

# BEYOND SURGERY: A RESIDENT'S PATH TO HEALTH AND COMMUNITY THROUGH REACHING FOR THE HEIGHTS

By Melina Castelan

*Reaching for the Heights* is a Community Public Health Team formed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, The Wellness Center, and Clínica Romero. The team works together to conduct household assessments in Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights. Through their partnership and door-to-door visits, they help residents find resources they need but may not know about.

Alma was struggling with a chronic health condition that sent her to the ER and urgent care more than 10 times in one year. She knew she needed to make changes to avoid a major surgery, but she didn't have the support to do it alone, "I was scared about my health, but I didn't know where to start."

Through a household assessment, the team connected Alma to classes at The Wellness Center. She began by joining a chronic disease management class. From there, she slowly added exercise classes and healthy cooking workshops. Over the course of two years, Alma lost nearly 60 pounds and no longer needed the surgery, "Finding The Wellness Center changed everything."



But her journey didn't stop there. As she became more involved, Alma also accessed other resources she never knew of including free advice when she had legal questions, help completing Medi-Cal and CalFresh applications, senior-friendly events and wellness services, and mental health therapy.

Now Alma comes to The Wellness Center almost every day. It's where she moves her body, eats better, and feels supported, "I feel healthier, stronger, and more hopeful." Alma is also now a proud member of the Resident Advocacy Committee, helping her neighbors discover the same life-changing services that helped her, "Now I tell everyone in my community about The Wellness Center!"

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**Reaching for the Heights empowers residents to care for themselves and to be part of something bigger**

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