

# Biography for Elizabeth Quiroz

Elizabeth Quiroz is an author and graduate of Arizona State University, with a Master of Arts degree in Social Justice and Human Rights. Elizabeth is currently at Liberty University to obtain her Ed.D. degree in Christian Leadership: Ministry Leadership. Her goal is to become a Faith Based Human Rights Activist where she can help make a positive impact on the lives of those transitioning through the justice system. As Elizabeth pursues this goal, she also serves as an Social Worker who assists adults and children through the Child Welfare System at Dependency Legal Services in Santa Rosa, California, and she serves as a human trafficking victim advocate.

Elizabeth's passion for helping victims of human sex trafficking has led her to start a nonprofit organization that will open a safe-house for human trafficking victims here in Sonoma County called Redemption House of The Bay Area. Elizabeth does all of this while working with her husband, José "Mico" Quiroz to raise their children, and working to raise awareness about human trafficking and its long-term impact on the lives of girls and women in communities across the country.

Elizabeth's passion and determination were fueled by a desire to atone for what she describes as mistakes of her past. These mistakes include past drug use, multiple arrests, and incarcerations. But, she has come to realize that these mistakes were a product of her childhood years surrounded by alcoholism, addiction, and being the victim of abuse. Elizabeth was the victim of a broken foster-care system that focused on her negative behavior while missing signs of abuse and trauma. Elizabeth soon found herself trapped in an abusive relationship, the victim of human trafficking, moving from the foster care system to the juvenile justice system, and on to the jail and prison systems.

Elizabeth's service to the community began upon her enrollment at SRJC, volunteering for the Bear Cub Scholar Program for foster youth. She soon became President of the Second Chance Club, an onsite support program for formerly incarcerated students. On Christmas Eve 2018, Elizabeth received an Unconditional Governor's Pardon from Governor Jerry Brown through the support of numerous community leaders. In 2021, Elizabeth graduated from Sonoma State University with Distinction, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology.

## **Motivating Others, Raising Awareness and Emerging Leader**

Elizabeth is a sought after speaker and presents on various topics, including Criminal Records Expungement, Addiction/Recovery, and Human Trafficking. Among her audiences are; Sonoma County Jail GED graduates, female inmates at Folsom State Prison, the California Violence Prevention Network annual conference, the Placerville Summit Child and Family Services, Lake County Tribal Health, the San Mateo women's correctional facility, SRJC Latinx graduation, the Santa Rosa Junior College President's Address to the Community, and more recently, San Mateo Sheriff Corpus Inauguration into Office. She also presents at the SRJC Human Trafficking Awareness and Women's History Month events. As a mentor, Elizabeth works with at-risk youth from multiple organizations including, Seneca, Valley of the Moon, and Juvenile Probation.

Elizabeth's new memoir, *Purified in the Flame*, is about her testimony and how she was able to break from and overcome the effects of human trafficking, addiction, incarceration and a broken foster care system. She is now using her pain for purpose, and showing other survivors that they, too, can use their voice to make a difference.

## **A Strong Advocate and Emerging Leader**

Elizabeth is evolving as a strong community leader and advocate. She currently serves as a member of the Sonoma County Human Trafficking Task Force, and founded and co-facilitates Sonoma County's first Peer-Led Human Trafficking support group for victims and survivors. Elizabeth coordinates a monthly street outreach program for human trafficking victims, working to provide them a path to exit the control of their perpetrators safely. To support these efforts, Elizabeth is the Co-founder of Redemption House of The Bay Area and is working towards building a nonprofit organization to help human trafficking victims by providing them a safe place to live while recovering and healing from their traumatic past. We are here to help victims of human trafficking reclaim their lives and return to a functioning, productive, and healthy way of life.

## **Recognition for Service**

Elizabeth is a recipient of several recognitions including, the 2019 American Red Cross Humanitarian Hero Award, the 2019 Achievement and Community Service Award from the Sonoma County Lowrider Council, the 2021 inaugural Spirit of Sonoma County Award from Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, the 2022 Sonoma County Woman of The Year Award from Congressman Mike Thompson, the 2022 Alumni Changemaker Award from 10,000 Degrees, and was selected as one of the 2019 Faces of SSU, a project at Sonoma State University recognizing students for sharing their unique story and their on-campus leadership and contributions to the campus community. Elizabeth recently received the 2023 inaugural SFF's Phyllis K Friedman – Retha Smith Robinson Community Leadership Award, and was recognized as an emerging woman-of-color leader under 40 in San Mateo County. Elizabeth also received the 2023 Journey to Freedom Award from Love Never Fails.