



September 5, 2018

Donate



"In that moment we were more than cases or clients. We were mother and daughter. We were survivors of domestic violence."

-Filma, former Ayuda client

In the year 2000, it seemed like my life was falling into place. I moved with my daughter to Florida, to join my future fiancé. We settled into our new life together. I started a job as an artist at a communication company in Fort Myers. We enrolled my daughter in school. We believed achieving the American dream was possible.

Then things began to change. He became abusive. Sometimes the abuse was verbal. Other times it was physical. I was scared but I kept working and tried to stay strong for my daughter. She was 11 at that time. One day, he started to make advances on my daughter. It was a new kind of danger.

I knew that I had to flee. But my work permit was granted under a fiancé visa. I felt trapped. I was mentally exhausted, scared and alone. My only source of strength was prayer. So I prayed. And I asked for help. One of my co-workers learned of my situation. She understood that I needed to protect my daughter. I told her that I knew of a family friend, from the Philippines, who was settled in Virginia. My co-worker and her husband made it possible for me to move with my daughter to Washington, DC.

In DC, we felt safer. My friend in Virginia helped us get our feet on the ground.

But we were still at risk. Without legal support, my stay would expire.

This is when we found Ayuda. Facing the expiration of my stay, I needed legal help. I needed a way to provide for my daughter.

An attorney at Ayuda helped me get my work permit. It took some time, but with that permit I got a job. With that job, I could provide for my needs and my daughter's needs. With stability, we could begin to rebuild our lives.

What I remember about Ayuda is that they asked about me, and about my daughter. Even before we talked about my legal situation, **they wanted to make sure that we were okay.**

In that moment, we were more than cases or clients. **We were mother and daughter. We were survivors of domestic violence.**

Today, my daughter is married to a member of the U.S. Navy. She earned her degree and is working as a nurse in her community.

This is why Ayuda matters. We stayed safe, I gained a permit to work, and today we are a family of survivors, serving and contributing back to our communities and to the United States.

To learn more about Filma, join us at the Welcome Breakfast on Thursday, September 20. Details below.

SAVE THE DATE!



Ayuda's Welcome Breakfast

September 20, 2018 | 8:00 am to 9:30 am

The Hamilton Live: 600 14th Street, NW, Washington DC 20005

This is a free event. You are invited to bring a friend.

RSVP Today!

<https://ayudawelcomebreakfast2018.eventbrite.com>

Women's Bar Association of D.C to Honor

Paula Fitzgerald



Each year at Stars of the Bar, the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia honors and publicly salutes star-quality local attorneys.

We are proud to announce that Ayuda's executive director, Paula Fitzgerald, has been nominated for this year's 2018 Stars of the Bar. She will receive this well-deserved award on September 20.

Ayuda in the Community

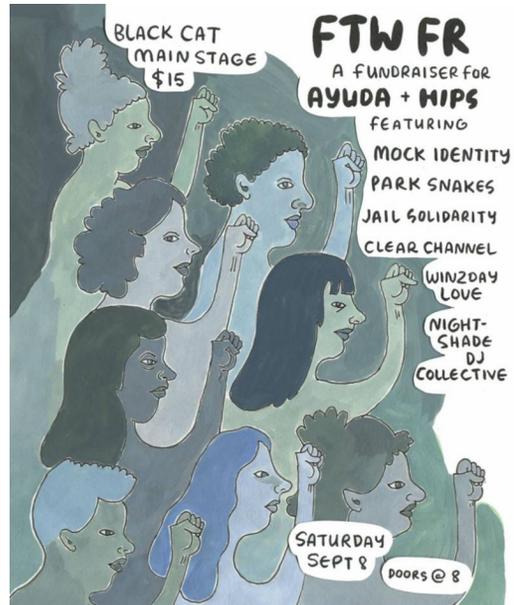


Ayuda is looking for volunteers to help participate in this year's Fiesta D.C. alongside other partner organizations in the Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC).

Fiesta D.C. is an annual celebration of Latino culture that features a Parade of Nations that displays and preserves the Native Latino cultural dance troupes as well as contemporary local groups from civic organizations, schools, and performers.

The event will take place on Saturday, September 15 from 12:30 to 5:00 pm.

If you're interested in participating in this year's event please contact Laura Catania at LauraC@ayuda.com.



Saturday, September 8, Black Cat is having a benefit showcase to raise awareness & money on behalf of Ayuda and HIPS!

You WON'T want to miss out on this incredible opportunity to listen to awesome music & support a couple of great local causes!

[Get your tickets here!](#)

