



Raul was trying to make life better for his family when he unexpectedly found *himself* on the receiving end of help.

It's hard to hear the word "cancer" when you're 25 years old.







## I had a purpose when I moved here.

My parents still live in Guatemala, and I wanted to help make their lives a little easier. It was so hard to understand why I had to get sick.

I work as a line cook and don't get health insurance, so I waited too long to go to the doctor. By the time I went to urgent care, the pain was so bad that I couldn't even sleep.

Without parents nearby to help me face three surgeries and chemotherapy, my picture of family expanded. I moved in with my aunt and uncle and they never left my side; coworkers helped with rides and picked up medication; and in the hospital, I got to know Life with Cancer counselor, David McGuiness. In his free time, he volunteers at Arlington Free Clinic, so he quickly recognized my need for a place like this.

I landed in a medical home. Arlington Free Clinic coordinated with my surgeon and oncologists; my counselor helped me rebuild when I lost hope; and everyone celebrated with me when I responded so well to treatment. Now, the dentist is even repairing the damage chemotherapy did to my mouth.

I crossed paths with so many incredible people over the past 15 months. While cancer changed me, I'm young and grateful to my vast, extended family that I can look forward to a full life, fulfilling the mission that motivated me to come here.



*Raul with members of his Arlington Free Clinic care team: Jenny Escoto, Jyl Pomeroy, and Aida Villata*

If you've already given this year,  
we send you our heartfelt thanks.  
If not, your year-end gift will help us  
continue to provide essential care  
to Arlingtonians in need.

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