



# August Hero Profile 2020



“We Are the Care” is a county-wide advocacy initiative comprised of families, professionals in the early childhood care and education field, civic leaders, TK-12 teachers, higher education leaders, employers, business owners, community members, government employees and elected officials who are partnering together to address our local child care crisis.

## AUGUST’S HERO

Nancy Norton

## HOW NANCY SHOWS HER CARE

By protecting the wellbeing of children— her life’s work

## ONE OF NANCY’S HOPES

That all families can access high quality child care that meets each of their needs.

**Nancy Norton is a champion for children— having dedicated more than four decades of her life to creating and nurturing thoughtful relationships within the early childhood education field.**

As the Director of Early Learning Educational Support at the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education, Nancy has been a positive force in the lives of countless young families. She values the home/school interrelationship and understands first-hand how important it is to support and strengthen the connection between each child and their family, their teachers, and available community resources to help them thrive. She empowers parents to get involved in their children’s education, speak up and not be afraid to ask questions.

It’s been said that if you are ever in a preschool classroom with “Fancy Nancy” — as the kids call her — you can find her playing in the sandbox, cascading down a slide, dancing to music, or sipping a beverage that a mini server prepared for her in the dramatic play area. Her adoration for children shines bright.

What else do colleagues and families and friends see when they look at Nancy? Someone who is caring, go-to, driven, upbeat, accessible, and infinitely generous with her time.

Nancy’s purpose and vision have remained steady and unbroken, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty within the profession of early childhood education.

This next academic year will feel a little different for everyone who knows and loves Nancy. After 42 years of dedicated service, she is headed for retirement to enjoy more time with family, opportunities to travel and savor a life of balance. But you can bet that when she’s out and about, she’ll still remember the names of children from 30+ years ago, recognize and greet a family from one of her many program groups, and remain connected with those she’s worked with during her remarkable journey.

**Thank you, Nancy.  
You are a true Hands-On Hero.**

*Look for more on all of our “We Are the Care” Heroes on COE-TV Channels 2 and 19!*



“We Are the Care” was born from “Where’s the Care?”, a Town Hall hosted in May 2019 by First 5 San Luis Obispo County with the support of local stakeholders. It led to the creation of three task forces dedicated to addressing challenges and identifying opportunities to improve and expand our local childcare system. “Hands-on Heroes” is a recognition program, coordinated with partner agencies, that honors individuals making a difference in the lives of young children and families. The year 2020 highlights Heroes in Child Care. To learn more about “We Are the Care” and “Hands-on Heroes”, please visit [first5slo.org](http://first5slo.org).