

## **Claudia Riumalló and Ricardo Cárdenas, with their daughter and sons**

Country of origin: Chile

Circumstances of arrival: When Claudia was very young, her father came to the United States to study at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She grew up in Boston and Houston. When she was 14, her parents decided to go back to Chile in the midst of Pinochet's dictatorship, in the mid-70's. It was in Chile where she met Ricardo at a music school. After Ricardo's first visit to her family home, their life together began. Claudia and Ricardo both free-lanced, she teaching English and Spanish to various companies, and Ricardo running a radio show. Their permanent move to the States was made possible when Claudia learned she had won a green card lottery—a risk she had decided was worth taking. The Cárdenas-Riumalló family was the first in Chile to win such a lottery. The following year, Claudia traveled to Eugene, where they had many friends; Ricardo and the children followed her there a few months later. The day of their travel was 9/11/02, also the anniversary of the coup in Chile. Nobody wanted to fly that day. In Chile, tires were burning in the streets. A significant influence on Claudia's and Ricardo's decision to make a life in this country was the opportunity for their children to have a good education.

Work/avocation: Ricardo is a professional musician who plays classical guitar. Claudia works as a college advisor. She has a background in the study of flower essences, dance, and anthropology. Their daughter and sons are earning degrees in fields ranging from visual art and Spanish language to bio chemistry and bio physics.

*Claudia: It's a blessing to be in and participate in various cultures, to see from both sides. You get to choose. You can be free that way when you have the opportunity of choosing.*

*When neighbors come together, that's what I enjoy about anybody, really.*

Photographer: Paul Dix

