



"In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers. " - Fred Rogers

Message from Donna Barranco Fisher, Executive Director

As Executive Director at Storyteller Children's Center, it is my pleasure to welcome our returning and new students! We have 24 new children between our two centers. We are excited to have our students back in the classrooms, filling them with energy and enthusiasm for learning. It is our goal to help every child feel welcomed, connected and join our Storyteller Family. At Storyteller, our dedicated teachers have planned and prepared for an exciting new year!

Celebrating 30 Years!

We are thrilled to celebrate 30 years and have released a new promotional video in honor of our anniversary. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do!



We invite you to join us for our **Dirty 30 Gala** which will be held on **Saturday, October 20th**, at the stunning **Hotel Californian**.

Enjoy signature martinis, an open bar, sumptuous bites, and festive live music from **Sister Sparrow & The Dirty Birds!**



[For more details click here!](#)

A Warm Farewell to Long Time Teacher Tere Flores!



Tere Flores started with Storyteller in January of 1994, as a Toddler Teacher. She feels blessed to have had the privilege to be part of Storyteller for many years. When Tere started at Storyteller, there were only 6 toddlers, 12 preschoolers, and a staff of 3. Tere states, "It's been an amazing experience to see how has Storyteller has evolved to serving 80+ families from only 18, back in 1994. Now we have a staff of 22! I was there when we were in the First Congregational Church basement, and shared the joy of opening 2 centers throughout the last 24 years."

Tere originally brought youth and creativity, and has grown to be a mentor and leader. She has consistently shown enthusiasm, flexibility, patience, love and care for the children we serve. She spent 15 years as a Toddler Teacher, and last 4 years as a Preschool Teacher. She has worked at both sites, and has supported teachers in numerous capacities to help out wherever and whenever needed.

Tere notes that the professional development component has been incredible. Other schools do not offer the same professional development opportunities as Storyteller does. It helped her grow immensely as a teacher and person. This has allowed her to feel capable, confident, and competent in working at a therapeutic school.

Storyteller is home and family. Tere's own children attended Storyteller. Storyteller welcomed Tere, and helped her grow into the confident person she is today. She has been deeply supported by co-teachers and direct supervisors. Tere will always feel like her heart lives at Storyteller.

Please Welcome - Huyen Nguyen



Huyen Nguyen joined the Storyteller Family in May as the **Senior Development Coordinator**. Joining Storyteller has come full circle for Huyen in terms of her career and life, overall. Huyen understands firsthand the detrimental impacts of families living in poverty through lived experience. She also spent several years as a teacher at a subsidized preschool in an underserved neighborhood. Her mother is an educator and her grandmother was as well in Vietnam. Most recently, Huyen worked to address issues of systemic poverty through the lens of food justice and equity. This combined with her studies of globalization, environmental science, and cultural anthropology have provided her with a birds eye perspective of how the multitude of issues we care about are closely interconnected.

Huyen appreciates that Storyteller offers holistic, multi-faceted resources and tools for our families to succeed and break the cycle of poverty. Huyen is grateful for the opportunity to contribute her time, knowledge, and care. It's more than a job, it's a privilege to be part of an inclusive environment which sustains a culture of hope, trust, and compassion. She embraces this wholly and with gratitude.

She believes it is critical to make a positive and lasting impact for children early in their lives to ensure they have the opportunity to lead happy, healthy futures. Families in poverty often endure complex issues. It is critical to provide direct services and a strong community network to support families in need. It has been incredible to witness and take part in the vital work of Storyteller!

PROMOTION



On July 27th, 28 students promoted from Storyteller and are headed to 13 different Kindergarten classes in the Santa Barbara including: Monte Vista, Vieja Valley, Cleveland, Adams Elementary, Peabody Charter School, Isla

Vista Elementary, Adelante, Tierra Linda, Harding Elementary, Monroe, Washington Elementary, Canolino, and Roosevelt Elementary. We had 150+ family and friends come celebrate this wonderful accomplishment!

LUNCHBOX LUNCHEON



Storyteller held our annual Lunchbox Luncheon this year on **April 19, 2018**. Over two hundred supporters gathered at Rockwood Women's Club, and learned about our important work in Santa Barbara County. Our guests loved the singing performances by our preschool students.

Storyteller raised over **\$108,000!** This generous amount will be applied to our **Sponsor A Child Program**. This year marks our 30th Anniversary. We are working toward our goal of sponsoring 30 children!

Next year's **Lunchbox Luncheon** will be held at Rockwood Women's Club on **April 25, 2019**. We hope to see you there!

BOARD UPDATE



We are sad to see Alixe Mattingly leave our board after 7 years of service, but she has enthusiastically joined the Advisory Board so she won't be far! Alixe has been a tireless advocate for Storyteller in our public relations, events, fundraising and strategic advancement, and we will miss her cheerful presence and counsel.

"It has been a privilege to work with such a caring, competent, and committed board and staff, and so rewarding to see the power of the unique roles and positive impacts that Storyteller brings to the children and their families." says Alixe. "Change the first five years of a child's life can transform their future, and this is what Storyteller does so well."

NEW HEAD START TEACHER: SILVIA MEJIA



Please welcome **Silvia Mejia** to Storyteller! Silvia will be joining our Head Start teaching

team. Prior to Silvia joining Storyteller, she volunteered at our State St. site on numerous occasions. Silvia was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. She is a graduate from Dos Pueblos High School and has been working with children since her junior year of high school. Silvia's hobbies include: playing soccer, painting, drawing, reading, and spending time with her family.

Silvia has always been enthusiastic about helping others, and began to seek her path by starting as a Psychology Major at Santa Barbara City College. During her time there, she took a few Child Development courses and loved them. Silvia earned an Associate's Degree in Psychology, and then pursued her passion in Child Development at San Francisco State University.

She describes her experience in San Francisco as amazing; it guided her toward helping students and families of all ages. Silvia worked as an intern at a low-income school in San Francisco, in the capacity of a fourth grade assistant. "It was one of the most memorable experiences I have endured. My time there made me realize my passion for helping those less privileged, and to investigate more within the behavioral sciences. I am now a proud graduate from San Francisco State University and received a B.A. in Child and Adolescent Development, with an emphasis in School Age Children. I am so grateful to continue my journey in the Child Development field at Storyteller Children's Center. I have been fortunate enough to observe the many great resources Storyteller has available not only the children, but the families as well. The value that attracted me the most to this amazing organization was the emphasis Storyteller places on teamwork, as well as the idea that the families, teachers, administration and staff are teammates in the developmental journey of the child. This is a great place to volunteer and work; it provides great experiences and touches the heart of many!"

We welcome Silvia to the Storyteller Family!

YOUR GENEROSITY - OUR FUTURE

Storyteller Children's Center is more than a preschool. It is a therapeutic environment that serves the most at-risk children and their families in the Santa Barbara community.

To be successful at what we do every day, we need your help. We hope that you are inspired to once again make a year-end gift to Storyteller Children's Center.

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