Jose and Gloria’s Story
Adult Education Services

Each client who comes to Catholic Charities Atlanta brings a different life story. Jose and Gloria are no exception. Their lives in Colombia had been disrupted when Gloria was kidnapped and held for 4.5 months. After her release, they left their homeland and sought political asylum in the United States. They joined their adult children in Georgia, and settled in Atlanta.

Five years later, the couple was eligible to apply for citizenship and began attending our Citizenship Classes in Chamblee. They also attended our English classes to improve their language skills. When they were ready, they filed their applications for naturalization and waited for notification of their interview appointments. The days finally came (Jose’s appointment was one day before Gloria’s). They passed the Civics and English tests with flying colors, and took the Oath of Citizenship on the afternoons of their interviews. Their entire family, including children and grandchildren are now United States Citizens!

However, their story with Catholic Charities does not end with naturalization. Because citizenship grants someone the privilege of a U.S. Passport, they wanted to apply immediately so that they could go to Colombia -- they hadn’t been able to go to see any remaining family members for 11 years because of their status. This was especially urgent because Gloria’s mother had been ill for several years and has Alzheimer’s disease. Jose mentioned that they were going to the airport two days after becoming citizens to apply for expedited passports. The Adult Education Services Manager asked about the process and realized they were planning to use a high-price service delivery business. She referred them to the Atlanta Passport Office where they could also apply for passports and receive them in two days, saving them $1400. They followed her advice and were on their way to Colombia one week later.

Jose and Gloria are now back in Atlanta, and are planning to return to classes to talk about their application and interview process to encourage current students.