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 - [America's Next Leaders 2016](#)
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- “America’s Next Leaders 2015” is an Equal Voice News special series that highlights young people who are strengthening their communities.

March 18, 2016 10:54 am by [Maria Rigou | Equal Voice News](#)



For Roshell Rosales Aguilar, contributing to her community means giving a voice to the underrepresented.

Roshell, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico at the age of 3, believes that the Hispanic community, especially in Birmingham, Alabama is not well known.



Roshell Rosales Aguilar

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she approached the organization with the goal of creating a new youth program that would prepare students for the future and expand opportunities for them.

Last summer, Roshell interned at ¡HICA! to learn new skills and help people.”We were trying to build a youth program and [develop and identify college scholarships opportunities] for Latino and Hispanic youth,” she says.

In 2011, when Alabama state lawmakers approved HB 56, which families and immigrant reform advocates [criticized as harsh](#), Roshell was one of many youth who attended rallies and marches in Birmingham and Montgomery to raise her voice against the law.

She has continued to be an advocate in the movement for immigrant justice as a member of [Adelante Alabama Worker’s Center](#).

Roshell is also a past participant of [Anytown Alabama](#), a social justice leadership camp for high school students. At the camp, she and other participants developed leadership skills to take back to their schools and communities.

“Roshell is a bright and determined young Latina,” Rubio says. “She is still considering her higher education options but wants to pursue a career that allows her to explore her love of science and helping people.”

With her Shriver Award, the 16-year-old hopes to start a scholarship program for youth of color through ¡HICA!, because she believes “this will help students who are about to graduate [and don’t have many options].”

“This would be a great way to help student minorities continue with their education in any school they wish to go,” she says. “The Award means [that I am able] to help my community in any way possible, even from something small to eventually getting more involved.

“With me doing all this work, I hope that [youth] get motivated, too, and they say, ‘Wow, I want to do that, too, I want to be able to help my community, I want to help my family out.’ That is what I hope to do with all my service at ¡HICA!”

*Each story in the [“America’s Next Leaders 2015”](#) special series features a young person who contributes to his or her community and has received a Sargent Shriver Youth Warriors Against Poverty Leadership Award. Each year, [Marguerite Casey Foundation](#), which publishes *Equal Voice News*, honors young people with this award. The *Equal Voice Network South*, which includes [Alabama Organizing Project](#) and the [Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama](#), nominated [Rosales Aguilar](#) for the award.*

◆ [Adelante Alabama Worker’s Center](#), [Alabama](#), [Anytown Alabama](#), [Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama](#), [Isabel Rubio](#), [Roshell Rosales Aguilar](#), [Sargent Shriver Award](#), [youth leadership](#)

Special Series: A Young Latina Is Making Change in Ala. added by [Maria Rigou | Equal Voice News](#) on March 18, 2016

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