

Querida hija,

I've raised you to believe in yourself, but to truly understand the power you hold, I want to show you how a movement blooms.

Maria Moreno sows the seeds by speaking out. After a flood in 1958, over 300 California migrant workers were unable to work, but also ineligible for receiving emergency food assistance. Her son developed a temporary blindness from malnourishment, choosing to give whatever food he had to his younger siblings. Driven by the necessity to take care of her children, she became an activist and worked to change local policy. The policy was reversed, and all farm workers became eligible for aid. Maria was one of the first women union organizers of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). She fought for migrant workers to have the same rights that most industrial workers had won in the 1930s. This included the right to unionize, minimum wage, and social security. Living conditions were poor, and child labor was still prevalent. Maria broke barriers by also representing workers of multiple ethnicities in a time of strict segregation for work camps and crews. She unified these workers and refused to give up on this fight.

Dolores Huerta nurtured the sprouts when she co-founded the National Farm Workers Association. This will soon become the United Farm Workers Union (UFWU). Dolores' passion was infectious, bringing many farm workers in Delano together and instilling hope. She plays a lead role in the 1965 Delano Strike of 5,000 grape workers. Following the strike, she was a primary negotiator on the Schenley contract, the first contract to be made between farmworkers and their employer. She continued to work to improve workers conditions and legislative representation.

Monica Ramirez continues the legacy today, tending the garden and advocating for women migrant workers against gender discrimination and sexual harassment. She established a legal project dedicated to helping farmworker women against gender discrimination in 2003. She is also a co-founder of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, the first national farmworker women's organization in the U.S.

These women had the courage to change the circumstances for themselves and those around them. Don't forget that you hold the same power. They sowed the seeds, and it is up to us to continue to tend the garden for the future.

Con tanto amor,
Mama

<https://colorlines.com/article/meet-maria-moreno-first-farm-worker-woman-america-be-hired-union-organizer/>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dolores-huerta>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/09/17/551490281/dolores-huerta-the-civil-rights-icon-who-showed-farmworkers-si-se-puede>

<https://time.com/5018813/farmworkers-solidarity-hollywood-sexual-assault/>

<https://www.concordia.net/community/monica-ramirez/>