

# Latinas Reaching the Green Dream



Photo: Lupita

Lupita (third from the left) poses with her family during a recent family portrait that was sent to all of her loved ones.



Photo: Irene Florez

Lupita smiles at the 2008 Green Festival.

## Lupita

*“I can think of no better way to raise my children than to begin by sharing with them the knowledge that their mother is proud and secure and that she works to preserve the world that they will inherit.”*

The future looked bleak for Lupita, a young mother working in an orange-packing plant. Lupita’s household earned barely enough to pay for food and rent during the harvest season that lasted only seven months out of the year. Outside of this season, things were even worse.

“We worked hard to make ends meet but were always struggling for the most basic things. This got worse when I had to leave work and focus on raising my son who has Down Syndrome.”

Fast forward to today and you’ll understand why Lupita wants to make sure that more Latinas know about WAGES: Lupita’s income has doubled and she is a co-owner of a successful green cleaning business, now doing customer service in English and using Quickbooks and other computer programs – all things she never thought possible.

“Before helping to found Eco-Care, I thought that I wouldn’t be able to achieve much more in my life. But thanks to WAGES, I began asking questions and became active and involved. And that’s not just true for me. Other Latinas like me have an amazing opportunity

to feel secure and proud once they’ve benefited from the services that WAGES provides.”

For Lupita, the security of a stable, healthy job has meant that she can support her four children, while she in turn is supported in many ways by her fellow successful co-op business members.

“Two years ago my co-op supported my request for a leave of absence when my second son was diagnosed with cancer. My husband’s employer, on the other hand, threatened to decrease his pay and reduce his hours if he took a few hours off of work for important doctor’s appointments. There is just no comparison. To be supported by a stable job with good pay and benefits is a dream.”

It is this ongoing support that makes her co-op a second family she can count on.

“I can think of no better way to raise my children than to begin by sharing with them the knowledge that their mother is proud and secure and that she works to preserve the world that they will inherit,” she said.