

LIFTING COMMUNITY WITH A TASTE OF HOME

VANESSA FAGGIOLLY doesn't know the meaning of defeat. Starting from nothing, she's been able to attain a piece of the American dream.

Armed with resilience, a deep love for her family, and a lasting connection to her homeland, Vanessa Faggiolly – along with her business partner and mother, Nora Saca – transformed a perilous future into a multimillion-dollar business.

Amerisal Foods, the Latin food distribution company owned by the mother-daughter team, not only became a lucrative means of sustenance for their family, but it also made a deep impact on its employees and their families, its loyal customers yearning for a taste of Latin America, and the entire San Fernando Valley community.

A Competitive Edge

But this story of two strong women at the heart of a business and a community might not be possible if it wasn't for the Kaiser Permanente-sponsored ICCC program in Los Angeles.

Vanessa's grandmother taught them: "You have two hands. Work. Never beg for money." Vanessa and Nora took these lessons to heart and with a keen entrepreneurial spirit bought a struggling business and lifted it from bankruptcy to liquidity, utilizing the resources and teachings from ICCC to help access capital and find success.

Vanessa explains that ICCC helped her to better understand her financials and become much more successful at raising capital. She even said that the banker was amazed at how comprehensive her report was and she attributed her preparedness to ICCC. The business is on track to grow its revenue 18 percent in 2018. When they started out, Vanessa and Nora had only 4 products. Now they have more than 50. And they're growing everyday, Vanessa says.



At the **Inner City 100 Conference and Awards**, Amerisal was recognized as one of the fastest-growing inner city businesses and was honored by **FedEx** with the **Champion of Global Entrepreneurship Award**.

Giving Back

The mother-daughter duo could have been content with a thriving business, but they wanted to do more and give back to the community that has given so much to them. Amerisal donates thousands of pounds of food each year to homeless individuals and the elderly. And Vanessa currently sits on a board at Cal State Los Angeles, where she helps first-generation student leaders become entrepreneurs and gain real-life leadership experience. Vanessa also nominated 14 businesses, and 4 of them – all minority- and woman-owned – are participating in this year's ICCC program in LA.

Meaningful Success

For Vanessa, her deep roots in the Latin American community drive her passion. "We are solving a pain," she says. "A pain of nostalgia." She sees a new generation of her Latin neighbors, thousands of miles away from their homeland, tasting her food and passing down memories and traditions that will last a lifetime.