

Noche de Familia



Engineering professors Carol Hsu (*bottom left*) and Tina Barsotti (*behind the table*) help Liam and other children at the STEM table.

Clark College hosted Noche de Familia on May 9, a special night for Latiné families to learn about academic options and resources offered at Clark College. Offered every term by the college and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the free event included activities for kids and dinner for all.

Attendees had opportunities to speak with Clark representatives from Financial Aid, Transitional Services, Workforce Education Services, Disability Support Services, Counseling and Health Center, Career Services and more. Workshops were offered to explain the processes of applying for Clark College and applying for financial aid.

While parents found out more about Clark College, children busied themselves with facepainting and games. At the STEM table Engineering, Professors Tina Barsotti and Carol Hsu helped children build a contraption that demonstrated Newton's Third Law of Motion. Diana Santos watched as her daughter, Ester, 4, inflated a balloon.

Through a student interpreter, a Clark College staff member asked Diana Santos if she was considering enrolling at Clark College. She paused a minute before answering, "I need basics."

Diana and the interpreter headed to the Transitional Studies staff member to learn more about how she could get started with basic ESL classes.



Clark grad Ana Aquino-Barragan shared her story.

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She started with English as Second Language (ESL) classes through Transitional Studies. Her path was not easy. She stumbled. She struggled. She wanted to give up. But her teachers encouraged her to keep going.

Eventually, Aquino-Barragan earned her high school diploma,

three Early Childhood Education certificates, and an associate degree in early childhood education. Today she is an early childhood education teacher. Next, she plans to start a bachelor's degree program part time while she is working. Her goal is to be a schoolteacher.

Her daughters saw how hard their mother worked to achieve her goal – doing her homework and juggling a busy schedule. Along her challenging educational journey, she inspired her daughters.

Her oldest daughter dreams of being a doctor and is starting college. Another daughter who is about to graduate from high school aspires to be a teacher. And, her youngest daughter wants to be a dentist.

“I am proud that I have set the bar for my daughters,” Aquino-Barragan said. “I showed my daughters that you can fall, then get back up and keep going. I hope that by sharing my journey, I’ve inspired you to continue your education.”

Next, the college's Diversity Outreach Manager Rosalba Pitkin spoke about the hardships of immigrant life: “It's important to be educated in this country,” she said. “This information you hear today can help break that barrier to education. To have access. To take that first step.”



Left to right: Lizette Drennan, Financial Aid, President Dr. Karin Edwards, and Vanessa Neal, ODEI

To learn more, visit the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

<https://www.clark.edu/campus-life/student-support/diversity-and-equity/>

Photos: Clark College/Susan Parrish