



January 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.

JANUARY’S HERO

Denise Buenrostro

HOW DENISE SHOWS HER CARE

By being an extraordinary example of “parent as first teacher” for her five children

ONE OF DENISE’S HOPES

Affordable and easily accessible child care for all families

Denise Buenrostro is a champion for children — a mom of five who can speak to the challenges of countless other parents who’ve struggled to obtain child care in San Luis Obispo County, and who holds deep appreciation for those who provide it.

Partly due to the shortage of infant and toddler care, Denise has remained home during her children’s earliest years. Four of the five found placements within the California State Preschool Program at Grover Beach, and the youngest will likely follow suit. This opportunity has made a huge difference for Denise’s young family. Denise credits site supervisor and teacher Mayra Botello for giving her confidence and peace of mind as a parent, because she knows her children are safe, loved and learning in a way that will prepare them for grade school— and set them up for future success. Denise also points out that without such quality care, one of her little ones might still be struggling with an undetected speech issue. The program has provided the Buenrostro family much-needed consistency and connection— yet they recognize that not all families have been fortunate enough to find such an ideal fit.

is shrinking, in part due to persistently low pay and a related undervaluing of the profession by the broader community. Our local Child Care Planning Council reports that public and private child care programs are finding it increasingly difficult to hire and retain staff across the county. The impact is felt near and far, as the coveted few spots available for care are often out of reach financially for families— or do not cover the hours needed. The mutually supportive relationship shared between mom Denise and teacher Mayra speaks to how critically important and valuable early childhood education is to our local communities.

As Denise puts it, “our community desperately needs more Mayras.” The Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce

**Thank you, Denise.
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.