



# Marisa Aurora Quiroz

SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION,  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

*I give because giving matters.*

## CROSS-SECTOR GIVING THAT BENEFITS LATINOS

**M**arisa Aurora Quiroz builds movements. From the barrio to the boardroom, she was born to lead. She has mastered the art of giving from the heart, and has led a life of service. It's in her blood, and it flows like the river near her home in the San Diego – Tijuana region – which no border can contain.

"Giving comes naturally to me," she said, "because I grew up with it. We took care of each other, looked out for one another. My grandmother, Aurora Adela Marquez, instilled in us global awareness – a collective sense of we, not just me. Even though we didn't call it philanthropy, we were living out these values everyday." A family sense of the collective we has led Marisa to invest her time and energy to directly impact the Latino community.

"Latinos are underrepresented within philanthropy, not because we aren't givers," she said, "but because the way we give is not counted. HIP's mission is changing that." When told that 'Latinos don't give,' she co-founded The Latina Giving Circle, a community of women who want to uplift, celebrate and share the philanthropic traditions and values of the Latino community.

Her wide-ranging contributions include serving as a public member of the California Structural Pest Control Board and the University of San Diego's Nonprofit and Philanthropic Institute Advisory Board. She also serves on the national boards of the Center for Diversity and the Environment, the Environmental Grantmakers Association, the Kindle Project, and the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission's Citizens Forum.

"I think it's incredibly important to not assume, because people are not practicing traditional philanthropy, that it's not happening," she said. "Communities move to their own beats. There are unseen ecosystems within neighborhoods – relationships, bonds, sharing."

Quiroz views communities with the studied eye of a nonprofit professional who has specialized in the environment. The International Community Foundation, her current institution, promotes funding for nonprofits and causes in Latin America. She's working to conserve extraordinary places like Laguna San Ignacio, one of the last remaining nursing grounds of the gray whale in Baja, Mexico. She previously worked for The San Diego Foundation and also organized and supported outdoor experiences for refugee and immigrant youth.

Quiroz graduated with a bachelor's from Mills College, in Oakland, California, and a master's in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from the University of San Diego.

To top off the many ways Quiroz gives, she is also a certified massage therapist and health educator, who also is specially trained to accompany women and their partners through childbirth.

Quiroz' passion is organic and authentic.

"I like being around people because I pick up on their energy and passion, and I like being part of a community," Quiroz told The San Diego Union-Tribune in a 2013 interview. "I'm really fueled by love."

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