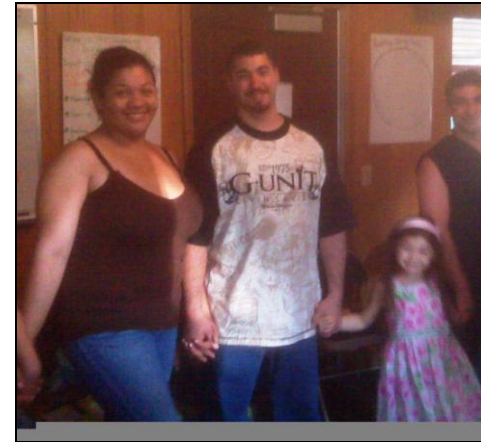


## ARH Parisi House on the Hill



Before entering House on the Hill and participating in *Celebrating Families!* “M” “was running the streets,” high on cocaine and leaving her daughter in the constant care of grandfather. For the past three years she reported admitting herself to Alcohol & Other Drug Treatment centers, leaving, relapsing, legal troubles and incarcerations. “M” recalls that she felt her daughter was a burden and got in the way of her lifestyle. Following the threat of losing her daughter to the child’s father, “M” came to the realization that she wanted to get clean and retain guardianship of her child.

Much transformation took place as “M” and her father participated in *Celebrating Families!*. Through the insight gathered from weekly group sessions “M” acknowledged generational patterns of use, domestic violence and

adopted coping skills. She gained self-awareness, acceptance of her feelings and the ability to communicate and express feelings in a healthy way. “M” was able to incorporate skills learned to improve relationships with her daughter, parents, and to establish healthy boundaries with a significant other. “M” had estranged relationships with her father and mother stemming from the chaos brought on by her and her father’s use when she was a child. Due to the frequent abandonment by “M”, her daughter perceived grandfather as her parental figure. It took a significant amount of time, effort and commitment for her to work her recovery process, and to improve relations with her parents and daughter.

### Memorable Moments

- Observing the interactions and healing of a three- generation family: Grandmother, Mother “J” (House on the Hill client) and her daughters, 11 and 17 years old. All three generations had experienced drug use and familial abuse resulting in cyclical chaos that appeared to be continuing with the 17 year old. Through CF!, grandmother, “J” and her daughters reported willingness to understand one another. Several life changing events occurred including Grandmother’s and granddaughters’ relocation to Fresno to provide a safer environment for the grandchildren. “J’s” daughter on many occasions reported pride and appreciation for “J’s” recovery and profound understanding of generational patterns and of her risk of continued use and abuse.
- Having five participants travel great distances to attend. Several of the male significant others bonded and traveled via carpool or light rail. And, despite spraining her knee, one participant managed to attend and complete CF!
- Observing strengthening of family bonds and create heightened communication is inspiring and powerful!

***“J” was able to verbalize feelings of gratitude intermingled with feelings of loss due to the greater distance from her that her children and grandmother would be residing. “J” stated that she had gained communication skills that enabled her to recognize and verbalize her mixed feelings, rather than covering her painful feelings with defenses.***

## **El Bohio**

An additional pilot site for *¡Celebrando Familias!* and translators of pre-adolescent and adolescent age-group.



***Preparing for  
Bubble Gum Family***



***Exercise with Cups Teaching  
Feelings-Defenses***



***Presentation***

## Bridges – The STARS Program, Sacramento

We began *Celebrating Families!* in February 2009. Our current population is Informal Supervision and Early Intervention Family Drug Court clients (clients who are not yet involved in the Dependency Court system but have CPS cases). Our mission is to reduce the number of families who enter the Dependency court system, reduce child abuse and neglect, reduce future addiction in children and generally increase parental knowledge. The program is voluntary to clients since they are technically in the voluntary stage of their CPS case. We have had a lot of success so far. At our first graduation, we recognized 23 graduates and are currently working with 19 families in our second series.

### Memorable Moments

- Giving out *Me not Meth* shirts to adolescents to be worn in a skit children performed. At the end of the skit they looked at their parents – pointed to the shirts and said *Choose me not meth!*
- At graduation having one of our 7-year olds stand up and thank us for helping her Mom *stop doing drugs* because now she plays with me and isn't always mad!

# ¡Celebrando Familias! Training



## Champions Recovery Alternative Programs, Inc.

WOW! Wonders of the World are sometimes hard for our families to grasp. However, in Session 4 a WOW moment occurred that I don't think I will ever forget.

A group member shared that her family was having dinner at one of the local restaurants. When they had completed their meal and were heading to their car, a guy came walking up rather quickly. The member made it a point to tell the group she was thinking that this guy wants something and we just don't have it. However, when the man caught up to them, he said that he saw them walk into the restaurant and being a God fearing man he had to wait for them. The Lord wanted them to have this.

With that the man placed a \$100 bill in her hand. The member reports that she tried to give it back to him but he refused and said to use it to buy something for her children, if they didn't need it for anything else.

What did they do? The family went that evening and bought \$100 worth of toys and left them in the Toy's For Tot's bin at the local Wal-Mart. Her family felt that there were others in our community that needed that money more than them. I told the member...

***“that is a pretty amazing story but why was it a WOW moment for you.” She replied “because her faith in humanity had been restored.”***

## **EMQ-Families First Addiction Prevention Services at Dorsa Elementary School**



**Graduate, now employed by EMQ-FF**



**Family Centering**

Under the leadership of principal Norma Rodriguez, Dorsa Elementary School collaborated with APS to pilot *¡Celebrando Familias!* Ms. Rodriguez made extra efforts to engage the families by calling them herself, encouraging students every day during the day's announcements, and having teachers incorporate follow-up questions from the program into the regular school day. Perhaps the greatest lesson from the program, which started with a meal hosted by group leaders, is the importance of *convivir* - the art of living well together and valuing one another.

### Memorable Moments

***A single mom of a third grade student with behavior and social issues told her story of drug use while pregnant and as a young mother. Tearfully, she said "if I'd known then what I have learned through ¡Celebrando Familias!, things would have been different!"***

- The community's response and families' commitment! It was incredible!
- The amazing turnout of fathers and their commitment! *"Never as a facilitator had I had so many dads in my class!"*
- A Mom asking, *"What is an alcoholic?"* After the explanation, she said *"My dad is an alcoholic!"*
- A Mom saying, *"I hug my kids and tell them I love them now. I don't know why I didn't do it before...perhaps I was embarrassed, but not anymore!"*

## **Friends Outside in Santa Clara County Lead Agency for Technical Assistance & Training**

Friends Outside serves families and individuals impacted by incarceration and the criminal justice system. Since piloting *CF!* in 2005, Friends Outside has facilitated six cycles and provided training, technical assistance and presentations. Staff members were involved in the writing and editing teams and are active partners with Prevention Partnership International (PPI). We have very fond memories of their many *CF!* families. From the mothers who were released from jail for the evening to participate with their children, to the first preschoolers to experience the Early Childhood Curriculum, to cooking *CF!* meals themselves on an old, broken stove, we continue to share in the passion and power of *Celebrating Families!*

### **Memorable Moments**

We could share many stories of lives changed and relationships that began their path of healing before our eyes. Overall, we share with you our vision and invite you to join us in ensuring that every child impacted by substance abuse is afforded the opportunity to begin their healing by participating *Celebrating Families!* with someone they love. Here's one story:

***A young Mom, pregnant with her second child, incarcerated for a second DUI during her time in group. We were uncertain whether this particular CF! group would be a good fit for her. Much to our surprise, she soaked up all of the information presented and shared about how she used the information she learned to mend relationships in her life, particularly with her mother and her husband. Not only did she rave about group, but she gave birth at about Session 7 - never missing a group!***

## Kern County Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services

Kern County Child Protective Services has provided *Celebrating Families!* since March 6, 2007. Over the course of the five series, we observed participating families develop their own support system, starting out shy and unsure. Mid way through *CF!*, they have built positive relationships and are a great support for one another.

### Memorable Moments

- Every session - the Affirmation Circle!. Watching the effect affirmations have on families is amazing! So many are used to hearing and seeing the negative things about themselves. The Circle brings tears and smiles to families' and facilitators' faces.

***We had a mother and son reunite, who had not seen each other in over seven years. This mother came from another state to participate in Celebrating Families! in order to reunify with her son. Throughout the program session we were able to watch their relationship grow and a substantial bond form.***

- The children! They become so much more self confident once they learn that they are not alone and that many families struggle with addiction. They walk away with the courage to say no and to tell someone about what is going on in their home. They take great pride in sharing information and knowledge learned during Family Time.
- Family members learn to appreciate each other, vowing to continue Tuesday night as Family Night.
- Graduation night! We provide a separate night where everyone receives a certificate, including the children. It is wonderful to see the pride the participants have for completing and celebrating their achievement. We provide a scrap booking table for the participants to

use pictures taken during the 16 sessions. They take joy in making family albums.

## MACSA – Mexican American Community Services Association



MACSA focused on children's successes (ages 4-7) in *iCelebrando Familias!*

- One of the children told his uncle to not smoke because the lungs will get black. Now the uncle doesn't smoke in the house and smokes less.
- Another child started a conversation with his grandma about tobacco. His grandma started to cry because one of her brothers died because of cancer of the lungs.
- On a hot day, another boy took his mother's beer away and told her that "it is not good to drink beer." He gave his mother the option to drink water.
- One of the children was very active, moving all over the room. He seemed very distracted and we thought that he wasn't learning. We were wrong! He talked with his uncle about his uncle's smoking, telling him that he will get yellow teeth and black lungs.
- One of my Lead Facilitator's WOW moments was during the communication session with parents, with the back-to-back drawing exercise. Most of the participants were surprised about how poorly they communicated."

***Another child, before going to a party, told her dad to not drink, because if he drank she would go back home. The father didn't listen to her, went to the party and drank a beer. The little girl started to cry, The father stopped drinking.***

## Helping Schools Overcome Budget Cuts Principal of the Year Collaborates with EMQ-FF Addiction Prevention Service



Principal of the Year,  
Norma Rodriguez,  
with student.

In an environment of deep budget cuts and shrinking programs, one school has found a powerful ally in the resources provided by EMQ FamiliesFirst’s Addiction Prevention Services (APS). Under the leadership of Principal Norma Rodriguez, Dorsa Elementary School collaborated with APS to pilot a Spanish language version of *Celebrating Families!*. The program invites targeted families for a 16-week program that promotes healthy lifestyles and better understanding around alcohol abuse and addiction prevention. Piloting this program is just one of the ways in which Norma has been empowering families and keeping them healthy. She was recognized as 2009 Elementary Principal of the Year by the Alum Rock School District in San Jose.

One parent who attended is the single mom of a third grade student with behavior and social issues. She told the story of her own drug use while pregnant and as a young mother. Tearfully, she said that if she’d known then what she’s learned through the program, things “would have been different.” The school recruited 28 families out of which 21 enrolled and completed the program—a high success rate since in many areas there is less than 50 percent completion. Children were encouraged to attend and engaged in their own program during the evening. Norma made extra efforts to engage the families by phoning them directly, encouraging students every day during announcements, and having teachers incorporate follow-up questions from the program into the regular school day. Perhaps the greatest lesson from the program, which always started with a meal hosted by group leaders, is the importance of “convivir.” That is the art of living well together and valuing one another. ♥

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