

SANTOS'S SPEECH

"My name is Santos Macario, and I am pleased to be recognized as the Executive Summary winner from LIFT's Community Business Academy. I come from Guatemala, and my first language is Quiché. My husband Marcos and I started VG Apparel three years because we wanted to own our own business. Our inspiration to start our own company was because I suffered labor abuse when I used to work in the same industry. Many times, I was paid much less than I had earned and I was told that I was paid the correct amount. When I complained to the manager and requested the correct amount, the manager would say, "If you don't like it, I will call immigration authorities on you." This situation inspired me and my husband to start our company. Now that we own our business, we treat our fifteen employees right and pay them everything they earn so that they can continue to be happy working for us. It hasn't been easy starting our business and we have had many challenges, especially during the pandemic. But thanks to God we have continued moving forward and we have conquered many challenges that have come our way, although there are may more to overcome. One of the benefits we have received from our business is that we have more time with our children who are here with us today. We also purchased our new home about four months ago. We have more dreams to accomplish, for example, pay all our business debt, keep growing our business because we have space to build a storefront and sell clothing and hire more staff. We also want to have more financial freedom, assist our family in Guatemala and send our children to college. We want to grow our business so that one day we can pass it on to our kids in hopes that they can take it to the next level. In the Community Business Academy, we learned so many skills to better manage our business. One example is that our instructor once said, "a big ship can be sunk with a small leak". This taught us to pay better attention to our finances and we noticed we

were losing funds every week. We are now saving over \$1500.00 a month. We learned so many things that now benefit us and we know we have a lot more to learn. I am now recommending other entrepreneurs to join the Community Business Academy. Thank you so much for your time and hear a little more about our American dream."

Santos Macario
Entrepreneur, Class of 2023

