

Meet the Family Justice Community Fellows (April 2017)



2017 Family Justice Community Fellows (From top left to right: Kayla Lopez, Carmen Alejo, Adriana Martinez, Esmeralda Cardenas, Malory Acosta-Ponce, Janell Coleman, Sparkle Stephen, Tiphereh Banks, Teresita Espinoza, and Shani Miranda)

Malory Acosta-Ponce (Central) **Program coordination**

Malory is originally from Mexico and now lives in Bay Point. She has been a participant of several long-term safety programs at the Center, such as WINGS, Positive Minds in Action and Project Connect, our monthly community/skill building circle. She considers herself a member of the self-described “Positive Minds group,” a team of clients who have attended different programs together at the Center. She sees herself as a lifelong learner and seeks to support others in their learning journey, away from shame and towards creative problem solving. She is interested in organizing study groups that meet Saturdays at the Central Center.

Carmen Alejo (West) **Program coordination**

Carmen is originally from Mexico and is currently a Richmond resident. She is a Parent Educator at the Latina Center and teaches parenting classes. She is interested in having parents discover their parenting style so that they are able to identify the benefits and challenges of their style as well as to discover new opportunities.

Tiphereth Banks (West)

Technology

Tiphereth identifies as multi-racial American Indian, African American, and white. She currently lives in El Cerrito. She is a student at Berkeley City College. She is passionate about arts as a creative outlet for youth. She is also interested in exploring how technology can support youth health and creative self-expression.

Esmeralda Cárdenas (Central)

Education & program coordination

Esmeralda is originally from Mexico and now lives in Walnut Creek. She has participated in WINGS and is also a regular participant at Project Connect. She is a volunteer at St. Mary's Church and feels passionate about children's programming in faith communities, as she sees that it has raised her children's self-confidence. She would like to raise awareness in parents about bullying. She enjoys crafts, especially knitting.

Janell Coleman (Central)

Advocacy

Janelle grew up in Oakland and has lived for 9 years at Marsh Creek in Brentwood. She is a graduate of Los Medanos College. She wants her family to live in a community where they feel comfortable and safe. To that end, she will shortly be asking her neighbors to complete a short survey asking them to list what they like about living in this housing development as well as rate their top three concerns living there. She would like to improve the communication between the neighbors so they may have the opportunity to address their collective concerns together.

Teresita Espinoza (Central)

Advocacy & program coordination

Teresita is from Mexico and currently resides in Pittsburg. She was encouraged to join Community Fellows Program by one of the 2016 Fellows, who was also Teresita's classmate, after she saw the change in the quality of her school presentations. Teresita is a student at Los Medanos College and feels passionate about issues of equity and inclusion. She wants to contribute to a college climate that is socially safe and welcome for all students. She is planning to create a student survey so that she can understand the students' perceptions and needs on this issue.

Kayla López (Central)

Education & training

Kayla grew up in Pleasant Hill and Concord. She is an undergraduate student at John F. Kennedy University, working towards a Bachelor in Arts in Psychology. She was a foster youth and feels passionate about the empowerment of this population. She is interested in creating a manual for foster youth to make connections with one another as well as to connect them with countywide resources.

Adriana Martínez (West)

Advocacy

Adriana is originally from Mexico and now lives in San Pablo. She is a Parent Educator at the Latina Center. To the parenting class curriculum at Latina Center, she added a lesson about recognizing signs of suicide in children, inspired by her own life experience. She is interested in mobilizing teachers and parents at her children's school to improve their efforts against bullying.

Shani Miranda (West)

Program coordination

Shani grew up in San Pablo, and studied for one year at Contra Costa College. In high school, she was a reading tutor because she was concerned about elementary school children advancing in school without mastering basic skills. She now is looking to support young adults who have survived abuse to be more empowered, and to pass that forward to their children.

Sparkle Stephen (West)

Advocacy

Sparkle grew up in Richmond and is now a college student at California State University, East Bay. She values patience, curiosity and practicing excellence in customer service as a product of her experience working in retail. She is passionate about animals and is curious about exploring the different healing roles pets can have on the lives of survivors of abuse.

