



January Hero Profile 2017

Children's Bill of Rights #1: As the children and youth of San Luis Obispo County, may we each live in a stable, comfortable home surrounded by parents, family and other caring adults who nurture us throughout childhood.

JANUARY'S HERO
Mary Thielscher

PASSION
Teaching skills that keep our children safe and healthy

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE MARY
Committed

NOMINATED BY
Center for Family Strengthening



Mary Thielscher is a champion for our local children, helping to keep them safe and healthy, even before they are born.

Mary brings an enthusiastic commitment to providing knowledge on preventing abuse and neglect of children and youth. She has developed her professional skills by learning evidence-based best practices and is dedicated to making this education accessible to all members of our community.

As the Lead Educator for Kidz Toolbox for Personal Safety lesson, in the past 12 years Mary has taught almost 50,000 local children self-protection skills and how to ask for help if they have a problem. This program works with several grade levels at developmentally appropriate stages, and gives them opportunities to learn and implement practical skills. Studies show that children lacking in self-defense skills are at higher risk for abuse. Mary gives these children the tools they need to keep themselves safe.

Mary also works with the Center for Family Strengthening to develop and teach the Beginnings-Prenatal Substance Use

Education curriculum that teaches prevention of substance use during pregnancy. Since 2012, Mary has taught more than 5,000 youth and continues to receive requests to teach at local high schools, Cuesta College Early Childhood Development classes and Cal Poly Human Development classes.

Mary is also involved with Get on the Bus, a program that brings children and their caregivers throughout the state of California to visit their mothers and fathers in prison, and supports building those important relationships. This program has proven to reduce recidivism and act as a deterrent to the children entering the criminal justice system.

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

Look for more on Mary and all of our Hands-On Heroes on COE-TV channel 19!



Hands-On Heroes is a special recognition of dedicated individuals who believe in and support the Children's Bill of Rights, an achievable vision that our children grow up with healthy minds, bodies and spirits that enable them to maximize their potential. This program is coordinated by First 5 San Luis Obispo County in collaboration with local organizations that make a difference in the lives of children in our community. To find out more about First 5 and the Children's Bill of Rights, please visit first5slo.org.



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