

Preserving a safe place for my community

BY LETICIA VALLE
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

I have been a board member of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon for five months. I take the work I do personally because my parents are immigrants to this country. I am also a community health worker and health equity advocate at a rural social services agency, and we have many migrant farmworkers who provide the labor needed to pick our fruit and vegetables. I have seen firsthand how challenging it can be to access health care if you are not a citizen of this country.

I am proud to volunteer and support an organization that is working to address this need in the immigrant community and that recognizes the connection between immigrant rights and reproductive rights.

There are so many barriers to health care access for the immigrant community that result in negative health outcomes. Attacks on reproductive rights would hit us the hardest. The ability to access preventive health care and stay together as a family are both crucial parts of what it means to have a happy and complete life.

Currently, our ability to do both of these things is at risk.

If Planned Parenthood were defunded, immigrants and other members of the community in the Columbia River Gorge may have nowhere to go to access care. Planned Parenthood is proud to see patients regardless of immigration status.

While undocumented immigrants may not be able to access affordable health coverage through the marketplaces or federally funded programs like Medicaid — a harmful and unfair policy that Planned Parenthood does not agree with — people who are undocumented depend on healthcare providers like Planned Parenthood that are willing to work with them to provide affordable, basic primary and preventive health care.

Defunding Planned Parenthood would strike a devastating blow to immigrants who already have so much standing in their way to get care. Planned Parenthood is a safe space for my community, and I commit to stand with Planned Parenthood to provide care no matter what.

Based in Parkdale, Leticia Valle is a Board Member of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon and Manager of Health Promotion Services at The Next Door Inc.

Here We Stay

by Michone Nettles

While looking through these eyes
I see the world turn slowly
Around the corner of the universe, with stars peeking out
to see the moon's craters winking and waving for attention
There are dark shadows that linger in the night skies
waiting for Jupiter's return.
Love is in the air, the universe and on Earth,
it has covered the whole span of life.
Knees are sore from prayers
going upward while we touch the ground with good faith.
Life is good, while being a miracle within itself.

LOVE

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