



# **Melissa Atocha Speaker**

**Friday Feb 20th  
1pm: Forum**

**Melissa will be speaking on her work with NorCal Resist. It's fascinating and her insight will be moving and inspirational. You don't want to miss this!**

*Melissa is a previously undocumented immigrant who volunteers with NorCal Resist, supporting asylum seekers by helping them navigate their court appearances through the court watch and accompaniment programs.*

Melissa was born in Ecuador and unknowingly immigrated to the United States at the age of seven. During nearly a decade as an undocumented immigrant, her family endured profound instability: her brother was deported, her mother lived under the constant threat of ICE raids during the Bush administration, and her sisters navigated early adulthood as undocumented immigrants. Melissa considers herself fortunate to have obtained permanent residency just before college applications were due—a turning point that dramatically altered her trajectory compared to that of her siblings.

She went on to earn a Doctorate in Pharmacy, and her clinical training brought her to California, where she has lived for nearly a decade. Throughout her professional career, Melissa has worked in community pharmacy, clinical practice, public health, and industry. Across every setting, she has been a steadfast advocate for underserved patients, using her bilingual skills to help families navigate an often complex healthcare system.

Today, Melissa is grateful for the opportunity to give back to her community in a broader way by supporting immigrants as they face a complex court and immigration enforcement system. She continues to learn as she goes and is deeply thankful for the invitation to speak with Strong Indivisible Seniors.