

# One by One, We Make a Difference

Yancy Reyes

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Have you ever had jury duty? Share what happened.

I believe in democracy, which gives a voice and vote to each of its citizens. For a democracy to work well, everyone needs to take their rights and responsibilities seriously.

I developed this opinion after an event that changed my way of thinking: I got called for jury duty. The person on trial was the mayor of the town in El Salvador where I lived. He was on trial for child abuse. The jury included different people who, like me, had come to serve and obey the laws of the country. I liked being on the jury. It was my first time being in a position to say my opinion on things. I was 24.

I never used to think politics was important. I never voted. After the trial, I started taking action, and now I vote. The first time I voted, I took my son with me. I wanted to teach him about the election.

This event made me understand that in a democracy, we all count. Even though the result of

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this trial was not what I wanted, this experience made me take an active part in our democracy and exercise my responsibilities. I thought that the mayor was guilty. Two other jurors thought he was guilty, too, but six jurors thought he was innocent. I felt a little frustrated, but I also felt satisfied because I was part of the jury.

In my country at that time, there were many bad people in the government. They took money from the people and the country. So, I voted for a new president. The person I voted for became president. The new president had different ideas.

There was a little change. I felt good because a new president had the opportunity to help my country. It is important to vote. Every vote counts. One by one, we make a difference.

**AFTER YOU READ:**

**1.** Tell the sequence of events that led Yancy to feel that “one by one, we make a difference.”

**2.** The jury’s decision did not reflect Yancy’s opinion, but she still felt satisfied with her participation. Why? Have you ever been in the minority but felt that your voice still counted? Explain.



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## A Jury of Your Peers

In the United States, courts randomly select citizens’ names from lists of registered voters and people with drivers licenses who live in that district. These people complete a questionnaire to help determine if they are qualified to serve on a jury. This selection process helps to make sure that jurors represent a cross section of the community, without regard to race, gender, national origin, age, or political affiliation.

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