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:02:47] Honestly, to say these individuals are heroes of mine is an absolute understatement.

MR Raquel [00:02:52] But before we get started, this week we're doing something a little differently. Blanca spoke with us in Spanish, so to honor her story we'll be sharing her words with you all first in Spanish, and then afterwards in English for all you lovely gringos out there.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:03:06] Well, I'm excited to get to hear both versions, especially because for us, I know for us it's incredibly special to hear her voice and the language in which

she has lived her truth and the soul in her voice. Really, there's just one more thing before we get started.

MR Raquel [00:03:21] What did I forget?

Wilmer Valderrama [00:03:22] Well, you facilitated the conversation with Blanca this week.

MR Raquel [00:03:26] Oh, yeah, that's right. So, Blanca's story in Spanish starts right now. For English speakers, you can find the English version of Blanca's interview at 22 minutes.

Blanca Arroyo [00:03:40] Mi nombre es Blanca Arroyo. Yo vivo en el condado de Monterrey. Um, El estado de California. Tengo más de 20 años um... Este, soy una trabajadora agrícola.

MR Raquel [00:03:52] Blanca, le quiero agradecer muchísimo por hablar conmigo hoy, por compartir su historia, por su tiempo, y espero que con esta conversación se puede celebrar y reconocer el trabajo que usted ha hecho durante muchos años y aún lo hizo durante la pandemia cuando tantas personas se permanecieron en casa, mientras tanto usted estaba fuera de casa, allí en el field, cosechando los vegetales y las frutas para alimentar este país. ¿Puede describir cómo se ve un día típico para usted?

Blanca Arroyo [00:04:27] Ok, un día típico, pues nos levantamos a las cuatro y media de la mañana a hacer nuestro lonche para nosotros y para nuestros hijos. Después los llevas más, los llevas a la niñera, te vas a tu trabajo. El trabajo empieza a las 6 de la mañana hasta las 4 de la tarde. Trabajamos en el brócoli, en la uva, en la fresa, diferentes um, tipos de trabajo. Pero todo es en el campo. Cosechamos la fruta, cosechamos la verdura y después de nuestro trabajo tenemos que venir y recoger a nuestros hijos de la niñera. Para nosotros es difícil también porque muchas veces um, no estamos con ellos en días como su cumpleaños. Um, por la razón que tenemos que ir a trabajar. También es difícil porque los dejamos y otras personas.. la niñera es la que los lleva a la escuela. Entonces es un trabajo bastante duro, el campo también para nosotras, para las madres de familia. Yo trabajo porque yo no quiero ser una carga para el Estado. Yo no quiero ser una carga para el gobierno. Yo quiero salir adelante con mis hijos, trabajar para darles lo... lo poco o lo que yo puedo?

MR Raquel [00:05:51] Eso suena bien duro, bien difícil. Me imagino que sus hijos sienten mucho orgullo de todo lo que haces para ellos. Em... relacionado con la niñez, ¿Cuándo llegaste a este país? ¿Cuántos años tenías? y ¿por qué empezaste a trabajar en el field?

Blanca Arroyo [00:06:11] Um, cuando yo vine, yo tenía apenas catorce años. Entonces mi padre llegó primero a Estados Unidos y después vine yo. Pero yo pensé que yo venía como a la escuela, verdad? Tristemente no precisamente yo si quería la escuela, porque a mí siempre me ha

gustado la escuela. Pero atrás había quedado mi mamá, mi hermano chiquito y mi hermana. Entonces tuve que ir a trabajar con mi papá al brócoli y era muy difícil porque a veces no alcanzaba las máquinas. Y tu infancia, tu juventud pues. Se, Se termina porque tomas responsabilidades que no son tuyas. Tomar responsabilidades de ir a trabajar y desde ahí se te mete en la cabeza- Pues yo vine a este país a trabajar y a trabajar. Tus sueños.. se van.

MR Raquel [00:07:01] Poof, esa imagen de usted, que no podías alcanzar la máquina me llama la atención muchísimo. me muestra que durante una etapa en la que la mayoría de los niños en los Estados Unidos estaban en la escuela, usted estaba trabajando y apenas podía alcanzar las máquinas que necesitaba para trabajar. Eso es muy muy intenso. y parece que fue muy difícil para ti llegar aquí pensando que irías a la escuela cuando en realidad ibas a trabajar. Eso me llama la atención también. Y ya han pasado más de 20 años desde que empezaste a trabajar en el field. Definitivamente eres un experto en lo que haces. Describe lo que haces a diario, con qué verduras y frutas estás trabajando y cuál es el proceso de la cosecha.

Blanca Arroyo [00:07:53] Claro que sí. Mira, um si vas a trabajar al brócoli este llegas um, te pones tu ropa. Donde tienes que tienes que cortar el brócoli a después pasa una banda, va una máquina frente de ti y tienes que estar cortando, cortando, cortando el brócoli. Entonces las mujeres van arriba de las máquinas y los hombres van abajo cortándolo. Entonces ese brócoli? los están recogiendo, los tractores con los cajones grandes. Entonces él se va al empaque o al cooler y allí hay otras personas. Los están.. empaquetando en empacando. También este, um, los llevan para que lo hagan ensalada. Eso son los brócoli. Si vas a la uva, a un día normal, pues tienes que limpiar el... Lo que es la patita este de la de la uva brotando. Tienes que escoger los brotes que lleva cada mata. Después empieza a crecer más. Tienes que deshojarla, hacer espacio para que la uva, agarre el calor que necesita para que se ponga una madurez, que se madure, verdad? Entonces a la gente entras, pues puedes entrar a las tres de la mañana, a cortar uva. Las tienes que cargar con más de 20 libras 25 libras que tienes que estar cargando frecuentemente. Ir a vaciarlo a unos cajones. Entonces, después de que ya llenaste sus cajones, los cajones se van directamente a pesar. Después de pesar los los mueven a la wineria, son otras personas ahí en la wineria, um, se encargan de recibir esa esa uva y así el proceso hasta que se hace wine. Um, en la fresa.. Yo también trabajé en la fresa. Este igual. También te tienes que poner calidad y pura calidad, pura calidad y toda esa otras personas que las chequean para que pueda pasar, te las puedan pagar. Es mucho, Mija. Es mucho. Y todo eso lo hacen las personas como yo, los mis compañeros este las personas esenciales en este país.

MR Raquel [00:10:10] Haces tantos trabajos en un cualquier día, pero ¿hay algo de lo que estés particularmente orgulloso relacionado con tu trabajo, específicamente durante la pandemia?

Blanca Arroyo [00:10:21] Claro que sí. Yo creo que a todos nos sentimos orgullosos del trabajo que, que que hacemos. Y más como cuando ves que te llevan todo el producto, toda la fruta, toda

la verdura y llega cada una de tu casa. Tanto a mi casa como a tu casa, como a la casa del vecino. Hasta la casa del presidente llegó. Las verduras de California. Mmmm. Mmmm. Entonces. Allí es el tiempo que dices tú, Ahí está mi trabajo. Ahí está. Mi... se puede decir? Mi... ¿Cómo te lo explico? Mi... Orgullo de ser una persona esencial.

MR Raquel [00:11:05] Guau. Se me pone la piel de gallina imaginar que la comida que cosechaste se le sirve al presidente, eso de veras es un gran orgullo. es increíble. Entonces, parece que el trabajo no se ralentizó demasiado cuando ocurrió la pandemia, pero ¿cómo eran sus días en el trabajo antes de la pandemia y qué cambios diarios ocurrieron debido a la pandemia?

Blanca Arroyo [00:11:28] Anteriormente de que estuviera la pandemia... Todo era normal. Podía saludar a tus compañeros. Este, trabajabas, um pues tus 8 horas, tus 9 horas. Después de la pandemia ya no fue así. Después de la pandemia muchos perdimos nuestro trabajo a raíz de que no había quién te cuidará a tus hijos. Entonces ah, teníamos que quedarnos en casa, uno de los padres. En mi situación eh, mis hijos mayores tuvieron que cuidar a sus hermanos más pequeños para que pudiéramos yo pudiera salir a trabajar, verdad? Pero era que el miedo que no te puedes imaginar era un miedo de de traer el Covid a casa. Nos enfrentamos a una... En el field que tienes que trabajar de tu compañero.. dos surcos... um a un lado de él no puedes estar cerca de él, no puedes platicar con ellos, no puedes agarrar tu lonche con ellos, no puedes..eh.. Fue difícil. Si fue muy difícil porque...Después de una semana, creo que las dos semanas era un problema porque no había tampoco comida, en los supermercados. No había este comidas en el supermercado. Este, entonces era otro...otro drama más que nosotros... Vino a la cabeza de nosotras como madres. Por qué les vas a dar de comer a tus hijos? La la cena de tu casa se terminó. Entonces, en el field, uh el trabajo ya era diferente, porque ya no eran tantas horas después tuvimos, aparte de que en este condado donde nosotros vivimos, este, hubo quemazones, había mucho humo. Entonces...Tuvimos ese año...Yo te puedo decir bastante, bastante crítico. En una ocasión, yo en una ocasión, este, ya no había comida en el refrigerador. Ya no tenía comida. Y le llamé a una persona um, de mi centro, de donde tenía mi niño. Esa persona ah trajo comida a mi casa, a mi mesa. Gracias a ella yo tenía comida. Entonces yo de cierta manera, y yo me sentía que tenía que ir a hacer el trabajo y nadie me lo reconocía, nadie lo miraba. Y mis hijos ah, siendo ciudadanos, tuvieron que...uh, sufrir de cierta manera ah... carencias, um a veces con la comida ah, con la escuela, porque no, no había internet en la casas, para, para las computadoras. Es muy difícil, muchacha, es muy difícil, lo que pasamos.

MR Raquel [00:14:24] Lo que usted pasó durante la pandemia, nadie debería pasar por eso. y la ironía de que seas una persona que trabaja tan duro para proporcionar comida a los demás pero que usted y su familia no tenían comida es totalmente inaceptable y una gran disparidad que no solo debe ser abordada, sino resuelta. Jamás debería pasar por eso, jamás. Aunque le acabo de conocer hoy, estoy muy agradecido de que hayas apoyado a tus hijos, a pesar de lo difícil que fue. son muy afortunados de tenerte como mamá. eres una inspiración. algo que aún no hemos

mencionado, que se relaciona con el evidente problema de que en algunos momentos usted no tiene los recursos que necesitaba durante la pandemia, es la protección personal. Cuando estaba trabajando en el field, ¿se le proporcionaron mascarillas y otra protección personal?

Blanca Arroyo [00:15:31] Pues mira de principio um, si. Ellos te te daban um, las mascarillas, te daban eh, los guantes. Mi empleador, te puedo decir, trató de ayudarnos. Llegó el tiempo, que no había mascarillas, Entonces um, nosotros tuvimos que improvisar, pues nosotras las mujeres aquí en el condado de Monterrey usamos paños, usamos paños para taparnos la cara. Verdad? Pero a ver que las necesidades de la mascarilla este pues, improvisaron a muchas señoras, se pusieron a hacer sus propias mascaritas. Yo, yo gracias um, a diós, este mi familia tuvo a unas mascarillas que nos regalaron, este la señora Mónica, Mónica este, Ramírez, consiguió una persona en Los Ángeles, un diseñador o alguien que miró mi historia, supo de mi historia y este y mandó a unas mascarillas para mis padres que ya son mayores. Y eso también que te puedo decir, yo lo agradezco. Lo agradezco porque um pues fue una ayuda, me entiendes?

MR Raquel [00:16:41] Guau, es increíble escuchar sobre Monica y su organización para conseguirle máscarillas cuando las necesitaba. Saber que hay personas como Mónica que abogan por los trabajadores agrícolas hace una gran diferencia en la lucha por sus derechos, incluso cuando estos derechos deberían haber sido garantizados desde el principio. ¿Cuáles son algunos de los derechos y protecciones, y cambios que son necesarios para honrar, celebrar y respetar a los trabajadores agrícolas en este país?

Blanca Arroyo [00:17:15] Um, pues para mí, por ejemplo... que se reconozca nuestro trabajo, que estamos haciendo en el field y que vean que que nuestros... tanto yo como mis compañeros, como mi mamá, como mi padre, que trabajaban en el field por mucho tiempo, no se les valoró su trabajo. Entonces hoy día esas personas ya son mayores y se quedaron sin un seguro médico, se quedaron um, enfermos porque ya no pueden trabajar, porque seleccionaron en el trabajo y debido a su estatus migratorio ah, no pueden hacer nada. Entonces yo no quiero que pase esto conmigo, yo quiero que si yo sigo trabajando en el field, **um valoren que que por nosotros, por mucho de como yo, mis compañeros.. muchas personas que no tenían... que no tenían que salir a trabajar cuando empezó la pandemia tenían fruta, tenían verdura, tenían carne. Debido a que nosotros salíamos a trabajar y nosotros no teníamos el derecho de que a nosotros nos mandaban ayuda.** A nosotros no nos mandaron ayuda. Um, yo recibí una ayuda, este gracias a la fundación de César Chávez y gracias a ellos que dieron un, un ayuda a nosotros, los esenciales, aquí en California. No sé si en otros estados, pero a nosotros recibimos ayuda y yo agradezco um, a ellos um, a la señora Huerta, porque el señor Cesar Chavez ya no está, porque se preocuparon por nosotros los campesinos. **Si me gustaría de verdad, de verdad que, que vieran que somos humanos. Que vieran que no somos una carga pública, no somos. Somos como todas las personas que están en este país. Legales o no legales. Todos tenemos la misma importancia como**

seres humanos. Más que nada somos seres humanos con sentimientos. Somos esenciales en este país.

MR Raquel [00:19:24] Guau. Tengo la piel de gallina otra vez. Eso fue dicho con tanta fuerza, lo sentí en todos los huesos en mi cuerpo. No podría estar más de acuerdo con usted, y cada trabajador agrícola es vital y esencial para este país. Ya es hora, y ya ha sido hora, de que la gente en este país entienda que sin tu trabajo, literalmente, no podrían comer. Eres una inspiración para los trabajadores agrícolas del futuro. Así que solo tengo una última pregunta. Qué mensaje o mensajes le gustaría dejar para la próxima generación de trabajadores agrícolas?

Blanca Arroyo [00:20:04] Mi mensaje sería... ah, Que tu trabajo, el trabajo de todos los campesinos um se reconozca. Y no tenga miedo de hablar, no tengan miedo de decir sus derechos. Que pidan sus derechos. Que somos... um, vinimos a este país país a salir adelante. Um con nuestro esfuerzo, con nuestra dedicación en el trabajo, um. Que si vienes con una meta de salir adelante, sigas tu meta, no te desvíes y que si tu tienes la oportunidad de que tu voz se escuche por ti y por tus compañeros, no te dé miedo hablar, no te dé miedo decir um, lo que está pasando en tu cuadrilla, lo que está pasando en tu vida um de trabajo. Que tú digas, um si un empleador o un compañero de trabajo... Tu miras con una necesidad que él tenga y tú ves que alguien no lo ayuda... Tú puedes decir- por favor, ayuden a mi compañero. No te dé miedo. Porque nuestra voz vale. Nosotros valemos como personas, somos personas como todos los que están en este país.

MR Raquel [00:21:25] Blanca, mil gracias por estar aquí conmigo hoy. gracias por compartir su historia y por ser tan honesto al hacerlo. Le envío un abrazo a usted y a su familia.

Blanca Arroyo [00:21:38] Muchísimas gracias. Gracias um, A ti, por tomarte el tiempo de de llamarme y saber mi historia grave por la persona de todo el equipo- de todas las personas que están en frente como la Señora Mónica la Señora Huerta y el Señor Valderrama.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:21:57] We'll be right back after this break. Welcome back to Essential Voices.

MR Raquel [00:22:02] Blanca's English story starts now.

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:22:06] My name is Blanca Arroyo. I live in Monterey County in the state of California. I've spent more than 20 years working as a farm worker.

MR Raquel [00:22:15] Blanca, I want to thank you very much for speaking with me today, for sharing your story, for your time, and I hope that with this conversation you feel celebrated and recognized for the work that you have done for many years and still did during the pandemic.

When so many people stayed home, you were away from home, working in the field, harvesting the vegetables and fruits that fed this country. Can you describe what a typical work day looks like for you?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:22:49] On a typical day we get up at four thirty in the morning to make lunch for ourselves and our children. Then we take our kids to the babysitter and go to your work. Work starts at 6 in the morning and goes until 4 in the afternoon. We work on broccoli, grapes, strawberries- all different types of work. But everything we do is in the field. We harvest the fruit, we harvest the vegetables and then after our work we have to go and pick up our children from the babysitter. It's difficult for us too because many times we're not with our kids on days like their birthdays because we have to go to work. It's also difficult because we leave them with other people, like the babysitter, and they are the ones who take our kids to school, not us. So it is quite hard work both in the fields, and at home for us mothers. I work because I don't want to be a burden to the state. I don't want to be a burden to the government. I want to get ahead for my children, and I work to give them what ... what little I can, or everything that I possibly can.

MR Raquel [00:23:56] That sounds very hard, very difficult. I imagine your children take a lot of pride in everything you do for them. Um ... related to childhood, when did you come to this country? How old were you? And why did you start working as a farmworker?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:24:23] Um, when I came, I was only fourteen years old. My father came to the United States first and then I came. But I thought I was going to go to school, right? Sadly, that's not what happened, and I always really liked school. But my mother and my little siblings stayed behind, so I had to go to work with my dad on the broccoli. And it was very difficult because [I was so young] that sometimes I couldn't reach the machines. And [when you start working so hard at such a young age] your childhood, your youth... it ends because you take on responsibilities that are not yours to take on at that moment. I took on the responsibility to go to work and from that moment [this mentality] gets into your head of, "Well, I came to this country to work and to work." [And because of this], your dreams .. go away

MR Raquel [00:25:30] Wow, that image that you shared, when you couldn't reach the machine, really sticks out to me. This shows me that during a time when most children in the United states were in school, you were working and could barely even reach the machines you needed to work. That is very very intense. And it sounds like it was difficult for you to get here thinking you were going to school when you were actually going to work. That's also something that sticks out to me. And it's been more than 20 years since you started working in the field. You are definitely an expert in what you do. Describe what you do every day, what vegetables and fruits you are working with, and what the harvest process is like?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:26:17] Yeah, sure. Look, if you go to work on the broccoli you first put your broccoli cutting clothes on. Then you go to where you have to cut the broccoli, then a big band passes along, and a machine goes in front of you and you have to be cutting, cutting, cutting the broccoli. And then the women go on top of the machines and the men go below cutting the broccoli. And so that broccoli? It's getting picked up by huge tractors. Then the broccoli goes to the packaging center or the cooler and there are other people there. They're .. packaging the broccoli. Also they take the broccoli and get it separated for salads. That's working with broccoli. If you go to work with grapes, on a normal day, then you have to clean the bit of the grape that is sprouting. You have to choose the shoots that each bush has. Then it starts to grow more. You have to take off the leaves, making room for each grape to take in the heat it needs for it to mature, to ripen, right? When you're working with grapes, people can go in at three in the morning, to cut grapes. You have to carry them, more than 20 pounds 25 pounds, that you have to be carrying frequently. Then you empty it in barrels. After you've already filled the barrels, the grapes get weighed. After weighing them, they're moved to the winery. There are other people there in the winery, um, the're in charge of receiving the grapes and processing them until wine is made. And, um, if you're working with strawberries .. because I also work with strawberries. It's the same [as the grapes]. You also have to make sure you're only picking quality produce because there are people who check the quality so that it can pass and then you get paid. **Blanca Arroyo:** It's a lot, Mija. It's a lot. And all of that is done by people like me, my colleagues and essential workers in this country

MR Raquel [00:28:22] It sounds like you do so many jobs on any given day, even if you're only doing one of the jobs that you mentioned, there's still so many different components. But is there anything that you're particularly proud of related to your job that happened specifically during the pandemic?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:28:38] Yes, of course. I believe that we are all proud of the work that we do. And even more so when you see that all of the produce, all the fruit, all the vegetables can be found in people's homes. To my house, to yours, to your neighbor's house. It even arrives at the president's house. California vegetables. That's when you say, "There's my work, there's my work." There's my... how do I explain it? My... pride to be an essential worker.

MR Raquel [00:29:18] Wow. It gives me goosebumps to imagine that the food you harvested is served to the president, that really is a source of great pride. It is incredible. So it looks like work didn't slow down too much when the pandemic happened, but what were your days at work like before the pandemic, and what daily changes occurred due to the pandemic?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:29:43] Before the pandemic ... Everything was normal. You could greet your colleagues. You were working, um, your 8 hours, your 9 hours. After the pandemic it was no longer like that. After the pandemic, many of us lost our jobs because there was no one who would take care of our children. So, we had to stay home, [at least] one of the parents. In my situation, uh, my older children had to take care of their younger siblings so that we could go out to work, right? But there was a fear that you cannot imagine... a fear of bringing Covid home. We are faced with a ... In the field that you have to work with your partner ... two grooves... um next to them you can't be near them, you can't talk to them, you can't grab your lunch with them, you can't .. uh .. It was difficult. It was very difficult because ... After a week, I think maybe after two weeks there was a problem because there was no food in the supermarkets. There was no food in the supermarket. This was another ... another trauma for us to endure and it was at the top of our minds for us as mothers. What are you going to feed your children? There's no more dinner for your kids at home. So, in the field, uh, the work was already different, because there were not as many hours for us to work. Later on there were a lot of fires, and there was a lot of smoke. So ... We had a year ... I'll tell you, it was difficult, real difficult. On one occasion... on one occasion there was no more food in the refrigerator. I no longer had food. And I called someone, um, from the childcare center where I would drop off my child. That person brought food to my house, to my table. Thanks to her I had food...In a certain way, I felt that I had to go to work and nobody recognized it, nobody saw or appreciated it. And my children ah, being citizens, they had to ... uh, suffer in a certain way ah ... deficiencies, um sometimes with food ah, with school, because there was no internet at home, or with computers. It was very difficult, girl, it was very difficult, what we went through.

MR Raquel [00:33:02] Thank you so much for sharing that with me, Blanca, what you went through and what you experienced during the pandemic, no one should go through that. And the irony that you are a person who works so hard to provide food for others but that you and your family did not have food is totally unacceptable and a huge disparity that must not only be addressed, but resolved. You should never go through that, never. Even though I just met you today, I am very grateful that you have supported your children, despite how difficult it was. They are very lucky to have you as a mom. You are an inspiration. Something that we have not mentioned yet, which is related to the obvious problem that at times you did not have the resources you needed during the pandemic, is personal protective equipment. When you were working in the field, were you provided with masks and other personal protective equipment?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:34:01] Well...look at the beginning um, yes. They gave you um, the masks, they gave you, uh, the gloves. My employer, I will say, they tried to help us. But the time came that there were no masks. So um, we had to improvise, because we women here in Monterey County used handkerchiefs, we used handkerchiefs to cover our faces, you know? But to see that there was a big need for masks... Many women improvised and began to make their

own masks. I thank God, that my family received some masks from Mrs. Mónica, Ramírez. She got a person in Los Angeles, a designer or someone who heard my story and sent some masks for my family and for my parents who are older. And that... I appreciated it, I appreciated it so much because it was a huge help, you know?

MR Raquel [00:35:08] Wow, it's amazing to hear about Mónica and her organizing to get you masks when you needed them. Knowing that there are people like Mónica who advocate for farmworkers makes a huge difference in fighting for your rights, even when these rights should have been guaranteed from the start. What are some of the rights and protections, and changes that are necessary to honor, celebrate and respect agricultural workers in this country?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:35:35] Um, for me, for example ... that our work be recognized, what we are doing in the field and that people see that our [work is valued]. For me and my colleagues, and people like my mother, like my father, people who worked in the field for a long time, their work was not valued. So today, those people are older and they were left without health insurance, they were um, sick because they can no longer work, because they were laid off from work and due to their immigration status ah, they can't do anything. So I don't want this to happen to me. If I continue working in the field I want to feel valued, no matter how little myself or my colleagues have, because we are the people who did not stop working when the pandemic started. When the pandemic started people still had fruit, they had vegetables, they had meat. Because we went out to work and we did not have the right to receive help from the government. No one sent help. Um, I did receive help, thanks to the César Chávez foundation and thanks to those who helped us, the essentials, here in California. I don't know about other states, but we received help and I thank Mrs. Huerta, because Mr. Cesar Chavez is no longer alive, but they were concerned about us agricultural workers. What I really really want, is for people to see that we are human. Let them see that we are not a public burden, we're not. We are like all the people who are in this country. Here "legally" or "illegally." We are all equally important as human beings. More than anything we are human beings with feelings. We are essential in this country.

MR Raquel [00:38:00] Wow. I have goose bumps again. That was said so powerfully, I felt it in every bone in my body. I couldn't agree more with you, and every farm worker is vital and essential to this country. It's about time, and it's been time for people in this country to understand that without you and your job, they literally couldn't eat. You are an inspiration to the agricultural workers of the future. So I just have one last question. What message or messages would you like to leave for the next generation of farm workers?

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:38:33] My message would be ... ah, that your work, the work of all the farm workers um is recognized. And don't be afraid to speak up, don't be afraid to state your rights. Ask for your rights. We came to this country to get ahead. Um with our effort,

with our dedication at work... That if you come with a goal of getting ahead, follow your goal, do not deviate and that if you have the opportunity to have your voice heard by your colleagues, do not be afraid to speak up, do not be afraid to say um, what is happening to your team, what is happening in your work-life. That you speak up, whether it's to an employer or a co-worker ... you speak up if you see someone has a need and that no one is helping. You can say, please help my colleague. Don't be scared. Because our voice counts. We matter as people, we are people like everyone else in this country.

MR Raquel [00:39:58] Blanca, thank you so, so much for being here with me today, for sharing your story and for being just so honest in doing so. Thank you. Thank you for your time. I'm sending a huge hug to you and your family.

Blanca Arroyo (Sam Galarza) [00:40:12] Thank you very much. Thanks um, to you, for taking the time to call me and hear my story. And thanks to the whole team, and to the people fighting for our rights like Mrs. Monica and Mrs. Huerta and Mr. Valderrama.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:40:32] Blanca is such an inspiration, to me, to her family, and to all of us. She was literally responsible for feeding this country even in moments when she herself didn't have food. It's mind blowing to me that Blanca's work and the work of so many of our immigrants often goes unappreciated when these are the folx who keep our country up and running. We literally couldn't survive without Blanca. Que dios la bendiga.

MR Raquel [00:40:56] That was powerfully said, Wilmer. Not sure I can follow that! It was an incredible honor to speak with Blanca and learn about what she experienced throughout the pandemic. Something that sticks with me is when she told us that when she came to the U.S., she was only 14, and expected to go to school. Instead, she went out to work in the fields with her dad and hasn't stopped in over 20 years. Blanca didn't get to have what so many folx here in the U.S. take for granted. I am eternally grateful to Blanca for feeding me and for her time.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:41:27] When we get back from the break, we'll talk with Monica Ramirez of Justice for Migrant Women, and iconic civil rights activist Dolores Huerta.

MR Raquel [00:41:44] Today, our guests need no introduction, but just in case we're here today with iconic civil rights activist Dolores Huerta and with Mónica Ramírez, the founder of Justice for Migrant Women Policy. And what I wear to an all. Monica, I'm incredibly honored to be with you here today, and I'm so excited to hear your thoughts. Wilmer, take it away.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:42:07] Monica and Dolores is a beautiful experience to have you here on our humble little stage. Going into the clip that you heard, what are your reactions to Blanca's story? And let's start with you, Dolores.

Dolores Huerta [00:42:19] Well, it's been a really hard time for farmworkers because Blanca was telling us her story and it's even been harder for some of the undocumented workers. And Blanca didn't mention how many of the farm workers have gotten sick from college and how many of them have actually died. Because so many of our population, they do have these underlying conditions like diabetes, hypertension, obesity in the system. And we have actually lost in the fact that they were not really given the protective equipment that they needed from the outset. There were many places where the farmworkers actually went on strike because they were not given the preventative equipment that they needed. And there were cases where the employers insisted that they come to work and not only in the fields, but also in the package that people are working right next to each other. And they were told that they had to come back to work, even though the workers didn't have mastered the equipment to be able to sterilize their hands and then standing right next to each other. In her case, Blanca didn't mention that the workers were told that they had to be a part. And she also mentioned the smoke that you inhale even right now, you know, with the fires like you're in county, all of the smoke that's coming from the fires, you can hardly see the sun right now because the air quality is so polluted. So you can imagine what the workers are having to go through in addition to the heat. So here we have this heat. That's one hundred five thousand six hundred seven. The temperatures have gone up to a hundred, nine hundred and ten. So but the farm workers have had to go through this year is just incredible. And then the loss of income. Blanca mentioned that one of the parents in her case, she had to stay home with the kids, so she had to have one of the oldest children stay home with the children. So immediately there has been a loss of income to these parents. And one of the things that the those what the foundation is working on, we're doing food banks almost every weekend, a couple of months ago with the food banks. And one day we gave like seventy thousand pounds of food in one day, including eggs, fresh chickens, yogurt, a lot of things that they usually don't get it at the food bank. And the other thing, too, is it was great that we have the stimulus package, but there is one benefit that the workers have and even undocumented people can get. And this is the child tax credit, which is a check that comes into the home every single month. And for undocumented families, all they have to do is file income taxes, OK, they can get a special number if they're undocumented and that money can come in for the children. So in the work that we're doing, we're also doing outreach, going door to door, getting people to get their vaccination appointments and make the appointment for them. And then we do the vaccine clinics to make sure that they got their vaccines. So we also give them a leaflet telling them all of the resources that are available to them. If you got sick covered, you can apply for worker's compensation. And then the state has made housing available to people that have been sick. And we have a caller and also, by the way, that people can call in if they need any information. So we're doing everything that we can to try to make life easier for the farm workers and other workers, not just farm workers. But we do live in these agricultural communities where most of the farm workers live.

Dolores Huerta [00:45:48] Thank you so much, Dolores. You just pointed out so many critical topics. And one thing that strikes me especially is the information that you shared regarding undocumented families filing income taxes so that they can receive government support for their children. And I'm really glad that you bring this up and bring it to our listeners attention so that they can spread the word about this. And also, it's just so totally amazing to hear about what you and your foundation are doing to be a big part of the solution for the severe lack of protections that farm workers face. Turning it over to you, Mónica, what are your thoughts on Blanca's story?

Mónica Ramírez [00:46:24] I think for me, one of the things that's so hard to hear is just the trauma that people have experienced throughout this and also the sense of isolation and just talking about the social distancing and the fact that before people could talk to each other, they could talk about what they were going through or just about. Our daily lives and all of a sudden that was impossible because they had to be distance and then eventually they had to leave the workforce, and there are so many things that have been difficult for everyone during the pandemic. But to think about folks like Blanca who were working all day and then came home and there wasn't food for her family and then feeling completely alone in this experience, like, I can't imagine how afraid the families were in those moments. Blanco's decision to call the local daycare the local headstart to ask for help, I think that speaks to the importance of those community relationships, but also it speaks to the fact that I think Blanca probably wouldn't have called before. That was like a last resort. But at that moment, it was what was required. And that tells a different story about our community that people don't often think about. They think of our community as one that is always asking for help, that is always trying to get something to get through a difficult time. And I think, Blanca, story points the fact that she waited as long as she could because she was trying to do everything she could in her power to help provide for our families. And so I feel like that's an important part of the conversation, too, that our community work as long and as hard as they possibly could to keep providing for this country. And they didn't get the return on their work and they got to the point where they didn't have what they needed and they weren't sure who to ask. And I'm hopeful out of this pandemic. One of the things that we will all understand better is how can we better support people? And it certainly starts with Congress. Congress needs to make the changes to finally protect farm workers and provide the rights that they always should have had. And certainly state political leaders need to do the same. It shouldn't be on organizations to fill the gaps where the government has failed. But I'm hopeful that coming out of this pandemic, there will be constant support and resources so that families like Blanca's will know that there's always a net of support available for them.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:48:36] We'll be right back after this break. Welcome back to Essential Voices.

MR Raquel [00:48:42] Turning it over to you, Dolores. You've dedicated your life to incredible activism and organizing for so many civil rights causes, which include farm worker and immigrant labor rights. But how has the pandemic affected your and your foundation's organizing and activism?

Dolores Huerta [00:48:57] It's made it a lot more difficult, starting with the census. We know the census was going to be very, very important because the census is going to determine how the different political lines are going to be drawn mainly for congressional seats or assembly seats. So we have to get out there and try to get as many people to sign up with the census. And so, again, because of the fear of what Donald Trump has been doing attacking immigrants, especially Latinos, it was very difficult. So what we do is we combine the census gathering with our food banks. OK, you want to get a box? Would you get to sign up for the census? So so we were able to get a lot of people to sign up. And then, of course, we had to do a lot of work on the telephone because we didn't want people to go out door to door. We did end up having to go door to door to get people to sign up. But we made sure that they had shields. We had plastic shields and they had masks and gloves and they had all of the sanitizing the liquids that they needed. So we were able to. And, of course, Valley, Silicon Valley, for those of you that don't know this, what Latinos are the majority. OK, we thought we were the majority minority. Well, now we are just the majority, period. You've seen that in Texas. Now the Latinos are now close to being the majority in Texas also. So all of that work that we had to do through Zoom's and Internet montopoli going to flea markets in a place that people were at churches, et cetera, it paid off because now hopefully we can get some new districts that are going to be drawn, more progressive. So more Latinos elected. But the work has not been easy, but we haven't stopped.

MR Raquel [00:50:42] Yeah, I mean, not being in person, I'd imagine it really does affect the organizing, not being able to be in someone's home and share space together, getting to know one another in person. But despite this, you've continuously been advocating for progress and fighting for the rights of so many folks, each person who's been organizing throughout the pandemic, whether it's on your level, Dolores and Monica or the farm workers and Blanca's community faced with drastic challenges during the pandemic for Blanca, one of these challenges was finding PPE. And we heard her say that her employer was able to provide PPE for a while, but then it became hard for for the employer to find PPE at that point. Mónica, you stepped in to provide PPE for Blanca. And what were some of the initiatives that Justice for Migrant Women had been and are still working on to protect farm workers and immigrants during the pandemic?

Mónica Ramírez [00:51:37] Yeah, so fashion designer Mario de la Torre, he had been making masks for hospitals in the L.A. area and his wife comes from a farmworker family. And so they decided that they needed to start making masks for farmworkers because they knew that the community needed them. So they actually reached out to a friend, Antonio, at the hitting of the

Hispanic Heritage Foundation and said, we want to create this mask for farmworkers project. And then they approached us and I said, will you partner with us on this project? So we started building the massive farmworkers project with them and we contacted the National Center for Farmworker Health, the health clinics, to see if they would be a partner to help with the distribution of the masks. And when we made that call, we heard from them that the health centers were actually having issues as well. They were laying off outreach staff. They didn't have the resources they needed. And so rather than just being a distributor of the mask that they needed to be beneficiaries as well. And so that partnership came together and the masks were made and distributed to farmworkers in Ohio, where we're based and in different parts of the country. And then there was a separate part of the initiative that was focused on getting PPE masks and other items to the health clinics in different parts of the country. That project kind of evolved because our organization, Justice for Migrant Women, we don't work only with farmworkers. We also work with migrant women workers in other industries. And we started hearing from other women that they, too, didn't have the PPE. And in some cases they were talking about having to pay a lot of money for the PPE and they did find it like price gouging was happening, things of that nature. And so the decision was made to take the project that we created for farmworkers and create masks for migrants and with different partners, set that project up. And we began working with an organization that was giving jobs to women in Guatemala. And so the women in Guatemala started to make the masks and they were essentially making them for their own neighbors. Right. Because there are so many people who were coming from San. America and the masks being distributed along the border for the migrants who were in the tent cities. So we've seen that it's many different workers, not just farm workers that need to be. And it couldn't be a one time deal because the masks, they have to wash them. They can only wash them so many times before they disintegrate or they need to replace them. And so we had to figure out how do we keep replenishing them. And it wasn't just our organization that was doing that work. Many organizations around the country were making masks, showing mask-making masks and trying to figure out how to continually fill that gap. And I think one of the outcomes was that organically, from the various stories that were being run on TV and into the newspaper, individuals across the country started sewing masks, trading masks, sewing groups and started sending them in or giving them to farm workers in their local area. There's still need we haven't closed the gaps. And now with the Delta variant, we know that we need to figure out how to get more resources into the community. But those projects at least provided somewhat of a blueprint for us to be able to work with and build off of.

MR Raquel [00:54:41] Earlier in the conversation, you brought up hope and hearing you now talk about how the various stories being run on TV and in the newspapers ignited folks all over the country to start making masks for farm workers in their local areas. It gives me a lot of hope that shining a light on farm workers and sharing farm worker stories will continue to inspire communities to band together and continue to fight for farm workers rights and take an active part in mutual aid. When there's a lack of resources, there's still a long way to go. But both you

and Senator Weta are instrumental in creating change for farm workers. To that end, Dolores, an analogy that Wilmar often likes to make is about Mount Everest and I'm going to borrow it from him now. Climbing Mount Everest is an achievable goal, but it takes incredible resilience to do so. I'd imagine standing at the foot of Mount Everest, looking up and summoning to the top looks like the most daunting goal. So for you, what is the Mt. Everest equivalent for your advocacy and organizing for farm worker rights?

Dolores Huerta [00:55:45] Well, I think we're looking at it right now. I talked about the child tax credit, which is amazing because every single family that has children under the age of 16 is getting a check every single month, every child that they have. This is going to cut the child poverty in half. And when I say that we're looking at Mount Everest right now, it's called the three and a half trillion dollar bill that President Biden is trying to pass in the Senate and that the two and a half trillion dollar bill, it includes free college education. It includes universal child care. It includes expanding health care. This is amazing that we are looking at Mount Everest right now, that we have a few politicians that are standing in the way, people like us, and set them up from Arizona, Joe Manchin from West Virginia. They're the ones that are standing in the way. And we've only got a couple of weeks to be able to move those people and some of the congressmen, some of the congressmen in Texas, Henry Clay, that is one of them. He's been in the Congress a long time. Well, he's coming out against the three and a half trillion dollar human infrastructure bill that President Biden is trying to pass. And like Bernie Sanders said, what good does it do to build a bridge so that people can sleep under it? OK. Well, we have so many homeless people so we can make it happen right now with the administration that we have with President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, our congresswoman from California. So we need to make a big push right now. And I just want to say to everybody, you want to do a big favor, OK? Call people that you know in other states we're OK with our senators blindsided by the. But if you have friends over there while you're at the like in Ohio, OK, you have one good. Senator Brown. Brown, I don't know about the other one, but just put the heat on my mind. I'll get a lot of e-mails and get a lot of phone calls into them. And all of your people that you have them are on your list. Please beg them and tell them, OK, we've got to contact the senators right now. Your your senators tell them to push for the three and a half trillion dollar infrastructure bill. Not enough to win like a lot of money, but this is going over 10 years. OK, so when you talk about a little over 10 years, it's not that much money. And the other way that we don't have to have a crystal mansion is to get rid of the filibuster. OK, and that could happen as we debate it right now as we speak in the U.S. Senate. The main thing is that we have to understand that we have the power in our hands to rebuild it, to do something about this. And it only takes a few minutes to call your senator and ask them to do the right thing. To pass that we have to give in to such a bill that we. And not ever at any time since the Depression when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was our president, because the need been so great in our society, the fact that we have so much poverty, but at the same time we have so many billionaires and millionaires. And part of the infrastructure package is to make the millionaires and billionaires pay their taxes just the way that everybody

else does. So this is what we have to do and we can make it happen. So, yes, that ideal that that we want is within our reach. But we have right now right now, we have a window to do so.

Wilmer Valderrama [00:59:17] Monica, do you want to share anything on that?

Mónica Ramírez [00:59:19] I totally agree with everything that the US has said. And I think that as we're making these calls to our senators, we also need to be asking them to support a citizenship bill for immigrant essential workers, because it's been too long that our immigration system has not served our community. It was made broken. It was made not to function for certain groups of people. And in order for things to actually be better for immigrants across our country, we need a bill that would provide them with citizenship. And if we can do right by immigrant workers in our country, we can do right by all workers.

MR Raquel [00:59:51] Absolutely. Agreed, Monica, to echo your words for things to actually be better for immigrants in this country. Our show aims to highlight that it only takes sharing one person's story to start changing the cultural narrative. And this cultural narrative shift plays a part in making things better in partnership with the necessity of bills to provide these folks with citizenship and dozens and dozens of other rights and guaranteed protections. With Wolmar working in the entertainment industry, he gets to see firsthand how the media influences this cultural narrative shift and how for so many folks that have been marginalized and minorities, the narrative is beginning to slowly change slowly on screen. I'd like to know how you both envision this cultural narrative shift changing in regards to farmworkers and immigrant workers. Dolores, take it away.

Dolores Huerta [01:00:38] Well, we have to understand the racism and discrimination stems from slavery. And the indigenous people were the first slaves before they brought people in from Africa to be the slaves. So racism is a justification for having people work hard to make other people rich. And this is the way that you could justify it by then discriminating against people. Most of them, of course, have been people of color. So we have to understand where the roots of racism are at and then how this racism manifests itself. And it does manifest itself in looking down on people who work with their hands. And of course, farm workers are the ones that are out there doing that work, as did the indigenous people and the slaves that were brought in from Africa. So once we understand that and not only but it manifests itself in the way that women are treated, it manifests itself in the way that children are treated. So we can understand where the roots of racism started and are perpetuated even to the state. Then we realize why we have to get rid of it and then not look down on the people that pick our food or the people that clean our buildings or people that work in restaurants. These are the people that we have to really uplift the people and build our buildings. And these are the people that keep society clean and safe and they build our society. So instead of looking down on manual workers, we need to respect them and we need to uplift them. And we have that, you'd say all of those in the corporate world out

there, you have got to pay your fair share of taxes so that everybody can have a good life, including the people that do the hardest work of all the put the food on the table.

MR Raquel [01:02:19] Thank you for sharing your thoughts, Dolores. Mónica, what are your thoughts about this?

MR Raquel [01:02:23] Well, I think that when it comes to the narrative work, especially when it comes to the Latino community and the narrative work that we've heard about the different reports that have come out about the underrepresentation of the Latin community in entertainment industry and the way that the Latino community is being typecast, I think that for the folks who are doing narrative shift work, we've got to be very careful about how we approach that conversation, because what's happened in that conversation is exactly what Dolores is talking about in terms of looking down on certain groups of people. So when you read the media articles about those reports or even when you read the reports, the conversation is about how the only roles that are for the Latino community members are for low paid workers and they list the different jobs. And when that conversation is playing out, the way it's been playing out is that those are bad jobs, that those aren't good jobs and those are not worthy jobs, and that those are not the jobs that we want to have or that we want to play. And I think that is a very dangerous conversation that we have unwittingly taken on. And we need to say those are dignified jobs. These jobs are absolutely dignified jobs, and we would play those roles of pride. But our community. Also occupies other space, too, and we want to be represented in all the spaces, in all the professions, and so I think that there's a whole body of work that's being developed around narrative shift. And Willmar, I know you've been part of those conversations, too. And I think it's part of our responsibility to say to people, if you're going to talk about the roles that we occupy, don't talk about the roles of low paid workers as if they are not good because that is dangerous. And if we're going to be pushing for the narrative to change, we have to make sure that we're saying part of the narrative change is that these are good, dignified jobs that we should all be proud to hold. And we owe these folks a debt of gratitude. And I think we've got to start pushing on that side when it comes to the narrative shift question.

MR Raquel [01:04:21] Incredibly well said, Mónica, thank you. So in coming to the end of this incredibly powerful conversation today, I'd like to take a moment with you, Dolores, if I may, to ask you, in your illustrious life as an organizer and activist, what are one or two things that make you most proud that you've been able to accomplish in the fight for civil rights?

Dolores Huerta [01:04:45] Well, I mentioned some of the things that we were able to win for farmworkers like unemployment insurance that we toilets in the fields. That was a great big one and called drinking water for farm workers. The right to organize the amnesty bill of 1986, where we were able to get the two million farmworkers got their legalization status. And but those three or four million of residents from the cities were able to get their legal status in the

country. I think the folks that are listening to this podcast, they probably know somebody in their family. They've got this. The fact that we were able to get ballots in the Spanish language and California driver's licenses and the Spanish language passing bills that if you were a legal resident of the United States, you can get public assistance agency. The children ages apply to the disabled. These are all bills that the community service organization and the United Farm Workers that we were able to pass. And then we were really instrumental in passing this bill. I mentioned a little while ago that people over 50 years of age, undocumented people, could get health care. And so, I mean, just passing these progressive laws and knowing that we can do this and we can take what we have done here in California, that we can take it to the other states, but we just got to continue to just ask people to be involved, be engaged. I know, Wilmer, you do a lot of work with Voto Latino, you know, and just get all of our people to get out there, become citizens registered to vote, get engaged. We're going to see our power manifest itself and the people that we elect to Congress, to our school boards, to our state legislators. So we have a lot of work to do. And so I think that the most thought it was just that I've been blessed to be able to do all of this work

Wilmer Valderrama [01:06:32] and we're blessed to have you in our lives as a mentor and as an inspiration. And Monica, you carry the torch for so much as well. And I appreciate you, too. And any last messages you'd like to send anyone that you like to speak to in this moment?

Dolores Huerta [01:06:47] Well, number one, don't forget, I need you to call your friends in other states. Monica, I swear to you there in Ohio and other places to call the senator so that we can amend or get rid of the filibuster. OK, that is a priority right now. Senators are going back to work there in Washington a week after next. And we're right at the brink that we can pass some of these laws. So this is really crucial. And if you want to learn more about our work, the what? The foundation, just go through the lotus work the dog. That's our website. Glasswork the dog. And we welcome you to join our movement. Well, I just want to thank you for the invitation. This has been a really inspiring conversation. And I just hope that folks who are listening remember that they're farm workers who are literally sustaining them every day. And in the states where they are, they should find the organizations that are doing the work and they should support them. They should support the workers in their state and they should support the organizations that are helping the workers in their states, because there's a lot of work to be done across the country. And there are people organizing all over the country, around farm workers rights. And for our organization, we're based in Ohio, but we do work in other states, too. And if folks want to learn more about us, they can look for us at justice, the number for women that are beautiful.

Wilmer Valderrama [01:08:09] And as we close down, can we get a ¡Si Se Puede! ?

Dolores Huerta [01:08:13] Absolutely. And just to say to everybody out there, remember that you've got the power, but the power is in our vote, OK? And all of us have to become messengers. All of us have to become organizers and talk to those people that are not yet engaged and convince them that we need them, ¡Si, Se Puede!

MR Raquel [01:08:38] So... that happened! Puchica, Wilmer, how is it that every episode I'm rendered nearly speechless by our guests?

Wilmer Valderrama [01:08:50] I know, MR. I need to catch my breath! You grow up hearing stories of Dolores Huerta and she is just as impressive, if not more so when you speak to her. The fact that she is still so engaged and so passionate even at 91 makes her the definition of "goals."

MR Raquel [01:09:12] Goals indeed. And Monica is making a huge difference for so many, with the work she does. She absolutely saved lives with those mask initiatives and her words about shifting the narrative regarding essential workers have stuck with me since we spoke.

Wilmer Valderrama [01:09:28] Me too. So next week we'll continue to try to follow Monica's example by speaking with essential worker Liz Abunaw, the owner of Forty Acres Fresh Market in Chicago, followed by a roundtable with actress, entrepreneur, and investor Keshia Knight Pulliam and Pinky Cole- Atlanta-based entrepreneur and the creator of Slutty Vegan.

MR Raquel [01:09:49] *Essential Voices with Wilmer Valderrama* is produced by me, M.R. Raquel, Allison Chesneau and Kevin Rutkowski, with production support from Associate Producer Lillian Holman. Executive Producers, Wilmer Valderrama, Adam Reynolds, Leo Klemm and Aaron Hilliard. This episode was edited by M.R. Raquel and Sean Tracy and features original music by Will Rosati.

MR Raquel [01:10:19] Special thanks to this week's essential voice: Blanca Arroyo and to our thought leaders Dolores Huerta and Monica Ramirez. Special thanks to Sam Galarza, who provided the English voice-over component for Blanca's story. Additional thanks to Maeve Elder, Melanie Murray, Amaranta Campos, and Greg Daisa. This is a Clamor and WV Entertainment Production in partnership with iHeart Radio's My Cultura podcast network.