

THE PROMISE



MISSION PROMISE
COMUNIDAD PROMESA DE LA MISION
NEIGHBORHOOD



Arold on the right and his son, Samuel.

PERSEVERANCE AND ADVOCACY FOR MY FAMILY

My name is Arold, I am 34 years old and originally from Lima, Honduras. I had to flee my country because of the violence that exists, and I have been in the United States for one year and five months. Now, as a single father, I have to fight for the well-being of my son who has many needs. In my homeland, there are no resources to support his growth and development. My dream is that one day my son can be independent and, in order to achieve this, I have to be informed of my rights and ask for the support needed.

I met Ana Avilez, Family Success Coach, through one of my son's therapists. She was recommended to me and we connected through email. Since then, Ana has helped me connect with many programs and I have been able to receive financial support from different organizations that support the immigrant community. With the financial support obtained, I was able to buy special materials that have supported my son's developmental growth.

My life has changed much since I met Ana because I already have more knowledge of how the system works and I am adapting to it. At the same time, she taught me how to use the DAHLIA portal to participate in the below-market-rate (BMR) housing lotteries and helped get my son into Felton's Molera program. The Molera program offers child care services for infants and toddlers from birth to six years old who have been identified as having any chronic health conditions that require on-site nurse monitoring. Ana also helped me get closer to school district staff for my son's IEP process and services.

My advice is to seek help and do not lose hope if the first person who says, "No." Seek another opinion and make sure the information comes from a reliable source. Remember that there is no worse fight than the one that does not occur.



Victoria at the Community HUB.

DAY AT THE COMMUNITY HUB

Community HUBs are designed to support children and youth that are struggling with distance learning.

My name is Victoria and I'm in the fifth grade. I attend Buena Vista Horace Mann and am currently attending the HUB Jamestown at Community Music Center, 544 Capp St.

Why are you attending the HUB?

I'm attending the HUB because I don't really speak English and I am being offered more help here.

What is a typical day for you at the HUB?

I can attend my online classes in the morning and I get to complete my homework with the help of the teachers. I also get to dance, play soccer, and learn to play the drums every day.

How has this experience helped you?

I've been able to do my homework and I've also learned to speak more English. The drum teacher also instructs me on how to read in English during my homework session.

Anything additional they would like to say.

I like pretty much everything, such as playing with my friends and practicing my English skills.



First row, top to bottom Pamela, Magali and Ana and some of the parents that attend the PSG.

NEW PARENT SUPPORT GROUP AT FELTON

Co-facilitators:

Pamela Gonzalez, Mental Health Specialist for the Early Intervention Team at Instituto Familiar de la Raza (IFR),
Magali Valdez-Robles, previously Family Support Coordinator at Family Development Center/Felton Institute and now Family Success Coach with Mission Promise Neighborhood
Ana Avilez, Early Learning Family Success Coach based at Family Development Center/Felton Institute

What is the Parent Support Group? In partnership with Felton, IFR, MPN, MEDA and the parents, we have created an open and safe space where families can reach their full potential. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have provided a safe space for families to connect with one another to process everything that this pandemic has meant for them. In this space everyone is welcome, participants can learn and honor each other's cultures, communities, language, children's education experiences, struggles and personal self-care tips. This group has allowed parents of all ages to check-in with each other on how they're dealing with the pandemic. Older parents share stories of resilience and resources, and younger parents are learning from these experiences.

"Through PSG we have been able to collaborate beautifully across our different agencies, tapping into our areas of expertise as we create space for our familias." -- Pamela, IFR Specialist

Prior to the pandemic Felton and MPN had already established an in-person Parent Support Group. There were times where Pamela was invited to answer questions that parents had (for example, ways in which parents can support their children's social-emotional health). When the shelter-in-place order started, we had a meeting and discussed the idea of facilitating a virtual Parent Support Group. Magali provided updates to families of the services the center was pivoting to continue to support and serve the children and their families.

Pamela and Magali collaborated and offered meditation and breathing techniques. They shared ways breathing exercises can emotionally support children. Ana shared information and resources available for families, such as the moratorium letter, SFUSD updates with distance learning, and food distribution centers. They all bring something different to the group – and the group supports the entire family allowing parents to feel relieved after attending the Group Meeting.

As time passed and families felt more comfortable sharing their stories, we noticed friendships growing. We have also witnessed parents taking lead in supporting one another and leading their discussions. Most of our conversations have also shifted into how participants have strength and knowledge, plus are active agents of change in their community. Participants feel more comfortable navigating Zoom: They know how to present, use the chat function, and mute/unmute. While these skills may seem effortless to some, for our families this was a challenge they overcame via their resilience.

Now that we are closing the year and get to reflect on the last eight months, we see that families have developed strong bonds with each other and continue to want to connect so they can continue to build community and support each other through this crisis. They believe in their capability to do many different things that support their children's well-being.



THE PROMISE COMMITTEE

From left: Alejandro, Ana, Pedro, Mariana, Liz, Dannhae, and Flor. Our mission is to share accomplishments and stories by students, families, and partner organizations that are part of our network. The Promise Newsletter will be published quarterly, so the next one will be on Winter, 2020. If you have an idea or would like to share your story, contact Alejandro at (415) 282-3334 ext. 126 or abautista@medasf.org.