

Imelda Rodriguez Class of 2011

Morton College graduate Imelda Rodriguez combines her entrepreneurial spirit with a strong sense of social responsibility. She lives her life to empower others through a number of different platforms, whether it's through her job, web radio program, family-owned business or new book.

The Cicero resident's full-time job is with a Chicago-based not-for-profit organization called Center for Changing Lives. The group's mission statement, "is to partner with those held back by lack of resource and economic opportunity to uncover possibilities, overcome barriers and realize their potential."

Rodriguez serves as a Housing and Financial Coach. She does presentations in both English and Spanish to community groups or individuals interested in purchasing a home. She covers everything from money management to credit scores to mortgages to working with Realtors.

"It's a 12-hour course and we offer a lot of information," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez is very proud of her involvement with "Today's Inspired Latina." She is one of 26 Latinas sharing their individual success stories in the book's third volume, which was released in May. Rodriguez is headed to New York in October on a book promotional tour.

"It took me a year to go through the process of writing my story," Rodriguez said. "My intention is to help people overcome what they are going at that moment. I think it's going to open a lot of doors for me and the ones who read the book. It's a great opportunity to connect with the community."

[Video honoring Rodriguez at a "Today's Inspired Latina" event](#)

Rodriguez and her mother are in their ninth year of their family-owned business, "Innovación Vida," which promotes individual personal development seminars serving the area's Hispanic community.

"Our business is growing," Rodriguez beams. "We've added a financial component to it and have an internet radio show called, "[Entre Nosotras \(Between Us Ladies\) Radio](#)" at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays."

Rodriguez, who along with her mother came to the United States from Mexico in 2001, received two associate degrees from Morton College – the first in Arts in 2011 and the second in Business Management a year later. She started at National Louis University as an Elizabeth Harrison Fellows, but left to work as a program director at a homeless shelter/interim housing program in Pilsen.

"Going back to college is one of my goals," Rodriguez said. "I don't care if I'm 80 years old. I'll graduate for sure."

However, Rodriguez's two associate degrees from Morton College is something no one can take away. She maintains her education consisting of taking courses, plus attending seminars and workshops, equipped her with the latest information she needs for her jobs.

"Going to Morton College was one of best decisions I've made ever," Rodriguez said. "It pretty much laid the foundation for me to grow into what I'm doing now."