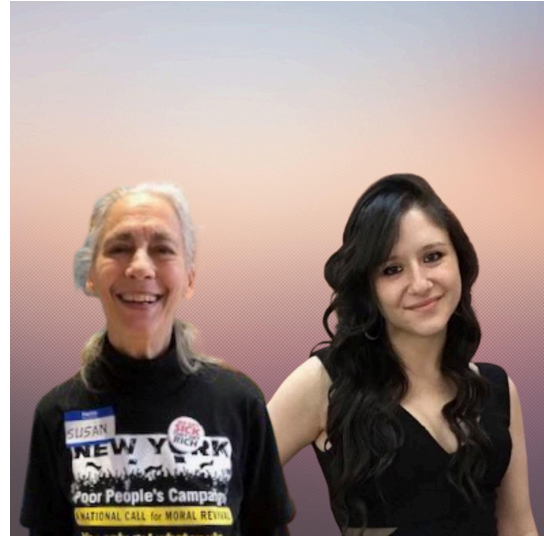


## Mariana Pineda: Presente

*Featuring*  
*Social Justice Advocates*  
**Susan Karbiner**  
*and Carly Paris*



### *This time on Code WACK!*

This is the story of a dedicated advocate, organizer, and powerful voice in the fight for healthcare justice - **Mariana Pineda**.

Mariana was a teacher in the Roosevelt School District, Nassau County, Long Island, until she caught a serious case of COVID complicated by pre-existing conditions, including asthma and heart problems.

No longer able to work, she lost her employer-sponsored health insurance. Desperate to have some kind of coverage, she spent down her savings on COBRA. Despite financial help from friends, Mariana eventually ended up in a homeless shelter with her young son, Max, where they suffered from cockroaches and bedbugs.

Yet through it all, Mariana never stopped advocating for people's rights. A social justice activist and tireless organizer, she could command a rally one minute and spend the next making sure everyone had something to eat.

And before she died earlier this year at age 46... she spent years fighting for healthcare as a human right.

This is part one of a two-part series about Mariana Pineda, single mom, teacher, and healthcare justice fighter.

# SHOW NOTES

## WE DISCUSS

*Tell us about Mariana as an organizer. What made her special?*

**CARLY:** She's one of the smartest people I think I've ever met in my life.

For any number of issues, obviously, health care was her number one; she never needed to write anything down. And it just blew my mind, all this information she had, and she connected to the issue so fast, her mind must have run like a million miles an hour."

*As she grew more and more sick, do you think her race, disability, and Medicaid insurance coverage influenced the level of care she received?*

**CARLY:** Quite a few times when she was in the hospital, she would call me crying, because of pain, or because of other issues. Even things like she needed help to go to the bathroom, and nurses weren't helping her. They weren't giving her adequate equipment. And so I would either call or show up, and because I'm white, I was able to get her the care that she should have had, regardless of a white person asking for it."

**SUSAN:** When she went to the hospital for example, one time , they were being very pushy. And she had what's known as an autistic meltdown. And they treated it as an emotional breakdown and put her in the psych ward. It was not a psychological problem.

## Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

# Helpful Links

[MARIANA PINEDA PRESENTE | Videos & Movies on Vimeo,](#)

[Mariana Pineda, KeyWiki](#)

[Hallucinating & Hypertensive: A Long COVID Nightmare, Code WACK!](#)

[Did NY Dems drop the ball on Medicare for All - again? Code WACK!](#)

['There is a solution': a Covid survivor's life-or-death battle for Medicare for All, The Guardian](#)

[Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](#)

[Mariana Pineda Testimonial](#)

[2026 Poor People's State of the State](#)

[El Estado de la Pobreza en Nueva York](#)

## Guest Biography - Susan Karbiner

Susan has filled a great variety of roles in the course of her 83 years, but is now committed full-time to the advancement of social justice. She is a tri-chair of the **NYS Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC)** and a coordinator for the PPC's Long Island region, concentrating on organizing and educating people about the systemic injustices in our society and advocating for change.

She writes a weekly newsletter for the Long Island region, and is on the team that publishes a biweekly newsletter for the NYS PPC.

## Guest Biography - Carly Paris

Carly Paris is an activist from New York who has been organizing for over 10 years.

She saw how broken the healthcare system is firsthand when she was forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket for care for her stage 4 deep infiltrating endometriosis. At that point, she decided she couldn't stay on the sidelines and sit by while people were dying because they had to choose between healthcare and food or rent.

She is not only a fierce advocate for healthcare for all but also for queer rights, environmental justice, women's rights, immigration justice, and much more.

## Host Biography: Brenda Gazzar

**Brenda Gazzar**, the host and co-producer of **Code WACK!**, has produced over 300 weekly podcast episodes, topping 400,000 downloads. A skilled interviewer and storyteller, Brenda brings nuance, curiosity, and clarity to every conversation.

Brenda has worked as a multilingual and award-winning reporter with more than two decades of experience in California and the Middle East.

Her work has been published by Reuters, Ms. Magazine, USA Today, Los Angeles Daily News, the Orange County Register, The Wrap, The Jerusalem Post, Cairo Times, and numerous other publications. She speaks Spanish, Hebrew, and moderate Arabic and is the recipient of national, state, and regional awards.

Brenda also enjoys being a life coach, helping people align with their purpose so they feel fulfilled while achieving their boldest dreams.

Brenda's work is grounded in a belief that systemic change and personal growth go hand in hand — and she's here for both.

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## Keywords

*Mariana Pineda, Code WACK!, HEAL California, Medicare for All, healthcare justice, healthcare is a human right, housing is a human right, Long COVID, Medicaid, COBRA, employer-sponsored health insurance, single-payer healthcare, health equity, disability justice, racial justice, medical bias, homelessness, Poor People's Campaign, New York Health Act, Mariana Pineda Presente*

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