

Meet the Riders



Claudia Farfan, 49

Los Angeles, Calif.

Caregiver to her mom, Consuelo, for 33 years

"We receive so much from others, caregiving is my way to pay it forward."

As a teenager, Claudia became a caregiver to her mother, Consuelo Mendez, after the unexpected death of her father. Blindsided by his death, Mrs. Mendez was unprepared to run a household on her own and relied on her children for support – from tracking bills to assisting with her property management business. Claudia and her siblings had to grow up fast.

Three decades later, Claudia has two children of her own, ages 21 and 25, and continues to provide care for her mom. She relies on family, friends, and neighbors to help with the increasing physical and emotional support that Mrs. Mendez needs. **"Little by little I've been taking care of her, and I've had to do more and more over time."** Claudia is proud that her children grew up watching caregiving from a multigenerational lens, and knows they are more prepared for their own aging experience.

Over the years, Mrs. Mendez has required more care, and most recently ended up in the hospital for surgery. That week-long hospitalization required round-the-clock visitation that Claudia shared with her brother. **"With each subsequent incident, my mom's health declined."** During these stressful times, Claudia takes advantage of the family medical leave benefits her employer offers, which allow her to take time off to care for her mom. Work flexibility is important to Claudia because she knows as time passes, Mrs. Mendez's caregiving plans will need to be flexible, too.

Because caregiving is so engrained in her family's way of life, Claudia hopes her children will be able to – and want to – provide compassionate care like she has. **"I hope it's in their character to understand and prioritize caregiving."** In addition to fostering strong relationships and building a family network of care, Claudia encourages other caregivers to ask questions and learn about the benefits employers may offer. As a human resources specialist at her organization, she worries that not enough people are aware of the different benefits available through family medical leave.

"My mom is very grateful that I am there to assist her, and she demonstrates that appreciation every day."