



March Hero Profile 2019



Children's Bill of Rights #3: As the children and youth of San Luis Obispo County, may we each have the basics for our daily life—clothing, transportation, and supplies for school, outside interests and activities.

MARCH'S HERO
Yecenia Silvas

PASSION
Strengthening and supporting young families

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YECENIA
Kind

NOMINATED BY
Oceano School Readiness Neighborhood

Yecenia Silvas is a champion for children, connecting hundreds of families and their young children with basic needs and community resources.

As a First 5 Lucia Mar School Readiness Family Advocate, Yecenia is first and foremost a listener. She creates safe space for children, parents and caregivers as they navigate everything from education, transportation and medical services to mental health and tough life circumstances. Colleagues say Yecenia's gentle wisdom and calm manner help families work through their immediate problems, and she empowers them to advocate for themselves and their futures. She has an inclusive approach and respects each family's diverse circumstances, backgrounds and needs.

One of Yecenia's clients, who is now training to be a Parent Educator, says it is because of Yecenia's positive example and motivating influence that she went to college and now aims to become a Family Advocate and role model for low-income, Latino community members.

A young child who had trouble managing her emotions and struggled daily to communicate her needs also benefitted

from Yecenia's disarming presence and direction. The girl and her mother met with Yecenia multiple times— building relationships, setting goals, drafting an improvement plan and solidifying family/child counseling services. That same 4-year old can now be observed learning, playing with peers, smiling, laughing and sharing emotions in positive ways. Her progress in turn is setting her up for better preparedness for learning beyond preschool, for transitions and routines at home and for handling stressful situations.

Yecenia always gives families a foundation of hope and resilience as they grow, learn and thrive together.

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

Look for more on 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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