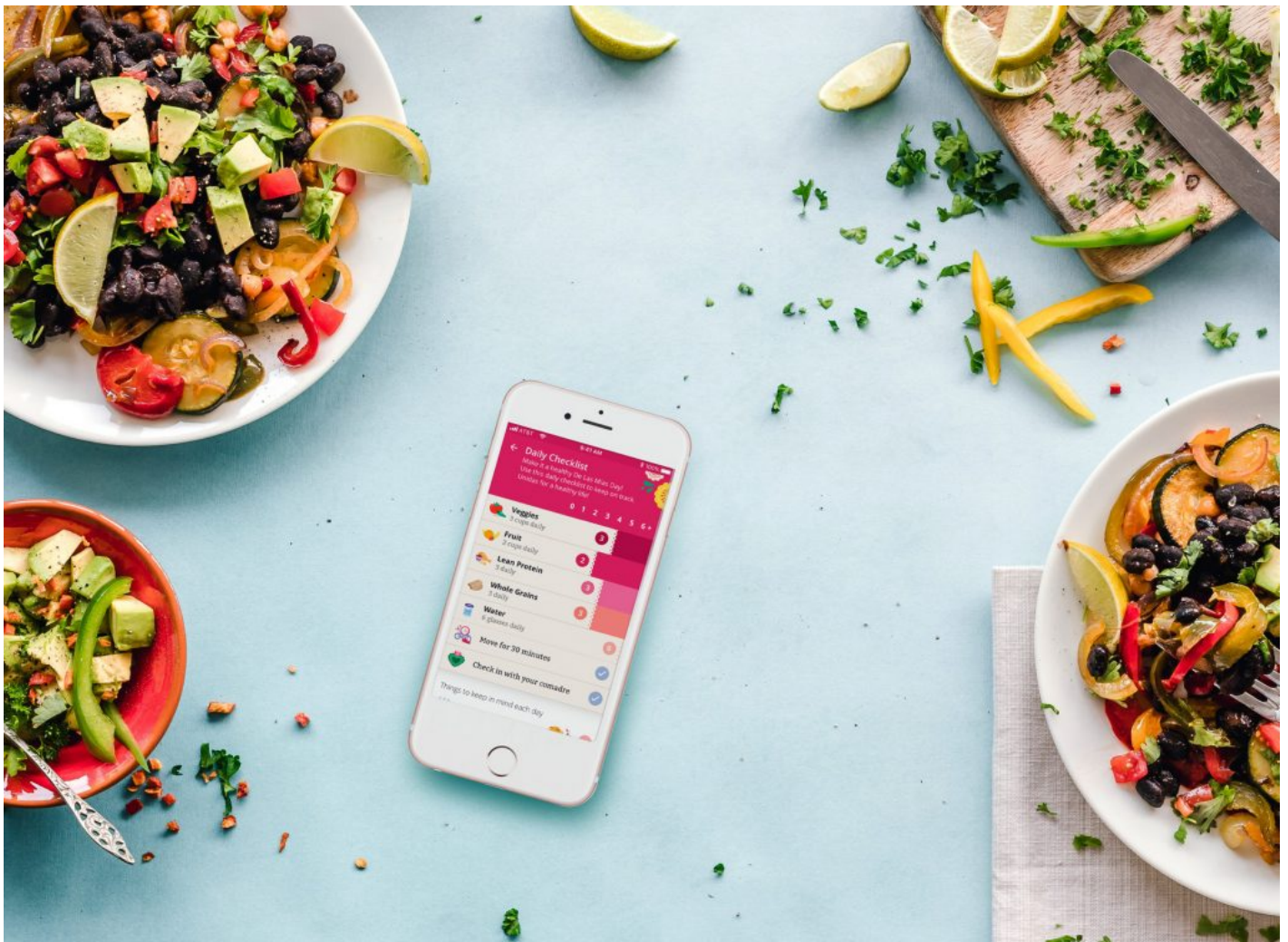


# We've come a long way, Comadre: The journey of a Latina-founded health tech startup

21 MAY / 2019



## **Poco a Poco — A little bit at a time...how we got to the iOS App Launch**

With the launch of the De Las Mías iOS app on the App Store, I'm reflecting back on the last 4

years and how much we have accomplished. When my mom and I founded De Las Mías we were confident we knew how to build a community, share our expertise in bilingual health education, and ultimately create a business that would positively impact the health and wellness of Latinas across this country. But what we did not know was A LOT. And, in particular we did not know a lot about building apps.

We did not start out this process thinking we were going to build an app. We started this process designing a solution to a problem, specifically the lack of culturally engaging health information and healthy living tools for Latinas. Our discovery process brought us to the solid realization, that what today's Latinas needed to help them on their journey to a healthier life was an engaging experience they could have at their fingertips to use on a daily basis. Enter the Smartphone and the fact that Latinas are early adopters and robust users of Smartphones, social media and the internet to access health information online. Here is what we call the "DUH" moment. That epiphany, obvious as it was, launched us on the journey to build a better healthy lifestyle app for Latinas.

### **And we are still learning. Every. Single. Day.**

One of the biggest take-aways is: It's all about the TEAM. I may not know how to build an app, but I know how to find people who do! We knew from the beginning we needed a solid team.

With a fantastic opportunity in the shape of a highly competitive grant from the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute Small Business Innovation Research (NIH-NCI SBIR), we built a terrific team of health researchers, obesity experts, nutritionists, exercise physiologists, digital strategists, and bilingual health communications experts. We found top-notch developers and UX/UI designers. And then we did a ton of user testing and conducted a randomized trial with nearly 200 bilingual Latinas in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

And we did it! We created the first-ever healthy lifestyle app specifically designed for Latinas!



**Here's a brief timeline of what it took to create De Las Mías and the tools you see today:**

- 2015: Awarded a SBIR grant from NIH-NCI - America's Seed Fund!
- 2016: Built v1 of the Android app
- 2017 to 2018: Conducted a 9-month-long randomized trial testing the Android app with 200 bilingual Latinas in Albuquerque, NM (The women in this study were our greatest teachers and we learned SO much!)
- 2018: Took ALL THAT, iterated the heck out of it (No Foolin'), and created a better version of the De Las Mías Android app. And oh yeah, built a bilingual website to go with it. Published and continue to publish all our content in English and Spanish. (No biggie!)

- 2019: Built the next, always-improving-version of the app only this time for all those iPhone user Super Mujeres!
- (Phew!)

This has been and continues to be a dream come true. Come on! Who gets to have a crack at solving a problem that is going to make the world a better place for Latinas and their familias? We do!

Huge kudos and thanks to the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute (NCI Grant # 4R44CA177037-02), and to the State of Oregon's Business Development Department who provided us with an SBIR matching grant funded in part by the Oregon State Lottery funds.

As we continue to grow and improve De Las Mías, research, user testing and a customer-centered approach will always be central to how we develop products, content and the platform. Audience-Centered Design is simply part of our DNA.

We are committed to presenting our community with the latest research and tools that make sense to us as Latinas. We will continue to use proven, evidence-based approaches to help Latinas live happier, healthier lives. And to make sure we are always in step with our community, we will continue to go out into the places Latinas live, work and play to ask you what's working and what's not working. We want to know how we can help you, your familia and ultimately Nuestra Comunidad.

There's a reason we call this De Las Mías and that is because we are on this camino together. We belong together on this quest. Poco a poco. Paso a paso.

**¡Unidas for a Healthy Life!**