

Remembering Our Beloved Sister Ana Cano

By Roberto Cabrales



Ana Cano was an environmental justice champion that paved the way for younger generations that continue to fight for environmental justice in Southeast Los Angeles.

Long after the closure of a glass recycling facility that Ana on Leota Street where Ana and her neighbors lived, her legacy was put on hold for almost a decade to provide for her family. Her story did not end there. In 2006, while taking a lunch break with fellow co-workers I ran into Ana Cano while she was patrolling the shopping center as a security guard on Florence and Seville in Huntington Park. I knew her face looked familiar but could not put my finger on it as to how I knew her and from where.

I approached her and she got nervous for a moment as I told her, "*Señora, I know you from somewhere*" she responded with a flirtatious look in her eyes, "*Oh yeah, from where?*" And then it clicked, "*You were featured in our Holding Our Breath publication for CBE*" and she glowed with excitement that someone knew her story. "*Yes, that was me but I didn't realize how famous I was*" she added and we both laughed and hugged. I introduced myself to her and told her that we had recently won to finally get rid of the concrete rubble on Cottage Street known as La Montaña. She was delighted and she cheered with happiness. I asked her to join our meetings to share her story with the membership. Of course, I was delighted when she showed up to our meetings with United Residents of Southeast Los Angeles (URSELA). And from the moment she stepped foot at URSELA space, she brought so much light.



Ana Cano re-joined the CBE family with full force. She shared her story and motivated parents about organizing for environmental justice. She described the actions she participated in and the feelings of accomplishment after testifying at board hearings and speaking directly with decision makers. She spoke to the injustices her community were learning about and the fight to shut down a glass recycling center in Walnut Park.

Ana Cano along with our beloved Ana Haney participated in a small CBE delegation of local community members to the first U.S. Social forum to Atlanta, Georgia in June of 2007. There they met other activists from across the nation during that trip. After the forum, the two Ana's shared their experience. I believe the most powerful experience was the moment part of our delegation received a tour of Georgia and got to experience the place where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr preached in Atlanta. Ana Cano got emotional to experience that special place in American History.

Ana Cano continued her commitment to fight environmental injustices in Southeast LA. When CBE's membership decided to take on the Vernon Power Plant in 2006, Ana Cano was a strong voice supporting that fight. She said, "Si, ya derrotamos montañas peligrosas y plantas de reciclaje en la vecindad, ¿Como no vamos a luchar contra esta planta masiva que quiere envenenar nuestra salud?" "No sera la primera vez que luchamos contra algo asi, vamos a darle con todo, claro que si."

Ana Cano's enthusiasm brought joy to the space because when she spoke, she spoke from the heart. The countless youth for environmental justice students that met Ana were received with open arms and warm and positive energy. Ana loved this country so much. She proudly showed off her youngest son' uniform from the service in the military but she never forgot her Chapin roots and she made sure that her two beautiful grandchildren never forgot where they came from.



Ana Cano will be missed dearly. The Southeast LA community, friends and neighbors wish the family our deepest and sincere condolences for your loss.

¡Ana Cano! ¡Presente! ¡Ana Cano! ¡Presente!

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