



December 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.

DECEMBER'S HERO

Raechelle Bowlay

HOW RAECHELLE SHOWS HER CARE

Tirelessly fighting for children and families

ONE OF RAECHELLE'S HOPES

That we change policies, break down barriers and get creative to support our child care professionals

Raechelle Bowlay is a champion for children—wearing multiple hats while juggling many moving parts on behalf of little ones, families and child care providers in our community.

With more than two decades working in the early childhood field, Raechelle keeps turning her expertise and experience into positive action on our Central Coast. Since 2013, Raechelle has worked for CAPLSO, (Community Action Partnership of SLO County) serving as Childcare Planning Council Coordinator and Quality Early Learning Manager. One of her first endeavors was engaging key partners in a local “Quality Counts” program for early childhood education, built off of a national movement to provide a better system of support and professional development for early learning programs.

Raechelle is dedicated to bolstering the broader community's investment in child care and advocating for providers as essential and vital to the very fabric of our society and future. She loves her role helping to connect the dots, knowing that we must act on all fronts to address challenges within the industry, including the need for: higher wages/professional compensation for providers, increased capacity and better access to high-quality, affordable care for families, as well as more family-friendly workplace practices designed to ease burdens and improve balance for families and care givers.

If you need further proof of Raechelle's commitment to the cause, just know that she's lived it. Years ago, Raechelle decided to run her own licensed, home-based child care program when faced with the overwhelming cost of putting her own two children in full-time care. Now, as a single working mother, Raechelle says she relies on her “village” of family, friends, teachers, child care providers, Scoutmasters, co-workers and employer to help keep her family afloat. Even with all the juggling and hat-wearing, Raechelle's enthusiasm and impact seem endless, to the benefit of all of us! She is an ever-ready volunteer to participate in new projects that champion children and families, on top of executing her typical, massive responsibilities like leading the charge on SLO's annual, county-wide Children's Day in the Plaza. WOOSH!

(pictured with sons, Micah, 10, and Bryce, 14)

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

Look for more on all of our “We Are the Care” Heroes at first5slo.org



“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.