



Journey to Success

2021-2022



Modesto Junior College CalWORKs Program

www.mjc.edu/studentservices/calworks

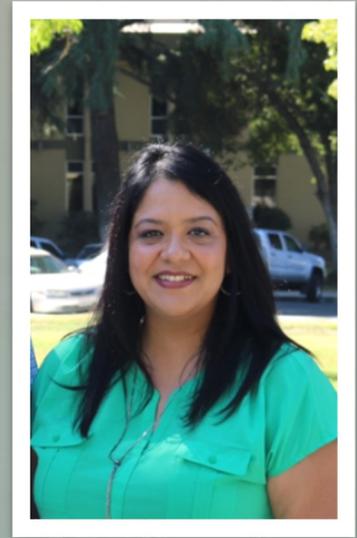
MJC CalWORKs Staff



Mary Everhart
CalWORKs Program Specialist



Brenna Bonson-Jones
CalWORKs Program Technician

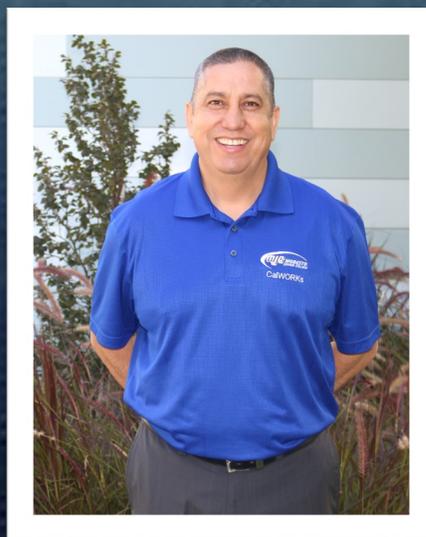


Martha Estrada
CalWORKs Counselor

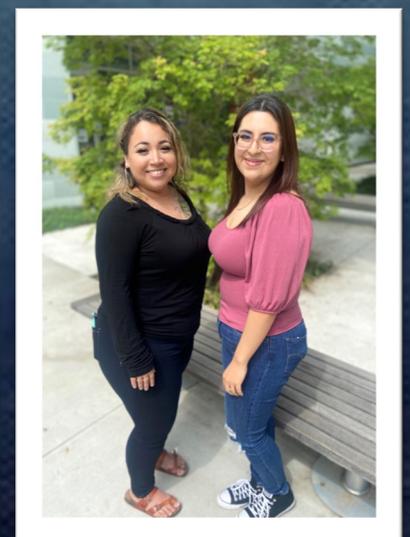
We are excited to share our CalWORKs Journey to Success publication. This book was designed to inspire and build a sense of community among CalWORKs students as well as celebrate their successes. Included are stories shared by some of our CalWORKs students, their struggles, triumphs, and most importantly, their progression and transition to becoming not only self-sufficient, but successful!



Jose Rocha
Dean of Special Programs



Hector Duarte
CalWORKs/EOPS Assistant Director



Yomaira Ceballos & Dana Perez
CalWORKs Student Mentors

We are MJC CalWORKs



Our Goal:

The CalWORKs program at Modesto Junior College is committed to providing students who are currently receiving TANF (cash aid) with coordinated student support programs and special services to assist them in reaching their educational and career goals. Our program is dedicated to guide students through a successful educational journey that will help them transition off aid and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Services:

We work collaboratively with the Community Services Agency to provide assistance with the following services:

- MJC Application
- Priority Registration
- Student Advocacy
- Ongoing Career and Academic Counseling
- Work-Study Opportunities
- Tutoring Referrals
- Childcare
- Emergency Bus Passes/ Transportation
- Referrals to On and Off Campus Programs
- Financial Aid Application
- Monthly Attendance Reports
- Coordination of Communication between CalWORKs Students and Stanislaus County
- Textbooks Vouchers, Reimbursements, Book Loans
- CalWORKs Student Support Service Center
- Grants
- Workshops
- School materials/supplies

21-22 Personal & Professional



Professional & Personal Development Workshop with the Career Services Center

Book Author of:



Speaker Topics:

- How to Overcome and Heal from Child Hood Trauma and Abusive Relationships - you are strong enough
- Transforming Your Life- change your mind, change your life
- Business Strategies: The Six Figure Single Mom
- Women Empowerment
- Turning Your Pain into a Purpose

Founder of Rising Above Publishing Services, LLC

Founder of Mothers Mentoring Mother Group

Few Major Features Include



Shareen Rivera is a best-selling Author, Ghostwriter, Founder of Rising Above Publishing Services, and a TV Show Host. She survived a ten-year abusive marriage, and after leaving to start over with her two babies, she dedicated her life to turning her pain into a purpose by empowering other women to believe in themselves enough to take steps towards bettering their future. She believes that sharing is an integral part of healing; a wound cannot heal without air, and the world can be healed by each of us collectively taking action to heal ourselves.



CALWORKS PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES



John Griffin III

After years of working dead end jobs John was faced with the reality that there must be more to life than just existing. As a homeless single father John chose to pursue his education. At 39 John attended Modesto Junior College where he obtained an AA Degree in General Studies. John went on to complete his Bachelors and Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership from Brandman University.

John's journey through education was filled with setbacks, heart aches, and pain. However, it was from pain that John catapulted his way through the educational systems of higher learning and using his drive, perseverance, and true grit to transcend any barrier that got in his way. John also earned a Graduate Executive Certificate in Public and Non-Profit Leadership.

John's message for those that are seeking success is the understanding of hard work, sacrifice, and looking for the YES when there are a thousand nos. Understand that a degree is the key into a career. However, what you do once you get in the career is what counts. In the words of C.T Fletcher "degrees don't win titles...hard work wins titles!"



MJC Career Services Center
Career Conversations
With Guest

MIRIAM CRUZ

TRANSFORMATIONAL
SPEAKER
EMPOWERMENT
COACH
ENTREPRENEUR

Miriam Cruz, founder of Miriam Speaks, faced many challenges in her life. Those challenges include dropping out of high school, spending time in the juvenile justice system, struggling as a single mother, and later diagnosed with postpartum depression.

Gratefully, however, Miriam began to work on her personal development and began her healing journey. She wanted an education, a stable home, and most importantly, love, respect, healing, independence, and happiness. Resilient and determined to achieve her goals, she discovered self-love and began rebuilding her life.

Miriam began sharing her story in 2019 and later started her empowerment coaching program, **Limitless**. In this coaching program, Miriam teaches people to **enhance their confidence, release limiting beliefs, develop healthy boundaries, love themselves, and take massive immediate action.**

Friday September 17th @ 1pm



Personal Development Workshops

CalWORKS Professional & Personal Development Workshop Series



Tanya Smith
EOPS & CARE Program Specialist

Stress & Time Management Workshop

Do you feel, stressed, frazzled? Do you struggle to meet deadlines? This is the workshop for you. I have managed a household as a single mom, while working full time and earning my bachelors and masters. We all have the same 24 hours in a day, learn how to get the most out of your hours!

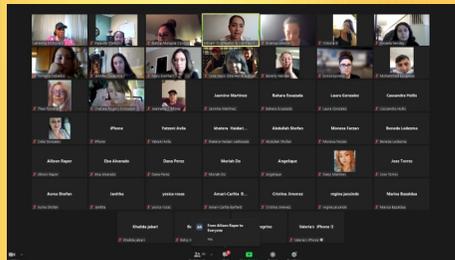


CALWORKS Professional & Personal Development WORKSHOP SERIES



HECTOR DUARTE
CALWORKS/EOPS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

I have been at Modesto Junior College for 29 years. Prior to MJC I worked in the nonprofit sector working with a variety of different programs; Shelter, Runaway youth, family unification program. ... The most rewarding experience that has contributed to my professional growth, as a counselor, has been working with Foster Youth and working with a Gang Intervention and diversion program. Working with the at-risk population has given me a lens of acceptance and a deeper understanding of the social and economic challenges that our students encounter in their educational journey. I take pride in serving all eligible students with dignity and respect. I am a firm believer that education is the agent of change.





CalWORKS Personal & Professional Development
Fall 2021 Workshop Series,
(Workshop #3) with the
MJC Career Services Center



Guest Speaker:
JEN THE RAINMAKER
FOUNDER OF DREAM YOU
UNIVERSITY

Jen the Rainmaker is a former corporate coach with the calling to teach the wisdom of her indigenous ancestry. She bridges the ancient Toltec/Chichimeca manifestation and healing Dream Warrior practices with cutting edge brain science, quantum physics and spirituality to give you an experience unlike any other

Friday November 19th @ 1pm



Carissa Lucio

What challenges have you had to overcome to pursue your degree/certificate? I have had to overcome many challenges, to start I got diagnosed with bipolar disorder during the summer semester in 2021. This was a disaster for me because I wasn't understanding why my medication wasn't helping me get "better". My grades dropped, along with my GPA and I felt like dropping out. It took a lot for me to even get into college because I was a dropout during my senior year in high school, I did not have a stable upbringing and bounced around foster home to foster home, never believed in myself to be honest. I took my HiSet exam in December 2019 and passed, I then applied to MJC in the fall of 2020. I am no honor student, but I am a hard worker, and my resilience is ongoing, I will do whatever I have to so I may be able to transfer from MJC and go to Stan State.

What successes have you had in making progress toward your educational and career goals? I consider my course load to be a huge achievement for me, considering I began fall 2020 and have completed 35 credits not counting what I am taking this spring semester of 2022. As for my career goals I haven't had

much luck yet being as what I want to do in social work requires a BA, but I do keep involved with my community, and work as a paraprofessional in a special education class full time. I feel the position is very rewarding as well as humbling being as I need to help all people not just some.



How has the MJC CalWORKs program helped you meet your goals? MJC CalWorks has helped me in more ways than one, for instance helping me get a job with Access and Outreach, giving me a printer and supplies for semesters that have at times been a saving grace. They offer support in more ways than one, via zoom, phone call, tutoring resources and job opportunities.

What are your plans to become self-sufficient? I plan to continue to work fulltime and continue as a

fulltime student to better my education and career goals. I plan on transferring to Stan State to get my BA in sociology and become a social worker to foster youth, or counselor for high school students.

In what ways have you been involved in advocacy, student leadership, community service and/or extracurricular activities? I have not had many opportunities considering my journey at MJC started in the beginning of a Pandemic, but I did not let that discourage me I just signed up to participate in the MJC opportunity to make a change in your community. I plan on making a difference with fellow MJC students. I sing in Choir for MJC and couldn't be happier on campus. I have participated in events for MJC through Access and Outreach which happened to be Senior days in the agriculture department and Vaccine Day, I handed out t-shirts and set up. I enjoy helping no matter the cause and I am happy I get the chance to do it for MJC because without this school I wouldn't be who I am today. More educated, more aware and can be the best version of myself.

Beverly Hardee

Since the beginning of my path with CalWORKs I wasn't sure what was ahead of me, but I knew that for a fact that anything worth having was going to involve me fighting for it. I was told from the start that I couldn't really do anything because I had kids and nobody to help. Later I realized just how wrong they were! I enrolled at a local GED program in Modesto and obtained a GED in no time! Shortly after I found myself enrolling in classes at MJC. I was about 2 months into my very first semester at MJC when we were all sent home due to the covid pandemic, but I managed to keep on my path towards education even though everything was now online, and the kids were stuck at home going crazy! I



must admit that everything being online has been a real struggle and has slowed down my progress, but I

have not given up and have learned more about computers and canvas. The MJC CalWORKs program has helped so much by providing necessary materials for success such as textbooks, notebooks, study aids, printers, etc. I would have been lost without them. I am currently on the path of self-sufficiency. I have plans to transfer to a 4-year university after I leave MJC to obtain my bachelors and I am even in the processes of becoming a student worker on campus to help motivate me more for the future. I will hopefully be training here soon for a position in the CARES office to help other students realize their potential and push for that bright future they deserve.

Mohammad Naim Mohammadi

There are many challenges that could affect pursuing my degree. First thing that I can say is taking care of my family we came from Afghanistan at the end of 2017 since that I am the only one working part time and take care every thing. I am studying hard to have success and progress

toward my career. Calworks program helps me alot. I am going to find a better job beside my college.



Dana Perez

Hello! My name is Dana Perez. I am currently enrolled at Modesto Junior College full-time for the Spring 2022 semester. I am twenty-three years old with a five-year-old daughter named Destiny, a four-month-old named Donovan, and a husband named Jose. I was raised with both of my parents in a small town, Greenfield, California. I have relocated many times as a minor, I never stayed in the same home for more than two years. Adjusting to new schools and a new environ-

ment was extremely hard on me. I was afraid of change. Change scared me to the bone, I struggled with interacting with new people and because of that I focused on my education more and stayed to myself. With all the changes going on around me, I focused on my own personal goals in life. I attended Delta Charter High School in Tracy, California. I can say from this point on in my life I started to blossom into the person I am today. I pushed myself to extreme limits to finish twelve classes in one semester because I was so excited to show my family how much I could accomplish in a short time frame. Due to my hard work and dedication, I graduated high school in 2015, a whole year before my class.

I attended San Joaquin Delta College immediately after graduating high school in 2015. I had an amazing mother who supported this and drove me to and from college daily. Due to my parents moving to Modesto and me being a minor, I went with them and transferred to Modesto Junior College. Moving to this college was one of the best things I could have ever done for myself. I began here in spring of 2016. While completing my classes I found myself to be pregnant with my daughter. I was seventeen and

pregnant with a child I was unsure of how to care for. I became a single mother at such a young age. I fell off my feet and dropped all of my classes and once I gave birth to my daughter I wanted to better ourselves and find a way in life to survive on a low income. I began taking classes again in spring of 2017. During my time at MJC I have branched out to find supportive services and found the EOP&S, CARE, and CalWORKs program. All the programs together have given be a reason to keep on pushing even when things got hard. Especially the CalWORKs department, I was able to obtain a job and find motivators who helped guide me to success. CalWORKs became my second family, a family who understood everything I was going through and helped keep me on track, despite my challenges. In October of 2017 and became homeless and started traveling five hours a day to stay with my best friend-Kayla because I needed my daughter to have a safe place to sleep. I fortunately found a room to rent in November of that year and moving forward to April of 2018 I found a home to rent for myself and my daughter. From then on, I have done nothing but achieve so many of my goals in life. I resigned from a job in July of 2018 and immediately got a position for working in the CalWORKs office in September of 2018.



Dana Perez Cont.

Throughout my years in college I can say without a doubt that the hardest year for me was 2021. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2019 I was impacted financially, but ultimately had to find a way to survive. Nothing could have ever prepared me for what was about to happen. In October of 2020 me and my husband found out that his mother (my mother in law) was diagnosed with an aggressive pancreatic cancer. There was no hope, they immediately put her on hospice. We all loved her so much. When I rekindled my relationship with my husband, she was there for us. My parents didn't agree with my relationship with him for years. She was another mother to me and to see someone you love so much slowly deteriorate is one of the hardest things to witness. We married in December of 2020 to allow her to witness our wedding ceremony. The plan was to wait a few more months, but we didn't have that time. In January 2021 I found out I was pregnant with our son, Donovan. I was torn on telling my mother in law because I knew she was preparing herself to say goodbye to us and she would be torn to find out she couldn't meet her grandson. Around February of 2021 my husband was a wreck, he was losing his only parent. I was his rock, I held us all up with our head high because when life pushes you down, you don't back down.

As my husband was dealing with his mom having cancer he became severely depressed and didn't want to eat, talk, or even be alive anymore. The worst day of my life was yet to come. My husband was in bed one evening and I could sense that something was not right. He was breathing hard, not very responsive to me, but he did that, it was normal right? He had a lot on his plate. He would not say a word to me and I got more and more concerned. He started to have a panic attack crying for his mom to get better and his eyes started rolling back. I screamed for my mom in hysterical tears thinking I was going to lose him. I don't remember everything, but I remember crying for him to not leave me, that I couldn't do it without him. I loved him so much and I was pregnant. He looked at me as I was screaming his name and his last words before having a seizure was "I love you." I thought I lost my husband. It felt like it took an eternity for medical responses to respond to our calls. Two days later my mother in law passed away when we were about twenty feet away. For about six months I was absolutely terrified of my husband having another seizure. This was one of my hardest things to overcome, especially considering I was still enrolled in school. When I gave birth last semester I was in 6 units and accomplished a 4.0 GPA. In Decem-

ber 2021 I was served with notices to vacate my rental property due to the home being sold. I spent my whole winter break moving to Turlock, California. I am now enrolled in eighteen units.

My major was originally to become a registered nurse, but when I started my certified nursing assistant program I found myself sad about my career choice, I wasn't happy to pursue that career. Therefore, I changed my major to Business Administration. I selected this major because of numerous reasons. I spent months thinking what career choice I wanted. I sat on the computer for hours going through the catalog and exploring my options. Something about Business Administration spoke out to me and I knew that this was the career choice I wanted.

My future goals and plans are to transfer to Stanislaus State University in Fall 2022 to continue my education in Business Administration. One goal I am pushing myself to achieve is not only a bachelor's degree, but a master's degree. When I began attending Modesto Junior College, I wanted to rush through all of my classes to start making money, but I found the more I got into my studies, the more I desired a higher degree. I want to go as far as I can go. In the future I see

Martha Espinoza

My parents would always tell me they came to this country to make a better life and they did make a difference, they wondered where my motivation was, where my dreams and goals were. I was born here. I knew two languages, I did well in school, I excelled in everything I did, except for sports. I finished high school, but I did not attend college for long, I had zero drive. All I wanted to do was make money. I wanted to live in the right now, I was living freely, carelessly without worries. I did what I wanted to do. What was the future? To me it was too far away it was not anything I could think of now.

Life went on and I stayed stagnant, nothing changed but my age, I became wiser (in some ways), my body changed, my views and perspective, the number of jobs, heartbreaks etc. I was now in my thirties, raising 4 children, under my parents' roof, on government assistance (something I was unfamiliar with), no job because I was the stay-at-home mom, I was stressed, depressed, I lost me, and I was in quarantine because we were undergoing a worldwide pandemic. Not know I was about to go through the most painful and life changing experiences I have gone through yet.

I was sitting in the kitchen table when I received a phone call from my partner, in the mos calm voice he repeated he loved me and then he said, "I cut my fingers." I asked what he meant but he just reassured me he loved me, and he had to go. Wow was I in for a surprise, what I thought was a minor cut because he was so calm and turned into my partner losing four fingers and half his hand. He managed to save his thumb and half the palm down. He

got his hand caught in a machine that was supposed to be off that day. A Sunday, May 24th, it was "cleaning day" and all machines were off "supposedly." He had a second to think of how to get out of this situation and he decided to use all force and body weight to pull his hand out and tore off his fingers to get out of the machine. I forgot to



mention to you all that I was 5 months pregnant. My partner was going through multiple surgeries, Covid was everywhere, I had 4 kids at which I was home schooling, and I was going through my own mental health issues.

Not even a month later June 15, 2020, to be exact my mother and a terrible stroke and had 2 brain hemorrhages. June 17th my mommy

passed away. It is the most challenging thing I have ever gone through. It is something I never stop thinking about. It is something that I will never overcome or get over. My mom showed me the most beautiful views of life, she instilled this greatness in me, she always knew how I was feeling even if I was not around her, she knew when I needed her, she knew me like no one will ever know me. My mom is my queen, and I was always her princess. It killed me, I was 6 months pregnant, and I had no mom, my best friend was gone in an instant. It was so devastating. I had so many emotions, so many people around me going through so many emotions. I had to be strong for my dad because he was going through it mentally and emotionally. I had to be strong for my nieces who were so close to their grandma. I had to be strong for my partner who lost half his hand, I had to be strong for my kids and my pregnancy. I had to be strong for my family to keep things in order, I had to clean the house, cook for everyone, clean up after everyone (we had 4 families living together temporarily), I had to stay on top of the bills, I spent hours talking to my father, I was crying all night, I was going through all these things had never gone through. I was just living my life, I was just free like a bird but now I felt like a prisoner, "a caged bird."

I lived like this for a year until I received a call from the county saying I had to participate in a program to get my benefits. I was so upset because I had my routine and there was no way I could leave the house. I would get behind on housework or feeding the kids. I was in luck (not really) because everything was via Zoom. I did not want to attend any of these classes, I did not want to make a resume, I did not want to be involved with any of it.

Martha Espinoza Cont.

Well guess what? These classes started awakening something inside me in plus my mother's death left me wanting more out of life. I wanted to make her proud, I wanted to change my life and show my kids what my mom taught me. I listened to motivational speakers every day I started practicing what they were saying. I started believing in myself. I was participating in everything, and I did not let any distractions get in my way. I remember one time, I was recording a mock interview and my 3-year-old was trying his hardest to distract me by jumping in front of the camera, he kept calling my name, you name it, he did it. That did not even phase me I kept it going as if he was not there because I was serious, I was in my "zone" I was ready to succeed and do better. I did not think anything of it, but my teachers were amazed by my focus and acknowledged me in front of everyone. That gave me another little push, a little more motivation for me to keep going because I was engaged.

This program decided I was ready for employment placement training, which means they place me at a company and to get work experience while receiving benefits. They said if I did well and received two weeks of "high grade" reviews from the supervisor at my work site they would pay me minimum wage and I would still qualify for some benefits. It took me two weeks to start the PaidWex program. Things were starting to finally look up.

I was getting paid, I was doing better mentally, I was finally learning to be me again and it was not the old me, it was a new me. It was a responsible me, it was a me that reminded me of my mom. I was unrecognizable and I loved it. Everyone loved it. I had a smile on my face, I was doing things that I love doing, helping people at the Family Resource Center. It was right next to my sons new Preschool. I am telling you things were looking up for

me.

I decided I could do more. I applied to Modesto Junior College to start a graphic design journey. It was something I had never thought about doing but I said why not give it a shot. I ended up taking 3 classes and I received straight A's. Wow I was proud. I knew my mom was looking out for me. I knew she was guiding me. I was not stopping.

I applied for a position at the company I was currently working at. I received an offer letter and I have been in this position for the last month. I never knew this position existed and I feel like it was made just for me. I knew my mom had something to do with this, but I know I was putting in all the work, all the effort I was working the hardest I had ever worked. I was making up for all the lost time. All the time I wasted. All the time I should have made my mom proud while she was alive. I still have 4 little ones that are looking up to me. They see how hard I work every day. I work 7-8 hours 5 days a week, I am currently taking 12 units, I am a full-time mom, I must divide my time between my family, make appointments, remember all appointments, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays etc. It is a tough job, but it was made for me. I have been through some challenges, but I knew I was going to do more in this life. I knew there was a strength in me that needed to be awakened. I thank everyone at workforce Development, everyone at Cal-Works, MJC staff, my partner for believing in me and helping me so much with the kids, my parents for instilling hard work and dedication in me, my kids for motivating me, Eric Thomas for all his motivational videos that changed my thoughts.

I do not know where I would be if I did not go through all these obstacles. I do not know what I would have done without going to MJC. I feel so power-

ful, confident, intelligent, I feel so proud of myself, I know my worth, I know I do not have to stop because this world never stops. It is never too late to change your life. You have to go after what you want. My mom would always say "nothing will ever come to you; you must go get it!" She was so right. She also said, "there are 3 things you will never get back, 1. opportunities 2. words 3. PAST. Go after what you want and love. Even if you live for the moment remember your future needs you too, maybe the most. You never know what can happen in a second.

I am Martha Patricia Espinoza and I have experienced life and will continue to experience it just like you but I will not take advantage of it I will take advantage of what it has to offer and I hope you will too. Sending love, hope and peace to all.



Kathryn Omholt

My journey at MJC started in 2017. My oldest daughter was in preschool, and I stayed every day to help in her class. It came a time that her teacher pulled me aside and told me how great I am with the kids that I should really think about going to school and become a para. At that time, she also told me how easy it was. Wow all I need is to take 2 classes at MJC and pass all my background checks. I had a job at the end of the summer after taking two classes.

Fast forward 2 years. I found myself with a 6-year-old and a 11-month-old picking up the pieces of my life because their dad began to do drugs and I finally could not take the verbale abuse that I had been going through. It has been one of the hardest things I have ever had to deal with. here is this man that I loved for 15 plus years kicking in my door while I'm holding my baby in my arms and at that moment, I saw the look in his eyes that he was not in his own body anymore and dint know what could happen next. Cops were called my phone was thrown against the wall and broke into pieces. My oldest crying, I don't want my mommy to die. The sound of the police officers and my best friend yelling outside because the police officers did not want to kick my door in while I am yelling for help. It was genuinely like a nightmare story you see on tv. They did not want to take him to jail because he didn't physically hit me. They did end up taking him because of how drunk he was, and he broke my

phone. They let him out the next day and he is waiting on school property when I drop my daughter off for school. I got a call from the school that my daughter never made it to class. He

walked out of the back gate with her on camera. Now he has my oldest and went back to the house and got back in and is sending me pictures of their day while I am at work freaking out because I cannot do anything because he is the father and no custody paperwork and no restraining order yet. By the end of that day, I was serving him restraining order paperwork and picking up my daughter. He went back to jail that day and I have not looked back.

Jump forward some time covid hits and now I'm at home with my kids 24/7 trying to get schoolwork done and I am falling behind in all my classes. My mom is stuck in a nursing home and wants to come home to be with her grandkids. So, I finally got her to come home in March of 2021 and then it hits me again how hard it is taking care of her and kids in school me working and going to school. Life was over taking me again. I hire someone to come a few hours A Day to help with my mom and everything is going well. About 8 months after she gets home, she ends up really sick and refuses to go to the hospital. The next morning Shes so out of it I call 911 again and they take her to the hospital where she passed away a week later November 18th a day I will never forget. Just as I am feeling like I have my life back and have everything going getting my grades back up I lose the best mom anyone could have. I still struggle with this every day with it still being so fresh. She was helping me a

little with bills and she was my biggest fan now I do not have that support system anymore.

I knew that I was going to have to make tremendous changes in my life to support my two little girls on my own and that is exactly what I did. I quit my job and became a full-time student. It has been a struggle but having programs like MJC CalWORKs and CARE have been such a blessing. When I did not have cordial things to wear for a job interview CalWORKs stepped up and said go by 4 pair of work pants and 5 shirts and 2 pair of shoes within reason. I also benefit from them paying for all my books and school supplies. They have even pulled through for me when I am struggling and that mileage reimbursement pops on my card it's not I whole lot, but it is always enough for what I need it for. It is such a blessing

and always comes when I really need it. Once I'm finished with school, I already have a job lined up. Becoming a teacher and being able to inspire young kids and their parent like my daughters' teachers did for me is my absolute goal and there is nothing that is going to stop me yes, I have had thing hold me back sometimes, but I love myself enough now that I know that I will make it through anything. MJC is genuinely like family to me now. I work on campus in community ed. This office of people are such beautiful people inside and out. I love working at the kid's camp for them in the summertime and before covid I would help with the CARE program to help set up or take chairs and tables down for events on campus. MJC has inspired me to become a better person and I have truly grown in the time I have been here.

Blanca Munguia Corona

The challenges will always be there, every time I succeed I built a stronger individual that is prepared to fight new challenges to get my AA in Human Services. The only class left is my Practicum, yet it feels like a forever challenge to win. I have overcome the worst and yet the closer I am the further I feel. I personally think that it's not a physical problem but an emotional one. The hardest is done. The easiest is the hardest because true challenges makes us a better person. The success of completing all my classes was the hardest struggles to win. It came with personal, emotional, mental, economic and spiritual challenges to overcome. Life happens and when it does, all my challenges become more harder. But in the end anything that stops me for example; work, kids, hard classes, family, relationships (any relationship in general) and even COVID has triggered challenges that when I succeed I make that challenge a new skill attained to make me better for next time. Calworks has made such an extreme change in my life. The resources I

get helped me make better choices, better steps and easier ways to get to my goals. Calworks has changed my future. I am extremely thankful for programs like Calworks. They have helped me make me a stronger person



and more prepared and responsible for my a better future. my plan to become self sufficient is not only receiving my AA in Human Service but the people I have met through Calworks workshops and Calworks staff. Having connections for future reference is al-

ways a plus and a huge life changing experience. As a student worker for DSDP it has given me office experience and customer service experience. That is showing me to be a responsible parent, student, coworker, and alliance for someone who might need my help with the resources that helped me get through so much. I am not only a single mother but a student, student worker for MJS DSPS (Disabled Services & Programs for Students), CARE (Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education) representative, a PRIDE Scholar, and a participant of MJC LGBTQ+ Advocates, and a mentee of the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program. Having 3 kids and being a mother is mostly important to me I need to find ways to make me a stronger person to show my kids that if I can they can too. No matter the challenges that broke me here and there I do my best to be successful.

Moriah Do



I have been at Modesto Junior College and a part of the CalWORKs program for about 3 years. Some of the challenges that I have faced while pursuing my degree include uncertainty, lack of support system, and lack resources or knowledge of resources. I have overcome each of these challenges by getting involved on campus, even if it was going to the CalWORKs office to type and print a paper before class. The inclusiveness and communication with like-students and faculty and staff that understand our situation at school can be encouraging and helpful for students that are new and have limited time to spend away from their family while at school.

The progress towards obtaining my degree/certificate and educational goals have come with not only success but also trial and error. My journey began with a degree that I changed after two semesters. I felt as though I lost

out on precious time and an incredible amount of effort that could have gone elsewhere. Nevertheless, hard work, determination, and commitment has led me down a path of success, I completed my A.S in Business Administration in Fall 2021 and I will complete a second degree, an AS in Computer Information Systems this semester while working on my BS at CSU Stanislaus. One thing that I have learned as a college parent/student is to ask questions, manage your time wisely, and shoot for the stars and don't settle for less!

The Modesto Junior College CalWORKs program has helped me tremendously throughout my educational journey. The CalWORKs program has provided on campus resources for parents that not many other programs do. Academic counselling and spring and fall school supplies really do help us parents to continue with our educational goals. At the end of the day its how we choose to utilize our time and resources here at MJC that makes all the difference in the world!

Some of my goals that I have set for myself include continuing my education, working towards a Bachelor of Science degree while working part time off campus and in the community. First and most importantly continue being the

best single parent while helping my kids learn by leading by example, everything else follows.

I have been able to advocate for students on campus through work-study. I was CalWORKs student worker for a new I3 program that included students from all demographics, freshman to seniors, all ages and ethnicities that included problem solving in the community. Research, gathering information, interviews with community members, and synthesis allowed students to choose a problem and also develop a prototype model that will solve it. Some of the problems included issues within our student community as well as issues in our local community. This experience alone has allowed me to advocate for our student community while also being a student leader and guiding students on where to look for answers and solutions in our local community so we were able to develop an effective prototype model that would be successful.

I will continue to advocate for CalWORKs/MJC students in our local community even after I graduate this year! The CalWORKs program and services available have helped me tremendously throughout my academic journey here at MJC. My advice to any parent would be, to take advantage of the resources and opportunities available.

Mohammad Essazada

On September 15, 2014, my family and I came to the United States through a program called SIV (Special Immigrant Visa). I am originally from Afghanistan, and I have worked for the United States Army as an interpreter in Afghanistan for three years from 2011 to 2014. When we entered to the United States in 2014, I faced in lots of challenges in Modesto CA. The People, the environment, and the culture and rules, were different than where we came from.

When I came to the United States, it was difficult for me because I was unfamiliar with the new environment, new system, and new culture. It took a year to adjust myself among the people with new culture. Once I found myself among the people, I decided to go to school to ob-

tain a Degree in computer science because computer science is the only major that I was enthusiastic to study when I was in high school in Afghanistan. I enrolled at Modesto Junior College in 2016, and I took some ESL/ELIC classes. Through the help of CalWORKs I was able to finished them in a year and half. Once I finished English 101, I thought about my educational career goals to obtain a transfer degree from Modesto Junior College and transfer to a university (Probably California State University Stanislaus). CalWORKs is the sole source which helps me be able to continue my education at MJC.

In Summary, it took a while for us to see us among the people of the United states, and CalWORKs is the only source which stand with us at all

times to help us reach our goals. When I finish university, I will decide to find a job and have better life in the United States. That's what all people in America want it, and it is called the American Dream. .



Bahara Essazada

On September 15, 2014, my family and I came to the United States through a program called SIV (Special Immigrant Visa). I am originally from Afghanistan, and my husband has worked for the United States Army as an interpreter in Afghanistan for three years from 2011 to 2014. When we entered to the United States in 2014, We faced in lots of challenges in Modesto CA. The People, the environment, and the culture and rules, were different than where we came from.

When I came to the United States, it was so hard for me because I was unfamiliar with the new places, new system, and new culture. It took couple years to adjust myself among the peo-

ple with new culture. Once I found myself among the people here, I decided to go to school to obtain a degree in child development, because child development is the only major that I was enthusiastic to get a degree in it when I was in high school in Afghanistan. I enrolled at Modesto Junior College in 2017, and I found CalWORKs there. Then I took some ESL/ELIC classes. Through the help of CalWORKs, I was able to continue enrolling more classes. Still I am taking some ELIC classes to finish them and be able to go through my major. Once I finish English 101, I will go by my educational career goals to obtain a transfer degree from Modesto Junior College and transfer to a university. During my

journey at Modesto Junior College, CalWORKs is the sole source which helps me be able to continue my education here.

In Summary, CalWORKs is the main source that helped me through my journey at Modesto Junior College, it really stands with me at all times to help me socially and financially in order to reach my goals. When I finish university, I will decide to find a job and have better life with my family in the United States. That's what all people in America want it, and I will get it done through the help of CalWORKs.

Marisela Escalera



Hello, my name is Marisela, I am 45 years old, and I am a single mother of five already grown up children. I always wanted to go to college and to graduate, but back in my country that was only a dream, I am from a very small town in Mexico, and there were little to zero possibilities, to overcome the economical obstacles plus the lack of schools at my hometown. One day I came to USA thinking to have a better life, and thinking that everything will be so easy, but the truth was different, it was not easy, because I couldn't speak English. I found myself basically alone in a Country that I barely knew and with little kids and nobody

to relay on, I was depressed and hopeless, I went to the social services and thanks to that I could take care of my children, now I have a daughter that is graduated from the East Bay University with a degree of Bachelor of Arts, Environmental Studies and Environmental society concentrations. Two of my boys live by themselves and work, and I live with the two youngest boys, one of them (19 years old) is a really hard working guy, the other one still in high school (15 years old). I am very grateful to the Cal-works program, because I am here pursuing my dream, and now I know that there is hope, and that is never too late when you really want to succeed and to become a better person and, to be an example for your kids and for others around you. I always had this feeling inside me that told me that I was better than what I thought, something inside me that didn't let me quit on my dreams. One day talking to my social worker, when she was telling me that even with my legal status and even with my age there was a chance that I would be admitted to college, that day I will never forget, because I told her, I think I am too old for school, and she asked me, what is better to let 4 years pass by, thinking that you are too old to go to college and do nothing? or, to let 4 years pass by and look back and say, look what I did, this is mine and nobody will take it away. Those

were powerful words and, may be she doesn't know the impact that she made on me. The Cal-Works program has been crucial for me and my kids. My plans to become self-sufficient are clear now, and seem to be closer and closer, I want to get my work permit again and start working, Immigration is very complicated, but I am still waiting patiently. Now that I am in school, I can see that it is a challenge, because English is not my first language. It might be difficult but, I can do it. I love when I read my grades, I feel very proud of myself. I know that one day I will be a Nutritionist. I think that helping animals is part of community service. I am a cat lover and I think that we the people who are able to use our brain and make decisions are entitled to help those who can not make decisions, in this case cats. There are a huge problem with feral cats in our community (Modesto), it is sad that due to the irresponsibility of people cats reproduce by hundreds and are an overpopulation, more than dogs, you can see them everywhere you go. I talk to rescue organizations and they help me to take the cats that I can trap to get sterilized and then we put them back to their colony, when I can, I feed them and give them water. Cats keep our communities clean of rodents, plus they are amazing pets.

Olivia Braga



I had a few challenges that I was faced with while pursuing my degree/certificates, for instance, I experienced my first domestic violence relationship, he was physically, mentally, financially, and sexually abusive. I was with this man for 8 ½ years and I escaped with our one-month-old daughter in December of 2016. I struggled with life period while being with him, I could not go to school while being with him between going to court to fight for our daughter and now, I have full legal and sole custody of my daughter (single parent). I was

did not get the sentencing he deserved. I had a total of seven surgeries. The worst part is when the abuse happened, I was going inform this man that I was pregnant, and I ended up miscarrying our child.

While recovering I was determined to finish school and be a mother. It was all worth it because I will be graduating with six degrees in Social Science, Human Service, Sociology, Child Development, History, and Psychology. Which I already have been approved for two and I should be getting another two

single for 3 ½ years because I was fighting to get through my mental state and be the best mother possible. On July 2, 2020, I met another man, and he was also abuse physically. February of 2021, he broke my jaw in two places I went through court and

at the end of the semester. I must be honest with you I am extremely proud of myself. I was shocked when I was informed in September of last year that I would be completing MJC (Modesto Junior College) with six degrees. Which tells me no matter what life throws my way I can complete everything I face no matter what life throws my way.

Martha, my CalWORKs counselor, was fantastic. She answered all my questions, she made sure that before she left each appointment if I had any questions, she would take the time to answer them before she went. She made sure that we went through every document and made sure that there was no change. I could tell that she cared about her students, and she was most definitely there.

Chelsea Rogers-Dozladelli



My name is Chelsea Rogers-Dolzadelli, I am 26 years old and a mother of four girls. My journey in life has been challenging ever since I was a child. I was raised by my mother who was on drugs, and who was verbally and mentally abusive, often telling me I should have never been born or how stupid I was. For seven years we lived with her boyfriend who also often abused my sister and I verbally and physically. At the age of seven I was molested by my own father who denied what he did, and with that my mother continued to send us to his house as that was her break from my sister and I. As I got older I was so angry at the world and felt so depressed and unloved all the time that I started drinking and smoking at the age of eleven, which was my way of coping at the time with what was going on around me. My mother got me on hard drugs like methamphetamine at the age of thirteen, and after leaving her abusive boyfriend we lived from drug house to drug house. I had gone through the juvenile hall/court system due to bad choices I made, and

my mother had even left me there on my release date and said she was not coming for me. The judge was going to send me to foster care since my mother denied to take me home and luckily my probation officer called my grandma to come for me. She was able to fill out the paperwork to release me home into her custody and got me into counseling, a drug and alcohol program, and an anger management program which helped me grow a lot out of the hurt and pain I had been put through. At this time, I was now fifteen years old and found out I was pregnant with a little girl. But how could I

give her the life that was given to me? I just couldn't, so I really started taking everything seriously for her life and my own. I re-enrolled in high-school where I ended up graduating with my class in 2013, after my high school graduation I got a job and moved out of my grandma's house into my first apartment. My spouse and I had then had three more girls making it a total of four by the year 2019, and they are now ages nine, six, three, and two. I know I am a good mom but I still struggle with my worth and my path in life which is why I am at MJC in the first place. I had a mental breakdown about 2 years ago and felt like I was at the lowest point in my life. I had no support, and I even tried to harm myself and ended up in a behavior health facility. Here I realized I was not setting goals for myself and I was living in the hurt of the past, it was stopping me from being able to move on in the future. Since then, I have been making goals for myself and my children because I want to be someone and no my worth, I want my kids to know their

worth and see the better side of life, because I am also learning there is a better side of life if you put your mind to it.

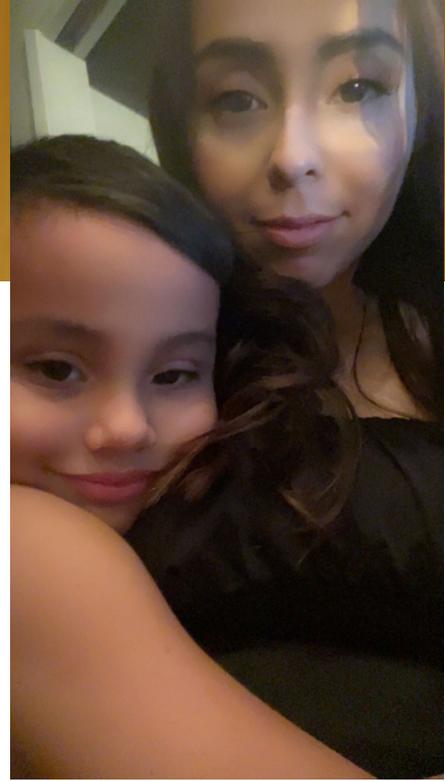
I enrolled at MJC as one of my goals to become a registered nurse in neo-natal care, and am so happy to be continuing to my path and setting more goals for my future. MJC and CalWorks has guided me and supported me to keep a clear head through my career path that I am currently trying to accomplish today, and I couldn't thank them more for all of the support. The workshops that CalWorks provides every semester gives me motivation to continue to keep pushing for my goals and my life. CalWorks gave me the opportunity to be a student worker, which helps me out a lot between my four children and my classes. I work through our MJC Pirates Pantry and here I get to do what I love and help other students with things like food and hygiene items. I have grown so much since I started attending MJC and plan to just grow more into my career path. Last semester I was able to obtain a 4.0 in all of my classes and I hope to continue to have strong semesters with the resources MJC and CalWorks provides. I will have earned my AS in natural science by spring 2023 and will be more than half way through my pre-nursing prerequisites. Of course, I still need to get into the nursing program which is the ultimate goal, but it is about taking one small goal step at a time until you reach that ultimate goal. I am also a student ambassador, and as a student ambassador I get to provide resources and information to other students just like myself. This is where I can really help do something for the students and our community, by helping them move ones step closer to their ultimate goals.

Yesica Rosas Berber

I have had to overcome so many challenges this year and the past. I have to strictly have classes on line because of how I know am responsible for taking my nieces along with my son to school, pick them up, come back home, make enough time for school, as well as home chores, appointments for my son or myself. I've learned to use a planner so I can schedule all my counselor meetings, workshops, and lastly find a way the children are being well behaved while I work in the evenings at home, managing time is difficult at the beginning but just stay positive and it will become easier. My journey in going to college has changed my life completely where I did not imagine

everything I have learned so far and I am proud to say I'm getting it done! There is always tough times and it's okay, I would go through the same, but something that helped me and still does is, telling myself everyday, I can do it, it's going to be okay, stay positive, when I'm done it will all be worth it, MJC CalWorks has been wonderful, they help me out with everything, planning my classes, any materials needed, helpful workshops and more. My plans to become self-sufficient are to stay positive, finish school, continue practicing what I have learned to find and keep a job that I know I love doing. Be more social, think

outside the box, and get out of my comfort zone. Give it my all because I won't know if I will succeed if I don't try it. Some community services I have done are Love Modesto, but I will definitely look into helping out in other ways possible, once my schedule is more open.



Sydney Throne

Challenges that I have had to overcome so far is accepting I will not always get 100 percent of every single test or assignment, no matter how much work I put in. And that's okay. I can study for hours, days and try so hard and still fail. Learning to accept it and learn and adapt through college thus far has made me grow in school and outside of it. Some successes I've had in making progress towards my educational and career goals have been my good grades getting me closer to my first degree. And I've succeeded in participating in programs that have helped me stay honest throughout my school year. The MJC CalWorks program has helped me want more for myself. This pro-



gram at MJC is so helpful in every aspect for you and it makes me want to work as hard as they work to keep

me going in school. My plans to become more self-sufficient are to hopefully, with my degree when I get it, find a stable job with a stable income with my degree(s). I plan to continue to work hard everyday in school, so that way one day I can look back and be proud of my hard work and where it has gotten me. I won't get where I want to get if I don't put in the work. So I have to grind everyday to make sure I get exactly what I want in order to be self-sufficient. I haven't been very involved in student leadership or extracurricular activities, but I do hope to change that in the near future.

Yomaira Ceballos



For years I described my life as “A Series of Unfortunate Events”, being that every time something bad would happen, an even worse situation would follow soon afterwards. I couldn’t see an end in sight, and while trying to remain hopeful, it never really helped. It would seem that “tragedy and struggle” were the themes of my life. When I started school at the age of 4, I was one of those students that had to learn

how to speak English at school. Both of my parents are from Mexico, and only spoke Spanish at home, so it was up to me to learn in preschool. Because it was not spoken at home I had a harder time learning how to read in English, and this set my reading level back for many years. I struggled with understanding concepts that my fellow peers excelled at. At the age of 8 my mother decided it would be better for my sisters and I to start attending the Private Christian school that our church had. I was there until the end of my sixth-grade year because it wasn’t very big I ended up being the oldest child in the school. I missed out on social interactions with people my age, and the famous sixth grade camp that every oth-

er sixth grader at other schools had the privilege to go on. During this time my family was going through their own struggles, for example, my parents were getting a divorce for the second time. My father had fallen into the wrong crowd and started his battle with drugs. My mother struggled with deep depression, and relied heavily on my assistance to help her raise my two sisters and little brother. When I wasn’t at school,

I was home babysitting my siblings while my mother worked. Although these experiences did teach me responsibility, I was robbed of a childhood. Throughout my adolescence I struggled a lot with low self-esteem, depression, and self-harm. My junior year of high school I remember cutting myself multiple times a day, and thinking of ending my life. I remembering feeling so worthless, and sad. This became a daily struggle for me, fortunately, my senior year brought some positivity to my life. I saw it as step closer to leaving my mother’s house, a step closer to living independently, and living by my own rules. I made plans to start at a school 4 hours away, a school close enough that I could come home to visit, but far enough that my mother wasn’t there setting my rules.

Then just like that I fell in love with the first love of my life, he was the reason I decided to put my education on hold after that. I was with this man for 3 years before I decided I needed to do something else with my life instead of busting my butt at jobs that didn’t pay me well. But not long after I left him did I get pregnant with my first child, by another man. This man, was my childhood crush, I used to chase him around the playground in kindergarten. Unfortunately for

Yomaira Ceballos Cont.

me, and our children, he is not a good man. I found myself in the most toxic, abusive, and draining relationship of my life. After two years suffering at this man's hands I ended up pregnant with our second child. I thought for sure things would get better after I had given him another baby, but I was incredibly wrong. For 6 years I struggled living under his roof and his rules. There are so many regrets that I have exposing my children to such violence thinking that them having both parents in their lives would be better than not having their father in their lives.

Finally, as if fate had made its way to me, my welfare-to-work case was transferred to a new worker in Modesto. I had gone through the job readiness classes and it was time to start my welfare to work assignments. I had asked again, like I had asked many times before, if it was possible for me to go to school. To my surprise, this worker said yes! When so many others before her telling me no, she said yes! And right away I headed to Modesto Junior College to apply and get enrolled in the CalWORKs program. When I started at MJC I had no idea what I was in store for, thankfully, my life has completely changed since starting school and joining this amazing program. There are so many

wonderful things that I can say about the MJC CalWORKs program because I know for a fact I would not have been able to complete school without their help. Not only have they helped me in getting the books, supplies, and paperwork that I need for classes, but they have also helped with enthusiastic encouragement that I receive from all the CalWORKs staff.

I am working on my Associates of Psychology degree and with that comes its own challenges, but knowing from experience I know how to adapt to whatever life throws at me. With this pandemic still present I have had to quarantine time and time again with my two children who are continuously exposed to COVID-19 at school. I have had to completely change my schedule around to complete all my assignments, be a full-time single mother, make sure that my children have time with me, and work. I have had to miss out on special events because my schoolwork needed to be done. I had to learn how to work completely on the computer, a skill I was not confident in. There has not been one semester where I have able to just sail through without some kind of obstacles, but with those obstacles comes so much progress. Progress that I never in a million years thought I would be making.

I have met with the MJC Transfer Center and they have informed me that I will be graduating with two Associates Degrees and I qualify to transfer to ANY university that I would want to go. This makes all the sacrifice worth it. A couple other big accomplishments I would like to acknowledge are my involvements in Project SPARC and being a part of Center for the Study of Social Policy, R.I.S.E. team. These two groups are making incredible strides in making equitable changes in the welfare system, and I am proud to be a part of the change. My plans to be self-sufficient are simple, work smarter and keep going!!

Celia Yepiz

Let me introduce myself, my name is Celia Yepiz. I am 37 years old, single mother of 2 amazing boys, ages 5 & 7 both on the Autism Spectrum; who were also recently also diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety. I am a full-time student at Modesto Junior College (MJC). I work for In-home Supportive Services (IHSS). and Just started my new job as a DSPS Scribe. So, as you may see my hands are full. I've always been a mother first and a student 2nd. Since I can remember (5 years old) My passion has always been to help people. My father (who passed when I was 16) always told me to never give up and pursue my dreams. He always said I think you are too sensitive for that job. BUT! don't ever let anyone, not even me tell you you can't do something you dream of with all your heart; and that is why I am attending MJC to become a Neo--Natal Nurse as well

as a respiratory therapist. It is also the reason why I accepted an English tutoring job in the past and am currently working as a DSPS scribe and homework helper. I thank you for taking the time to read my letter.



As I mentioned before my passion has always been to become a Neonatal Nurse. However, after my father passed my life turned completely upside down. My mother made some decisions that impacted my life in a very negative way. At first, I was the "Cinderella" of the house, as well as the nanny, or mommy to my 2

siblings. Continued by verbal abuse that later turned into physical abuse and humiliation. Having lost my home and my family, my only option was working to survive. So, all my dreams, scholarships, good grades, and hard work went to waste. Having my world turned around I looked for support in the wrong people and "things" Entering the wrong relationships and putting up with abuse physical and sexual I lost myself. When I hoped my life was turning right side up, working and attending beauty college after emancipating myself I suffered a

bad car accident. Once again I was homeless, jobless, and kicked out of school. After pleading for a second chance I continued my journey and routine. 5 am up and walking 2 hours to school unless I received a ride. 3 pm trying to catch a ride home to make it to work at 4 pm. 11:30 pm off, work walking home to see if I had food

Celia Yepiz Cont.

available, wash my white school uniform, and start homework. 2/3 am off to bed to get 2 to 3 hours of sleep.

Skipping to my future years. I found myself pregnant years later. What I believed to be a light at the end of the tunnel resulted in a dim spark. Having my son was a blessing. I walked with him to work and was able to feed him as I was single and homeless. Time passed, and my 1st son was diagnosed with Autism. I took time off to make sure he received the help he needed. When I decided to continue my education, I got as far as finishing my CNA program and receiving my license when I was told I was pregnant and had a high risk of losing the child. I came from an unstable relationship where I was constantly forced to have intercourse, verbally and physically abused, and constantly threatened. My plans were not to have a second child. However, God decided I needed another angel in my life. After having my second child, with the complications of NICU, respiratory failure, and so many more problems he encountered, I decided I would add respiratory therapy to my career goals.

After my 2nd son was diagnosed with severe autism and nonverbal I thought my world was going to end. I was alone with 2 children with disabilities. I decided to stay home and place my dreams on hold and get them help, early intervention, and any other programs necessary to help them become as independent as possible, and good citizens for our country.

You see I love my children so 3 years ago I left this abusive relationship with a restraining order and full custody of both of my boys. I applied at MJC and haven't stopped since. We have been homeless, sleeping on friends' couches, and many tears have fallen. But I know in my heart times will get better and we will persevere. I have met amazing professors throughout my journey; who have helped me through very difficult times and guided me through this path through success.

I am currently enrolled in the EOPS, CalWorks, and the Care program. These programs have been of amazing support to my goals and dreams. Calworks has been my guidance every step of my journey. Not only with counseling

help but economical support. The staff at Calworks has not only been kind and understanding but very supportive. There have been many tough times I have wanted to give up when a Calworks email pops up and offers tips or scholarships. As if they secretly knew I needed a push or a pick me up. My passion and dream to become a Neonatal nurse and respiratory therapist are around the corner as I will be receiving my AA this spring. My father would be proud. I thank you for your time and if given this scholarship you would be giving me and my boys a chance at a better future.

Yatzeni Avila

There are many challenges that I have had to overcome on my path to pursuing my certificate and just overall personal growth. For a while, my family moved around often, never staying in one place for more than a year. because we did not qualify for many places because we did not have 3x rent income. Currently my family has stabilized and have been living at our current location for three years and have not once been late on rent. I think one of the biggest ones was definitely just overcoming my own insecurities and depression. I have dealt with depression since my teen years and for 10 years it kept me from believing myself. I believed I was not capable of being successful, I often felt I should not even continue living. I have two daughters now and they are the main reason i forced myself to seek professional help because if i cant live for myself, then i need to live for them. The CalWORKS program is one of the reasons i even considered the possibility to go to school, my family was always low income so in my younger years, my parents could not help me whatsoever to further my education. Now I have my own children and would have the same problem

juggling survival and education, but the assistance CalWORKS provides made pursuing an education a reality. Admittedly, I was pessimistic in my first semester and thought myself to be incapable, but I worked hard and managed to get straight As. I am now in my second semester and I currently have an A in every class, and I plan on finishing this semester that way as well. I am currently taking classes to achieve an Associates Degree in Art because that is one of the options for the path of becoming a funeral director/ embalmer. I also also taking medical classes to help with a back-up as a phle-

botomist, as well as classes that help with another back-up as a videogame designer. My path for self improvement has not been easy, and i often find myself overwhelmed or too tired to for any leisure time, but when I get those grades back and i see 100%, I know that at the end of this path, the struggles will be worth it. No matter what, I will be in a better place than i was a year ago.





Hello, my name is Beneda Ledezma. I am a student at Modesto Junior College. This is my fourth semester

Beneda Ledezma

ter attending classes. Being a college student has not been easy for me. I have had multiple challenges and have had to push myself to overcome my challenges. There were days I did not even have a ride to class. I lived 45 minutes away and I would get on the city bus 3 hours before my class just to make it on time. I have successfully made a lot of progress in my education. I have set a goal that my career is my priority. I am so grateful for the CalWORKs program helping me out they go off and beyond for their students they really encourage you to believe

in yourself and to know you are not alone there always there to help students out in anything they can. My plans to become self-sufficient are taking task to commit to my everyday schedules to focus on my career 24/7 to be able to accomplish my daily task every day. I have involved myself in advocacy myself to leaderships and community service extracurricular activities such as joining all workshops doing group sections and being enrolled in anything that could help me achieve my goals in life and my main goal is graduate.

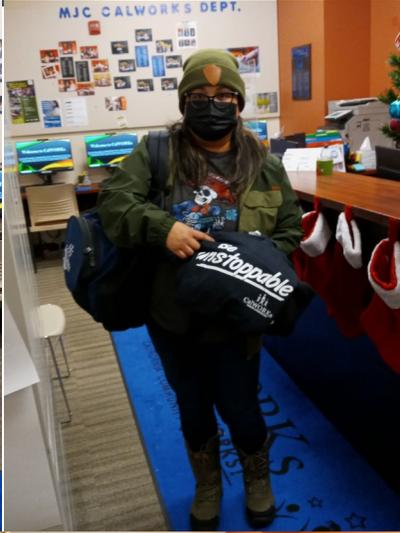
Danielle Aguilar

Some challenges I have had to overcome to pursue my degree is taking on subjects that have been difficult for me, such as biology. Being a stay at home mom and finding time to study and work on assignments has been difficult but I've been able to do it and has been one of my huge educational successes. MJC Cal-Works has helped me reach goals by supplying and supporting me in my studies and helped me gain new ways to get things done at a pace that is fundamental to both me and professors. A plan I have to be

self-sufficient is to be less dependent on others to help me with things like studying and finding easier ways. I haven't been really active in extra curricular activities due to health issues this semester but I plan to in upcoming semesters.



School Supply Refresh



2021-2022 Award Winners

Journey to Success Scholarship Winner



Chelsea Rogers-Dolzadelli

Student of the Year Award



Yomaira Ceballos



Perseverance Award



Thea Fonseca

Inspirational Award



Blanca Munguia Corona

L.I.G.H.T Award
Chelsea Coulson (not pictured)
Medical Assisting Instructor

