



BETH SCHLANKER / THE PRESS DEMOCRAT
Cinthya Cisneros, owner of La Cheve Bakery and Brews in Napa

Cinthya Cisneros

What is a personal achievement you are most proud of?

Obtaining my degree in chemistry. I grew up in a low income household and being an undocumented student made it that much more difficult to get any type of support. But I was determined and full of grit.

What were the biggest obstacles you faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

What blows my mind to this day is that the hardest thing was not taking my parents out of their 25+ year job to join me on my venture at La Cheve, it was taking them out of their job and then being told that we couldn't open our business because of COVID-19.

My last inspection with the city to be able to open was March 17, 2020. The full shut down took place March 18. Not only that but my rent was expected to be paid from March and on. Even without us being able to open.

I was heartbroken. I cried. And then I began to brainstorm on what to do to keep moving forward. I had to figure it out. And we did. We sure did.

When you are not at work, what do you enjoy?

I love food. I'm a big foodie and love to

explore new restaurants. I have found a deep appreciation to podcasts and listening to other entrepreneurs. Friends and family I cannot live without.

What have you learned about your leadership and how will it change the way you lead going forward?

I have learned that in leadership, those tough conversations that we avoid that need to be done, will affect you. I am a big proponent on leading with kindness, warmth and allowing that energy to radiate. But I am also becoming a leader that will have those tough conversations to ensure the way I lead, stays and isn't affected.

What are you most proud of regarding the achievements of your organization, your work and/or your community activities?

I am very proud of our scholarship funds we have created at La Cheve. I am aware that I am here today because of my community. They helped me tremendously in becoming who I am today. As soon as we were able to, I ensured that we created scholarship funds called "American Dream" where we support first generation, Latina, and/or undocumented college students. It feels amazing to pour out of our labor of love.



MARIANA MARTINEZ
Mariana G. Martinez, CEO, MGM PhD Consulting LLC; director, Mendocino College CAMP; and trustee, Santa Rosa Junior College

Mariana Martinez

What is a personal achievement you are most proud of?

Advocacy for my son. Since I was in high school I have advocated for other young adults of color for access to quality education (K - higher education) and I believed that has equipped me to be an active mother and professional. I have been an educator for over 20 years and have my own business for the last two years advocating and supporting BIPOC non profits with their growth and financial stability. All of these experiences have given me the opportunity to be the best mother for my own son, a young boy of color, and continue my work in educational equity and social justice equity overall.

What were the biggest obstacles you faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

Doubt and impostor syndrome are real. Even as a strong willed individual, doubt and the feeling of being an impostor, feeling of not belonging are obstacles that have been difficult to overcome. These combined with lack of professional mentors adds to the stressors and obstacles of growing in any field. These obstacles include not having the right strategies, not having the writing skills, feelings of not being able to highlight the

clients' work and contributions to the community.

What have you learned about your leadership and how will it change the way you lead going forward?

In order to be able to lead, you must also learn to follow. It is simply to be humble in the work that one does. All have the opportunity to lead but opportunities need to be given for that to happen. In many cases if we are often the ones leading, we do not provide others with the opportunity to showcase their strengths, their ideas, their contributions.

What are you most proud of regarding the achievements of your organization, your work and/or your community activities?

As an educator I have been fortunate to witness student development from young students (into) professionals in diverse industries, but most importantly building their career when they did not themselves know that they could do it, and that is a true blessing. As a consultant, I have been able to bring in financial support for nonprofits that would not otherwise get the support they needed to grow and maintain their efforts in the community.