



The Storehouse
COMMUNITY CENTER

Contact:
Elizabeth Lenart
214-394-7457
Elenart2013@gmail.com

The Storehouse Community Center
1401 Mira Vista Boulevard
Plano, TX 75093
info@thestorehouseecc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Transformation Realized at The Storehouse Community Center

How a visit to the food pantry helped a North Texas immigrant find life-changing employment in his trained profession at Hilti North America



Jose Salazar sits at his desk at Hilti North America's corporate office at The Shops at Legacy. A former public accountant with more than 20 years of experience, Jose began his path toward stability and transformation in 2022 after first seeking help at The Storehouse's food pantry.

PLANO, TEXAS - June 10, 2025 - In 2018, [Jose Salazar](#), a highly educated and successful auditor in his home country of Venezuela, immigrated to North Texas and faced the challenge of rebuilding his career in a new county. In 2022, he was working multiple low-paying jobs to support his family of four when he visited [The Storehouse Community Center](#) for food assistance. He would never have imagined that going to the food pantry would launch a journey through a transformative pathway of programs. Today, Salazar has come full circle. Not only is he employed in his trained profession at [Hilti North America](#), a global company in more than 120 countries, but he also recently volunteered, serving others with his Hilti team, in the same food pantry where his life-changing journey began.

In Venezuela, Salazar worked as a public accountant with a postgraduate degree in auditing and tax control. For nearly 17 years he worked in auditing at various institutions, including seven years as external auditor for the mayor of the city of El Vigia.

“My career took an unexpected turn when I was persecuted by the government for doing my job with integrity,” began Salazar. “I refused to compromise my principles and continued to hold public officials accountable for serious acts of corruption. That decision, though morally right, forced me to make the most difficult one of all: to leave my country.”

In 2018, the family fled without a plan – only with faith. They came to Dallas in search of a place where they could rebuild their lives. They did not know the culture and did not speak English, but they found The Storehouse. At the food pantry, they learned about additional services such as The Academy education program and its ESL classes.

“The Academy became a turning point in my life,” said Salazar. “The staff and volunteers taught me how to communicate with courage and showed me I was not alone. There were people in Dallas who cared and were ready to walk alongside me in this new beginning.”

Like many Storehouse neighbors, not knowing English was a significant barrier to Salazar’s success. He and his wife, Ana Gutierrez, along with 10 additional neighbors, recently graduated from all six levels of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at The Storehouse Academy, where 222 neighbors enrolled this spring, and a waitlist of comparable size continues to grow. Additionally, during the ceremony, 190 received ESL certificates for completing the semester, and four earned automotive repair and service certificates through a course held in partnership with Collin College. Salazar was asked to provide remarks on behalf of all the graduates at the ceremony.



Left: In addition to taking ESL classes on Saturdays, Jose Salazar enrolled in accounting courses offered through The Academy in partnership with Collin College, earning his accounting clerk certification.

Right: Jose Salazar (left), his wife, Ana (right), and their daughters, Sofia and Ana Lucia, at the spring 2025 graduation ceremony for The Academy. Jose and Ana were two of 12 students who completed all six levels of ESL.

For neighbors seeking transformation, The Storehouse provides pathways to education, employment, and financial stability. Since May 2023, 69 neighbors have found living-wage employment through trusted job partners such as Lux Ice, Hilti, and Nebraska Furniture Mart.

When Salazar first arrived in the United States, he was a delivery driver, worked in warehouses and construction, and cleaned up stadiums, among other jobs to support his family. None of his work had anything to do with his profession, and he was very frustrated. Through The Academy’s partnership with Collin College, Salazar earned an Accounting Clerk Certificate, bringing him

closer to reclaiming his career. This not only enhanced his knowledge of U.S. accounting practices and his technical English, but it also helped him to overcome his fear. He also participated in a Storehouse pilot program called Work Well, which taught him about workplace culture in the U.S.; how to write a resume; present himself professionally; and prepare for interviews with confidence. Next, through The Storehouse’s job partnership program, Jose was hired in May 2024 as an apprentice at Hilti, where he was cross-trained and mentored to develop and identify his strengths. By November, Salazar was hired as an accounting administrator and auditor for Hilti North America. Coming full circle, Salazar had returned to working in his field.



Jose Salazar addresses his fellow graduates, classmates, volunteers and guests at the spring graduation on May 19, 2025. He encouraged new students, saying, “The Storehouse can equip us with the tools — but it’s up to us to do the work, to believe in the process and to commit to transformation.”

“Programs like Work Well and our partnership with The Storehouse bring in a diverse talent pool, create inclusive workspaces, and build a more resilient and innovative workforce committed to the long-term goals of the company,” said Dulari Mehta, social impact manager, Hilti. “Jose’s initiative and his drive to seek out new opportunities really stood out to me. He knew his journey would not be easy, but he kept showing up and making the most of what came his way.”

At Hilti, Salazar received non-traditional supports, including a mentor to help him integrate into corporate American culture, online courses, a job coach trained in workforce development and a caring group of team leaders.

“When partners like Hilti come alongside us and have made a commitment to our neighbors and to our vision statement, we know that by working together we can truly make a transformational difference,” said Candace Winslow, CEO, The Storehouse Community Center.



Left: Jose Salazar volunteers as a food cart runner with his coworkers from Hilti during a food pantry distribution on April 17, 2025.

Right: Jose Salazar (left) and his coworkers from Hilti pose for a group photo before their corporate volunteer day at The Storehouse’s Seven Leaves Food Pantry.

“The Academy programs and its partnership with Collin College provided me with the vocabulary, the confidence, and the vision to connect my professional past with my new life here,” continued Salazar. “The apprenticeship at Hilti helped me to learn the operational process from within and prepared me for what was to come next. My new position at Hilti is a personal milestone, but it is also a responsibility. Now I proudly represent the students of The Storehouse: hard-working, honest individuals who are ready to contribute to this country with excellence and integrity.”

“From receiving food at our food pantry, to securing a career at an international company, Jose’s journey reflects the impact of the holistic care of The Storehouse which intersects with amazing job partners such as Hilti,” said Candace Winslow, CEO, The Storehouse. “Jose’s story represents hope, and it is available to all our neighbors when our staff, volunteers, job partners, and donors all come together as one community. This is transformation realized.”

###

The Storehouse Community Center (formerly The Storehouse of Collin County) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the community through food, clothing, resources, education, and employment support. By creating strong partnerships and offering transformational programs, TSCC works to address the root causes of food insecurity and empower neighbors to achieve self-sufficiency. During its previous fiscal year, The Storehouse served 182,024 unduplicated neighbors with the support of more than 2,000 volunteers. Visit www.thestorehousecc.org. The Storehouse EIN: 27-1883333