



Philadelphia VIP proudly recognizes **Laura Rodriguez** for going above and beyond by *answering the call to serve*.

Thank you Laura!
July 2017 Volunteer of the Month

Ask Laura Rodriguez why she volunteers for Philadelphia VIP and her response is uplifting: "I want to help people overcome barriers. When people don't have knowledge of the law, they feel helpless. I know how important it is for people to feel comfortable communicating so they can accurately express the issues they are facing." The college student is part of the paralegal program at Philadelphia Community College, and has been a prominent VIP volunteer since January, working as a Spanish language interpreter on complex homeownership cases.



Born in Mexico, Laura became a practicing attorney in 2013. She moved to the United States in 2014, and she began looking for ways to get involved in the Philadelphia community while getting more experience. "VIP is a wonderful organization. The staff always makes me feel confident about my skills and the help that I'm providing," she says. Laura also volunteers for the Consulate of Mexico in the Protection and Legal Affairs Department.

From her recent experience, Laura realizes that her communication needs to be specific to the client and the situation. "Every case is different," she explains. In her latest case, she had to carefully interpret and explain the importance of deadlines for a specific complaint. Without Laura as a translator, the client could have missed a deadline or could have given incomplete answers, resulting in a negative outcome.

VIP's staff values Laura for her willingness to go above and beyond and for her enthusiasm to ask for more as an interpreter. Pro Bono Case Manager Annie Mrazik describes Laura as "a dependable combination of professional and compassionate. Laura has been volunteering with VIP for 5 months," Annie states. "Already, she has made her mark as a true encapsulation of our motto to say 'yes.' VIP is very lucky to have her."

Laura recommends volunteering with VIP because the organization welcomes people with different backgrounds, and helps them build skills and invaluable knowledge. "My parents always taught me to be grateful for what we have, to aspire for more, and to use our skills as much as possible. Volunteering helps you grow as a person and to empathize with others in different situations. I want to help people feel knowledgeable about the law. I chose this profession because I feel that we have the law in everything we do, and if I can help people understand the system a little better, then I'm doing something worthwhile."

**Laura is a dedicated volunteer who is committed to helping her community.
We applaud her partnership in helping VIP achieve access to justice for all.**