

## Facilitator Spotlight:

### Vianka Villagomez of Homeboy Industries

#### Creating new beginnings through family and community

At [Homeboy Industries](#), every person is seen for their potential, not their past. As the world's largest gang rehabilitation and re-entry program, Homeboy Industries provides hope, healing, and opportunities for individuals and families seeking a fresh start. Through free programs and services, which include workforce development, education, mental health support, legal services, parenting programs, and community building, Homeboy empowers people to transform their lives and strengthen their families.

This commitment to healing extends beyond the individual. Homeboy Industries recognizes that when parents are supported, families become stronger, children thrive, and communities grow more resilient. By investing in parents and caregivers, they help create brighter futures for the next generation.

That commitment is reflected through AP-OD, where parents gain research-based knowledge, practical tools, and a supportive community to help them nurture their children's development and become confident leaders within their families.

This month, we're proud to spotlight Vianka Villagomez, a parent-turned-facilitator at Homeboy Industries. What began as a desire to create a stronger educational foundation for her four children has come full circle. Sometimes, that journey begins in the classroom and grows into something even greater.

Today, Vianka is helping other parents discover the same hope, confidence, and opportunities that once transformed her own family's journey.



Vianka Villagomez shares her journey as a parent-turned-facilitator with AP-OD

## From learning for her children to leading her community

When Vianka first enrolled in AP-OD, she was looking for something many parents seek: a way to give her children opportunities she hadn't experienced growing up. She shared,

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**I wanted a better educational future for my children. Having a better foundation than what I had growing up motivated me to learn more about opening doors.**

As a mother of four, and now a proud grandmother, Vianka quickly discovered that AP-OD offered more than parenting strategies. It provided research, practical tools, and a new perspective on the powerful role parents play in shaping their children's futures.

One lesson especially stayed with her: understanding the research on children's educational outcomes and recognizing that parents can influence those outcomes every day. Vianka said,

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**I knew I didn't want my children to become part of those statistics. I wanted to create change for my family by setting goals, understanding how to reach them, and giving my children every opportunity to succeed.**

## Lessons soon became everyday family experiences

One of Vianka's favorite memories is taking her children to the library together for the very first time. Watching them listen to stories, smile with excitement, and share those moments as a family reinforced the importance of creating opportunities for learning and connection beyond the classroom.



Vianka took her children to the library, reinforcing the value of learning outside of school

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**Seeing my children so excited and turning to look at me with smiles on their faces made my heart so full. Those moments reminded me that this is what we live for — our children's happiness and creating joyful experiences together.**

Her AP-OD facilitator also introduced Vianka's family to valuable community resources and new experiences, from educational outings to family events that strengthened their bond. Through those experiences, Vianka saw firsthand what it looked like when parents support one another and communities invest in families.



## The experience that inspired her to give back

Today, Vianka serves as an AP-OD facilitator at Homeboy Industries, where she welcomes parents with the same encouragement and support that once changed her own life. She says,

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It has been such a rewarding experience seeing parents come into class excited to learn. They want to know more, they ask questions, and they take what they've learned home to share with their children and loved ones.

For Vianka, every session is an opportunity to plant seeds that will continue growing long after the program ends.

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I'm excited to see the outcome — to see the fruits of the love parents are putting into learning more for their families.



Certified in the AP-OD Fourth Edition and experienced in facilitating the Third Edition, Vianka sees each session as an opportunity to plant seeds that help families grow and thrive.

## Opening doors for more families

When asked what she would say to parents considering AP-OD, her answer is simple.

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I would absolutely recommend AP-OD. No matter your educational background, there is something valuable for everyone. It helps build stronger connections with your children, strengthens families, and creates opportunities for a brighter future.

Vianka's story reflects the heart of AP-OD: when parents are equipped with knowledge, encouragement, and community, they don't just transform their own families; they become leaders who help open doors for others. Her journey from parent participant to facilitator is a powerful reminder that every family has the potential to create lasting change, one generation at a time.

**Mission:** Homeboy Industries provides hope, training, and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated people, allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community.

For more information, visit [homeboyindustries.org](https://homeboyindustries.org) or follow them at:   