



2022 Family-Friendly Focus



JANUARY HERO: Christina Lefevre Latner **Workforce Development Manager, SLO Chamber of Commerce** **Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program**

Among many things the pandemic has served to remind us— it's the need to support families who are in a constant tug-of-war over time: time to parent growing children, time to care for aging parents, time for their career, and time for themselves. We are thrilled to begin our new 2022 Hand-on Heroes @Work series by sharing a brand-new countywide program led by Christina Lefevre Latner, aimed at improving the quality of life for families and building stronger communities for all. In October of 2021, Christina was hired as the Workforce Development Manager for the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, a new initiative based at the SLO Chamber and made possible with funding from First 5 SLO County and the County of San Luis Obispo. In this position, she is leading the regional effort to create more family-friendly workplaces, helping businesses embrace their vital role of getting more parents back to work.

Christina's personal experience and professional background make her an ideal fit for the position. She is a community leader and Cal Poly lecturer with more than 20 years of experience in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. She was also instrumental in helping launch the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit, a free online resource designed to help employers assess their current business practices and identify opportunities for change. As a mom of two plus caring for an aging parent, Christina already knows firsthand what a recent Cuesta College-funded study estimates: at least 1,400 parents in SLO County are unable to work because of family obligations. This reality has a direct impact on our economy. Even small changes by businesses can make a big difference, including options such as:

- Allowing for employees to work additional hours to accommodate for time taken off
- Providing part-time work opportunities or job share agreements
- Allowing for telecommuting or home-based work
- Offering predictable and stable schedules
- Subsidizing or reimbursing child care

The Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program was built on the belief that family-friendly workplaces are essential to supporting business success, bolstering our economy, and advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the workforce. While it's not a one-size-fits-all approach, simple practices set up employers to attract, motivate and retain employees, improve employee satisfaction through work-life balance, and strengthen productivity. Stronger, healthier families contribute to stronger, healthier businesses thus empowering our community to grow and prosper. While the pandemic has brought much hardship, it has also presented unique opportunities for us to make positive changes. We are grateful that Christina is at the forefront of one of those encouraging shifts, representing the best of Hands-on Heroes @Work for 2022!

The Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program is a partnership among First 5 San Luis Obispo County, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce and the County of San Luis Obispo; this FREE initiative, housed within the Chamber, aims to help businesses hire and retain employees, support working parents' balance between job and home life, and bolster the economic vitality of our communities. The program builds on the SLO County Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit which was created by the "We Are the Care" Initiative – a countywide coalition dedicated to addressing local child care and related work-life balance challenges and faced by local families.



To learn more about the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit, visit slofamilyfriendlywork.org. For information on the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, contact the SLO Chamber's Workforce Development Manager, Christina Lefevre Latner, at (805) 786-2762 or christina@slochamber.org. To learn more about early-childhood related initiatives, go to first5slo.org.