

APM Fortieth Anniversary Gala
Nilda Ruiz-APM President and CEO
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Temple University
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[After viewing APM Mini-Doc]

To stand here tonight and thank all of you on behalf of so many heroes and legends is such a great feeling - and a great honor.

We have been working so hard, to build APM into the towering strength our founders envisioned, so many years ago.

We all stand on their shoulders.

As you can see, it is truly a night of legends.

Our founders were visionaries, but they were also men and women of action. They did not sit by watching things go wrong. And they didn't merely dream.

They saw something wrong and they **fixed it**. And that's what we have to do every day. This past election was a *mess* for progressives, and a lot of good people lost. But almost all of the races were very, very close. It shows us who ever has the greatest energy will win. Not who has the best idea- Not who has the best interest of the people-no-the best *energy* will win. And so we must remain engaged and energized. We must remain vigilant and committed to the ideals of our founders and the great forward movement of this entire country.

Committed and vigilant...

Paraphrasing two famous progressives Edmund Burke and John F. Kennedy who said, 'For evil to triumph it is necessary for [the] good...to do nothing.'

We must be about the business of constant care and constant vigilance.

Apparently the selfish and shortsighted never sleep. So we must always be planning our next march.

Forty years ago our founders could have been out drinking or playing dominoes - but they chose to do something about the 'text book' inequality they saw. They came here looking for a better life. They came for economic opportunity. They arrive here and they find devastation. The housing was terrible. The social services were terrible. They wanted better, they deserved better. It looked like no one in the power structure cared at all. So they said, 'What do we do?' And they started talking with their broken English and surveying the terrain, reaching out to whoever would listen. And in their little jibaro ways, **they made it happen**. They said they would make people's lives better and **they most certainly did**.

We are out there every day following in their footsteps. Every day raising the money to help more people achieve their greatest potential. And when we say 'APM for Everyone'-- we mean it - nine thousand multicultural clients every year!

Our medical services make you feel better, our day care makes babies happier, our financial and mortgage counseling improve your bottom line, and when you're ready, we'll build you a house and you can go shopping in our supermarket.

We make our case and luckily there are people out there who are able to hear us. They want to join in this exemplary effort. They do it because they know we have a common interest in making all our citizens stronger.

We all have this in common. All of us here tonight and those who were here 40 years ago. We all have this willingness to share our strength, to empower our neighbors. When you share these priorities of amelioration, when humanity comes first, when we join in this effort together- it makes us family. Familia. We are of the same spirit. We are joined in the same battles and joined in the same victories.

In 2005, I told you something that was true then, true in 1970 and true today.

From APM's top executive offices to the fields and clinics, we are all foot-soldiers in this noble and difficult battle to strengthen people's health and social stamina. When we are called upon to break into an apartment where someone has overdosed on drugs, or we come upon a patient suffering with AIDS too weak to take a shower or a sobbing baby frightened by unworthy parents-we display immense courage and compassion. APM staff stays right there, grappling to solve these problems for hours, days, weeks, months. Trying to help that person get back on their feet is a yeoman's effort of epic proportions. This is God's work we are doing and we don't lose sight of that for one moment. Our actions on behalf of the least of our brothers and sisters send multiple signals between our people, to our neighbors, to the Halls of Congress and The Heavens.

It says we are here **not** just helping with one crisis, but here helping with whatever crises come our way.

We do not shudder.

We do not flinch.

We answer every call.

We lend that nurturing hand.

And when we do that, we help guarantee the health and future of this entire community.

One person, one saved life, at a time.

That is what we do.

That is who we are.

Now --

Forever --

APM-on the march. Thank you all and God Bless.