

Buckner Family Pathways empowers single mom to dream again

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MIDLAND—Sitting in a shelter for abused women was never in Michaela Saucedo's plans. But that's exactly where she found herself, her young daughter and her soon-to-be-born son.

"I had big dreams," she said. "I wanted to be in the Peace Corps. I wanted to help others. I wanted to have my own business. Life just gets in the way. Things happen. Me and my kids hit rock bottom. I just kept thinking there has to be something. Then I found out about Buckner."

The Buckner Family Pathways program in Midland is designed to help single parents strengthen their families and reduce barriers to self-sufficiency such as lack of education and life skills. Buckner provides families affordable housing and childcare so they can achieve their vocational and educational goals. As a result, parents can attain better-paying jobs so they can support themselves and their families.

Through the program, parents learn about themselves and how to strengthen their families. Parents work through issues they may have encountered. As parents grow as individuals, families grow stronger and closer together.

Family Pathways mothers connect to form a deep, encouraging community. They help care for each other's children. They pick each other up and push their friends to fight through difficult times. The moms come from different backgrounds, but they all want the same thing: "We're all just trying to do better for each other," Saucedo said.

“The best thing about the program is having a home, having stability for your kids,” she added. “When you don’t have a roof over your kids’ heads and you don’t have food, that’s your main worry.”

Saucedo and her children now have security. They have a routine. And they enjoy it. Saucedo’s daughter, Layla, and son, Malachi, see their mom studying for classes at Midland College and are inspired to study for school as well.

Saucedo is on schedule to earn her associate’s degree in May. After that, she plans to work on her bachelor’s degree. One day, she hopes to own a daycare. She cares deeply about children and wants to see them succeed.

“Michaela came in, and she was very withdrawn,” said Family Pathways in Midland Program Director Anna Rodriguez. “Now, her attitude has completely changed. She’s an empowered, determined woman who has set goals and is ready for what life has in store. With the help of counseling and hard work, she’s blossomed.”

Saucedo started in a place she never wanted to be. But a call to Buckner was the first step in making her dreams come true.

“Family Pathways is your stepping stone to where you want to be,” she said.