

THE PROMISE



MISSION PROMISE
COMUNIDAD PROMESA DE LA MISION
NEIGHBORHOOD



Mariana and Ovidia during their Support Group in-person meeting on June 8th, 2021

"MY FAMILY AND I CAN HAVE WHAT WE DESERVE AND NEED"

Ovidia is a mom from Leonard R. Flynn Elementary School. She has a 10-year-old son who is currently in fifth grade. Family Success Coach Mariana Tejada, in collaboration with Flynn's Mental Health Consultant Pamela Gonzalez, from Instituto Familiar de la Raza, have been working as a team supporting Ovidia in different ways.

I met Mariana almost three years ago at my son Jeffren's school. She offered to help me find a job. I first met Pamela during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the Support Group to which Mariana had invited me.

They helped me much emotionally: I used to be nervous speaking in front of people, but now this group has given me confidence and has helped me get over my shyness. Now, I can speak in front of people and express myself well.

Thanks to all of that support, I was able to communicate with my son's school psychologist and social worker so that they could give Jeffren a formal evaluation. I realized that he was falling behind in school, but I was ashamed and did not know how to express my concerns. This is where Mariana and Pamela guided me through the process. The school is now going to do the formal evaluation to see the reason for my child's learning delay. If I had not had this trust with Mariana and Pamela, I would never have felt comfortable expressing my doubts and needs – and the most affected would have been Jeffren.

I now feel empowered each and every day. I practice and use the tools that are shared in the Support Group. I am not so shy anymore, expressing myself without fear. That is why my family and I can have what we deserve and need. I feel very happy and comfortable with the Support Group, and I hope it continues.



Sarah (on the left) & Magy (on the right) taking their online classes

TWO SISTERS STRENGTHENED FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

Sarah is in kindergarten at Buena Vista Horace Mann School. Distance learning is something new and it makes her curious because she has never touched a screen and sometimes she acts as if it is a game. She likes this activity, but I have to be with her to make sure that she participates in class and does not get distracted by touching all the buttons on the computer.

The school supported us with the needed materials so that Sarah could take her classes. Her teacher's support, for which we are very grateful, is very important to us to be able to work well. Sarah would like to attend face-to-face classes because she wants to meet her teacher and friends so that she can talk and play in person with them.

Magy is in fourth grade at Buena Vista Horace Maan School. Distance learning has definitely been a new experience –and at the beginning, it was a challenge for her because she did not know how to use her computer and the internet was unstable. She felt very tired, and her eyes and head would hurt. This caused frustration. We thank her teacher, who has supported her with distance learning.

Now, Magy is performing much better and understands the difference between face-to-face versus virtual learning. Thanks to the entire school team for their support, plus for providing the school supplies and tools so that she can continue her classes. Magy would like to go back to school in person so she can be with her teachers and classmates, plus to socialize, which is important for personal development.



Kids enjoying the 2019 Fiesta Comunitaria

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND CHILD CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Quality childcare has always been, and will continue to be, an essential function of a thriving economy. Without such support, working parents and caregivers of young children, mostly women of color, would not be able to provide for their families. In the past 16 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a multitude of broken systems and inequities that the most vulnerable populations, Black and Latinx communities, have had to endure.

Knowing the critical need for childcare, the Mission Promise Neighborhood Early Care and Education partners -- Mission Neighborhood Centers Early Head Start and Head Start; Felton Family Developmental Centers; Good Samaritan Child Development Centers; and family childcare sites -- maintained their services, at various capacities, while enhancing their humanitarian action to meet the urgent needs of families.

It was crucial for center-based educators to make a swift shift to create a service model that incorporated a spectrum of services. Teachers had to be innovative in producing learning content for both distance and in-person learning, while family support staff built systems to provide emergency assistance to families. Partners also took this opportunity to strengthen collaborations with other community-based organizations, in the network and citywide. Tandem, Partners in Early Learning provided partners with Spanish-language bilingual book donations to distribute to families, plus created virtual read-aloud content in multiple languages for children to access at home.

Family childcare providers juggled the stressors of keeping their small businesses afloat, providing essential care for children of first responders while ensuring security for their own families. For the home-based providers who are part of the Family Childcare Quality Network, they continued to receive local and state funding, easing the uncertainty of closing their doors and keeping

them abreast of the latest public safety health measures from the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Family Childcare providers became pillars in their neighborhoods by becoming small-scale resource hubs for families: They met the needs of families who had school-age children by extending their capacity to provide care for older siblings, so parents could continue to work outside the home.

The response to meet the childcare needs of families during the COVID-19 pandemic is rooted in the cultural competence and whole-child approach Mission Promise Neighborhood Early Care Education center-based and home-based partners have practiced since the first day they opened their doors to children and families. The need for quality childcare will persist, through our pandemic recovery efforts and beyond. The time is now to rebuild equitable systems that will meet the needs of our most vulnerable population of women of color -- and to invest in prosperous futures for all children in San Francisco.



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 Fall, 2021. If you have an idea or would like to share your story, contact Alejandro at (415) 282-3334 ext. 126 or abautista@medasf.org.