



“ THE PAST 13 YEARS AT NLIRH HAS BEEN INVALUABLE, AND I AM SO THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS. **NLIRH HAS CHANGED WHO I AM.** I CANNOT EXPRESS ENOUGH HOW GRATEFUL I AM TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED TRANSFORM THIS ORGANIZATION AND MADE MY TIME AT NLIRH UNFORGETTABLE. ”

-JESSICA GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My time here at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) is coming to an end. I have experienced such incredible joy, growth, and transformation in my role as Executive Director, so it is with mixed emotions that I reflect on my departure. I am ready to pursue a new role in public service because of the learnings, challenges and successes that I have experienced at this amazing organization over the last 13 years. I come to this moment knowing that this is the right time because right now NLIRH is stronger than ever. That knowledge leaves me deeply grateful for the talented team and *familia* I've built in this fight for reproductive justice.

My activism for health, dignity and justice was born out of my own story of attempting to access contraception at a clinic as a young adult. That experience of being attacked by anti-choice harassers shaped me to come to this organization 13 years ago. But it was the inclusivity and validation of all my intersecting identities that made NLIRH my political home. Back then, we were much smaller –or as I often said we were young and scrappy long before the musical *Hamilton* made it a catch phrase. What started as a small hard-working group of Latinas grew into a truly national organization which has earned its place as a courageous and respected voice within the reproductive justice movement.

During my tenure as Executive Director, NLIRH has more than quadrupled in size and reach, amplified the voices of our communities and deepened our work at the local level with our

leadership development, organizing and civic engagement strategies. We've operated from a reproductive justice framework that strives to center not just the stories, but the solutions of those most impacted. We've operated from the values of love and dignity, most visibly in our *Yo Te Apoyo/I Support You* campaign that debunks the myths and stereotypes about Latina/x attitudes regarding abortion. We also served as the bridge between movements – elevating the Latina/x and immigrant voice within the women's and reproductive rights spaces, and the gender and LGBTQ voice within the immigrant and Latino civil rights spaces.

As NLIRH grew, so did our ability to build Latina/x power in ways I only dreamed of when I started working here. I am so incredibly proud of our journey. It has not always been easy, but it has always been worth it. As I look at the many inspiring individuals who started as activists, joined our team and have gone on to be movement leaders in the field or at other organizations, it makes me incredibly proud that we have invested in building a pipeline of true Latina/x leadership. Along the way, I've had the honor and privilege of working alongside a team that helped me steer NLIRH through this period of expansion with their passion and purpose for justice. That period of expansion was also fueled by you, our donors and supporters who put your trust in our work and continue to invest in those outcomes. Our goals were bold then and they are now. But they are always rooted in the hope, tenacity, and resilience of our community.

Our organizational growth and strengthening isn't possible without the radical love and vulnerability of our *poderosas*. As the Executive Director of a reproductive justice organization, I have always kept in mind that even though I had a large platform to speak from, the more critical part of my role was stepping back from speaking in order to listen to our communities. Our *poderosas* have fearlessly told their stories and found strength in their own voices. Their stories showed the world that our work mattered and illustrated the true impact of oppressive structures that disproportionately affect communities of color. It has always been their stories that drove me to fight for change every single day, and I will carry their stories and passion with me wherever life takes me.

The past 13 years at NLIRH has been invaluable, and I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director for the past eight years. NLIRH has changed who I am. I cannot express enough how grateful I am to the people who have helped transform this organization and made my time at NLIRH unforgettable. The work would not have been possible without the incredible dedication, bravery, and insight of our activists, staff members, movement partners and board. As we look forward, I know that there is so much work still to be done, but I know that I am leaving the organization in the hands of some of the most motivated, competent, and driven people who will not only work hard – they will move us toward our vision of a world in which Latina/xs have the agency to make decisions about their own health, family, and future. A world where our vision for reproductive justice will be fully realized.

¡Que siga la lucha!

En solidaridad,



Jessica González-Rojas
Executive Director