



The Eagle Leadership Award
Remarks of Angela Padilla
The Sutter Club, Sacramento, CA
April 13, 2023

Angela Padilla: Good afternoon. Thank you to Mickey Ibarra and to the Latino Leaders Network for this great recognition. I remember when I first met Mickey. Alex and I had just started dating, and one day he asked me if I would accompany him to a work dinner. He said, don't worry, it's going to be very low-key, no stress, very casual. I said, okay, that sounds great.

So when we arrived, we walked into a beautiful restaurant in downtown L.A. We walked into a small room. Sitting right in front of me was the illustrious Mickey Ibarra, and to the right of me was Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. In the room, there were other prominent Latino leaders. In true Mickey fashion, he asked everyone to go around the room and introduce themselves and share why they were there. And so when it was my turn I stood up nervously. I remember thinking to myself, oh, I am

never going out with this guy again. But here we are almost 14 years later receiving this award together. We do indeed make a great team.

Alex supports me as much as I support him. As parents of three beautiful boys that give us a lot of grief, as most Mexican children do, it's "true teamwork makes the dream work." And as a good friend recently told me, yes, somebody has to go out and try to help save the world. But somebody has to stay back and help save the house. So that's me and I'm very proud and honored to do so.

As a Latina, I'm honored to have the spotlight today. You see, years after that dinner I realized the importance of what Mickey was doing. He was bringing leaders together. Mickey is the great uniter. He shines the light on Latinos who are working to make a difference. He knows because he walked that path himself. It's his way of leading others toward their great purpose. It's truly beautiful, and we need more people like him.

Now, being one of the few Latino families in the United States Senate, it's abundantly clear to us that we need to keep shining the light on other families walking the same path. Alex and I quickly realized that there is no playbook for families like ours in the Senate. We were not groomed to reach these heights. Unlike other Senate families, we don't have unlimited

resources. And it's not a given that as a family we will succeed. The good news is that Alex and I do not have a lack of *ganas*. We know why we're there and how important it is to represent.

As a mental health advocate, I want to thank the Latino Leaders Network for recognizing the importance of mental health. I'm thankful to Maritza and Maricela and The Twins PR for helping me advance our mission at FundaMental Change.

When I established FundaMental Change in 2017, I knew how important it was to share why we needed to do more to support ourselves and others in our mental health journeys, having witnessed my mom's incredible challenges over the year and then her recovery because we found the right recipe of treatment, support, and medication. I always thought it was important to share the hope and possibilities with others. But I never thought that we would be embarking on one of the greatest mental health crisis our nation has ever faced, the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of the pandemic, more people now recognize the importance of getting proper mental health treatment. As someone who studied psychology, I can tell you that people have been using therapy as a tool to become the best versions of themselves for many, many years. And while many societies and cultures openly participate in therapy without any stigma, for

Latinos, that isn't necessarily the case, and it puts us at a great disadvantage.

There is so much stigma in our community because, unfortunately, we've been told along the way the untruth that we should feel ashamed if we need mental health support. That's just false. Especially for executives and people who work in high-stress work environments, it's important that we learn how to channel our energies and our emotions in a healthy way.

In your swag bags, there's a beaded bracelet courtesy of FundaMental Change. Its purpose is if you find yourself going to a meeting or an interview or something you know is going to be high stress, you put your bracelet on, and you start counting your beads. It's really going to relax you and help you reroute your thoughts and help you get focused.

In closing, I want to challenge each and every one of you, if you don't already have a good therapist - emphasis on good - find one even if you think you don't need them now. Have their number handy for if and when you do. And please allow yourselves to be vulnerable. It will become your superpower, and your brain will thank you for it.

Thank you. Have a great day.