

Carpinteria Children's Project: A collection of hope-aholics



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I am a hope-aholic. With a tip of the hat to Gloria Steinem for that descriptor, I nearly always see the glass as half-full, the goal as achievable. With the Carpinteria Children's Project (CCP), I am surrounded by fellow hope-aholics, people who naturally look for the strengths in children and families and want to support them as they take positive steps in their journeys. Our staff and volunteers inspire me because they eat, sleep and breathe teamwork. It's all about what we can do together. Over the next few months, I'm going to share a bit about what we do at CCP.

What really happens over there at the old Main School on 8th Street between Palm and Walnut? Well, it's now called the Carpinteria Children's Project and meaningful, inspiring teamwork that strengthens children, families and our community happens every day. We want to spread the word about this treasure in our community and invite you in!

The CCP is best known for our delightful early childhood education classrooms and early elementary afterschool programs. Many know that we are the hub

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We provide or coordinate adult education through a variety of parenting classes, offered either in English or Spanish. And we have classes to help you learn English or Spanish, too, as well as support groups. We received a grant for something special this year—on nine Tuesday nights starting next week, we will provide a family dinner at 5 p.m. and free childcare from 6 to 7:30 p.m. while parents take their choice of one of four class series. The choices for parent classes are Nurturing Parent in English, Nurturing Parent in Spanish, and Family Literature & Parent Café in English or Spanish. You can register for a class series at carpchildren.org/class-registration_registro-de-clase/ or by calling 566-1621.

for a number of non-profit and government partners that serve families on our campus. Our Family Resource Center, the focus of today's column, operates that hub and serves families in our classrooms and those throughout Carpinteria who are not in our classrooms.

Family Liaisons lead our Family Resource Center, which is housed in Bungalow 310 by the parking lot. They enable parents to identify their strengths and areas for growth and to reach out to other providers who can help on their family journey. Importantly, Family Liaisons support this process so that parents are not overwhelmed—but instead empowered—to make a positive difference in their own lives and the lives of their children. They take a clear-eyed look at the needs of families and think to themselves “What team will best support this family? Which service agencies could best contribute to this family's growth?” Family Liaisons are experts in local resources around medical and dental insurance, nutrition support, family counseling and child development, and they do the research when new needs arise. We help families access healthcare. We provide or help families access child and family counseling.

In addition to coordinating services for individual families and providing parenting and other classes, our Family Resource Center hope-aholics also contribute to efforts to ensure our community supports all families so they all can flourish. We are connected with other Family Resource Centers throughout Santa Barbara County and more tangentially with those across California and the nation.

Next month, I'll share more about how that network feeds our work for families locally. In the meantime, feel free to stop by and meet Angelica, Maria, Maria and Chris in the Family Resource Center at the Carpinteria Children's Project. They do it all with hope, all with an eye for celebrating how families use their strengths to do their best for their children.

Maria Fisk, PhD is an educator and leader who believes in the power of communities to change lives. She is the Executive Director of the Carpinteria Children's Project (CCP). CCP provides early childhood education, family support services, and leadership of the Thrive Carpinteria Partner Network of early education and social service providers. Learn more at CarpChildren.org. Maria can be reached at mfisk@carpchildren.org or 566-1600.