

## CET Helps Farmworker Mom Obtain a Better Life



Imagine yourself, rising at 4 am, getting your husband and children ready for the day, then commuting two hours each way for training, Monday through Friday, whilst pregnant with your third child. This is the path Janie Amezcua set forth daily as she left her family home in Dos Palos on course to Salinas in search of her better tomorrow. Her determination to move forward in life, provide for her family, and be a role model to her children, was all the motivation she needed to fuel her throughout the day.

Reflecting on her early years, Janie states that ever since her teens, she had been stuck earning minimum wage at seasonal general labor jobs. After several years of meaningless

work, Janie decided it was time to set her vision on attaining stable employment in a professional setting. Unfortunately, she found that everywhere she applied she was turned down due to lack of experience.

Frustrated, Janie shared her experience with family members who advised her to look into vocational training. They explained it was a means to learn a skill and gain the experience she desperately sought. After some research, Janie became aware of CET and recognized the opportunity it presented to her achieving her goals. Janie came to CET Salinas prepared with all her necessary documentation, intent on changing the trajectory of her future. As a recipient of NFJP funding, Janie was able to commence training in the Business Office Administration program, one step closer to her career.

Shortly thereafter, the toll of attending training full-time caused such a financial hardship for her family, Janie was unsure she would be able to follow through with the commitment. Two months had elapsed and she was now faced with choosing between alleviating the strain on her family and continuing on her career path. Janie shared her struggle with her Instructor, with the intent of notifying him she would have to withdraw. Her Instructor and CET staff worked together to inform Janie of the availability of supportive services and helped her navigate through the process of applying for assistance.

Janie received supportive services such as gas cards, food vouchers, and monthly bags of FDA food provided through the local food bank. However, it was the housing assistance provided through the 167 MSFW Temporary Housing Program in conjunction with the NFJP grant stipends, that provided the greatest relief to her family and allowed Janie to thrive in training. Janie flourished in the BOA class, successfully meeting all requirements for course completion and graduating right before the birth of her third baby boy. After a month of recovery, Janie was ready to put all her new skills to practice and actively began her job search. She started out as a receptionist in a medical facility and within two months was hired by the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF) in Salinas as Supportive Staff, earning a \$2 increase in wage. Janie's position at MAOF specializes in finding families childcare solutions, so that parents can access opportunities to grow and succeed in their education and careers. Janie is now working in the professional setting she always dreamed of, paying forward the blessings that were afforded to her through grace.