

Dailia Guzman, Mercedes Barrios, Nancy Ayala, Emely Martinez, Luis Medina 2017 Sam Karas Farmworker Leadership Award

The Migrant Education School Readiness Program is for children ages 3-5 and their families. The preschool services consist of the three following components:

The first component is a home base service, which consists of visiting the family in their home. It is so wonderful to have the migrant families open their door to allow us to visit their humble homes. These homes can be far out in a rural area outside of Watsonville, or anywhere within the city limits. The home could be set up in a garage, a cart-port, a room in someone else's home, an apartment, or a trailer. Many of the families are hesitant to say yes, since this is something new and it means maybe having trouble with the homeowner by allowing an agency visit their property unannounced or by receiving prior notification. We do our best to assure them that we will not cause troubles for them in this aspect. We agree to see them wherever they feel comfortable. Sometimes we have to sit outside the property. On occasion, we do need to present ourselves with the owner and explain our visits. This is a huge barrier for us to cross but we are successful most of the time. It is of great importance to us to assure that these most needed families receive the services. Even if it means sometimes getting, poison oak, or running from dogs. We always end with a laugh and make the experiences the most positive.

Once we are okay to visit, we schedule the day and time, which is a very flexible schedule for us. It could be any time of

the day, afternoon, evening. As the visits progress, we build a trusting bond with much trust, where the family receives all of the community service information they may need individually such as health care, food, clothing, schools etc. They may ask us to help fill out forms for them since they may not know how to read or write, and finally we are able to introduce the preschool program to them. Once the 6 visits are completed, we offer them the opportunity to enroll in a center, but if they cannot attend, we will continue to visit during the year.

The second component is a center base bilingual preschool service, which is scheduled 4 days per week for 3 hours long in seven locations throughout Watsonville. During the learning time in the centers, one or both parents attend an English class while their child learns in our pre k classroom. Once a week, the parents meet as a group with the preschool teacher and they receive special trainings offered by the community. Such as the Second Harvest Food Bank to acquire healthy eating habits and free food. We collaborate with the Center for Community Advocacy to offer the families all of the services offered by the center such as renter's rights, health awareness and other agencies in the vicinity.

The third component is a swimming class. Each Friday the families are welcomed to come and learn swimming skills as a family.



Sam Karas Award winners : Dailia Guzman, Mercedes Barrios, Nancy Ayala, Emely Martinez, Luis Medina