

Norma Brambila

My name is Norma Brambila, I am part of a Hispanic family including myself, my husband and my 5 children. I have lived in the Westwood Neighborhood for 20 years, and I am currently a Community Connector with the organization Westwood Unidos. I am the Connector for the Safety and Environment Group, put together by the community in order to come up with ideas and achieve goals, which have been related to their needs. It used to be the most violent, most graffiti filled and least safe neighborhood. There were no green spaces, the sidewalks were in poor condition, dogs were on the loose, and so the community could not go outside and do physical activities. This is why there was a high level of obesity.

Our community, together with the support of other organizations, was able to achieve change. The alleys that were once used as dumpsters have now been transformed into safe routes for elementary school children. We worked hard to get a new park and the community had input on the plan created by Denver Parks and Recreation for the park. We then did community outreach for the Westwood Park transformation, which was not well known by the community, or they called it by different names. The outreach was done door to door and we established meetings in the evenings. They were bilingual and we provided food and childcare, and they were carried out in a place known by the community.

When we would carry out the meetings, the residents would express their needs and we would also listen to the youth and children. The group felt more and more like they owned the project and were happy that their voices were being heard. And our park is under construction right now, which will have been designed by voice of the community.