



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Sofia Moncayo

Sofia Moncayo helped those in her community when they needed it the most. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Moncayo selflessly began working with friends and fellow members of a local church congregation to operate a food pantry for those who had lost jobs or their source of income – particularly those in western Queens' large and growing arts community.

Working alongside Lucy Bodden and Ruth Ostos, they each reached into their own pockets to start providing food for their neighbors. Through hard work and diligence, the food pantry ultimately began receiving donations from local restaurants. They successfully became enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture Farmers to Families food box program, ensuring that area residents were able to have farm fresh produce available to them.

Eventually, the food pantry expanded to serve over 2,000 people every week at the height of the pandemic. This was no small task, requiring coordination between vendors, volunteers, staging locations, and families being served. Additionally, Ms. Moncayo worked with numerous restaurants, including The Skillman, to raise over \$250,000 for this effort.

The pandemic posed its own hardship to Ms. Moncayo, as she was laid off from her job at a local construction company. She also owed substantial back rent on a small business she co-owned with her husband, which was shut down – challenges faced by hundreds of thousands of fellow New Yorkers. Despite these personal setbacks, Ms. Moncayo was able to turn her own adversity into resolve, continuing to serve families in need throughout the western Queens community.

Ms. Moncayo's efforts have been recognized both locally and nationally. In addition to being a 2022 Women of Distinction honoree, she has been honored by the Sunnyside-Woodside Kiwanis club, profiled by the *Associated Press*, and was even a guest on the *Kelly Clarkson Show*.

A native of Colombia, Ms. Moncayo lives in Sunnyside, Queens.

***Sofia Moncayo was selected as a
2022 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Michael Gianaris***

