



Facilitator Spotlight: Xochitl Becerra

Strengthening Families in Sonoma County

At [Sonoma Community Action Network](#) (Sonoma CAN), the vision is clear: Families thriving in communities where every child is raised with joy, justice, and connection.

Through a whole-family approach, Sonoma CAN builds on the strengths that already exist within families while helping them navigate challenges together. Their work recognizes that when families have the support they need emotionally, socially, and economically, children are better able to grow, learn, and succeed.

Each year, Sonoma CAN supports families through a wide range of programs designed to nurture early development and strengthen community well-being. Their services include early childhood education programs such as Early Head Start and Head Start childcare, Pasitos y Pasitos de Transición, ALAS, and AP-OD (Abriendo Puertas-Opening Doors). Families can also access support through health and mental wellness services, school-based programs for children with disabilities, therapy and coaching for parents and children, and community support groups.

Beyond education and wellness, Sonoma CAN also provides safety-net services that help families meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and financial assistance.

Their employment pathways programs offer job training, skill-building opportunities, and educational support to help parents strengthen their economic stability and build brighter futures for their families. This holistic approach reflects a belief that strong families are the foundation of thriving communities.

At AP-OD, we share that belief. We know that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. When families are supported, connected, and confident in their role, children benefit, and entire communities grow stronger. This month, we're proud to spotlight Xochitl Becerra, Facilitator at Sonoma Community Action Network in Sonoma County, CA.

Through her work, Xochitl is helping families build connection, confidence, and community one cafecito at a time.



From Observer to Facilitator

Xochitl first encountered AP-OD more than a decade ago while working in school readiness programs. At the time, she helped prepare rooms for facilitators.

But she often stayed to listen. "I really liked how Abriendo Puertas used los dichos from my culture to connect with parents," she shares.

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I could see how engaged families were learning tools, sharing stories. I remember thinking, this is something I would love to do someday.

In 2024, that "someday" arrived. Xochitl completed her facilitator training and began implementing the program.

Now, a little over a year into facilitating AP-OD, Xochitl says her experience has been deeply meaningful. "I believe parents are their children's first teacher," she says.

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I love how Abriendo Puertas honors culture and values the knowledge parents already bring.

For Xochitl, success begins with listening. "Paying attention to what participants need is very important to me. That way, I can connect them with resources and support." That attentiveness has created powerful ripple effects.

One parent from a recent cohort stood out as warm, engaged, and always connecting with the children. The team at Sonoma CAN saw her strengths and invited her to join their organization. Today, she provides childcare for programs at Sonoma CAN. "That's been a beautiful success," Xochitl shares. "Seeing a parent grow into leadership."



Xochitl facilitating AP-OD at Sonoma CAN in 2024

Cafecito y Corazón

Another success story followed a cohort's graduation in fall 2024. The parents didn't want it to end. "They kept asking to continue meeting," Xochitl recalls. "They wanted to keep sharing and supporting each other."

So she helped create Cafecito y Corazón, a twice-monthly gathering space where families connect, drink coffee, share experiences, and access resources. What began as a response to interest has become an ongoing support group.

"They keep showing up," she says. "That sense of connection means everything."



Cafecito y Corazón gathering in March, 2025

"Las matemáticas son tus amigas para toda la vida."

In one session focused on early learning, several parents shared that math had never been their favorite subject. Xochitl asked, "How can we make math fun?"

One mother responded: "Las matemáticas son tus amigas para toda la vida." (Math is your friend for life.) For Xochitl, that moment captured the heart of the program.

"Parents use home as their first classroom," she says. "They already have so much wisdom."



AP-OD Graduation Spring 2024 with Sonoma CAN

Cafecito y Corazón

Would Xochitl encourage others to become AP-OD certified facilitators? Without hesitation:

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Yes. You can support parents in their role as first teachers, value the work they are already doing, and help them understand how this impacts their children's lives. You help parents see they are the voice for their children.

Xochitl, thank you for the way you listen, build community, and lead with corazón. Your work reminds us that when parents are seen and supported, entire communities grow stronger.

We are honored to walk alongside you.

Mission: Sonoma CAN (Community Action Network), Santa Rosa, CA, is dedicated to reducing poverty and enhancing the quality of life through innovative programs and services that empower those in need. For more information, visit <https://www.sonomacan.org/> or follow them at:   