

Family finds encouragement at Buckner Family Hope Center

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DALLAS—Tilia Sanchez volunteers at Burnet Elementary School in Dallas whenever she can. She wants to make the school the best it can be for every student, including her children.

So, it was no surprise she was part of a special event at the school, but she was surprised to encounter someone new. He was standing next to a small table smiling politely, shaking hands and handing out brochures.

Sanchez accepted one of them, which detailed the launching of a Buckner Family Hope Center in the area to strengthen families. The center would offer job skills, parenting, Bible studies and entrepreneurial classes.

Sanchez was intrigued. Maybe she'd check it out, she thought.



Tilia Sanchez learned she had Stage 5 renal disease. When she began attending a class at the Buckner Family Hope Center, she found support and encouragement. (Buckner Photo / Mark Sandlin) Then her world imploded.

“When I was 14, I was diagnosed with a polycystic kidney disease,” she said. “This disease took my mother and my grandmother. This year, I was diagnosed as being in Stage 5, final renal disease. As you can imagine, it was very big news for me.”

During the next few weeks, Sanchez tried to hide from the rest of the world. Often sitting in the dark, she avoided her friends and found herself spiraling in despair.

“I just wanted to be at home crying, asking myself, ‘Why?’” she said. “All the memories of my mom going through this disease came to me. I didn’t want to do anything with the outside world, to be honest. But I had great friends who lifted me up and practically dragged me to the first class. I enjoyed it. I could see (the teacher) helping me psychologically, coping with it.”

Encouragement during a tough time

The same man she met when he was distributing brochures led her first class—Ricardo Brambila, director of the Family Hope Center at Bachman Lake. She found the class full of energy and encouragement, and she wanted more.

Eventually, Sanchez took three classes at the Hope Center. Buckner staff invested in her, helping her look for the positive aspects of her life. They prayed for and with her. They even gave her a Bible.

“Tilia came in right after incredibly difficult news about her illness,” Brambila said. “She’s so smart and such a hard worker. She just needed some encouragement to get through a tough time.”

Sanchez found her spirits lifted. Despite her medical situation, she was pushing forward for herself and her family. When she began taking a class about how to start a business, she knew she found what she and her

husband, Ricardo, were missing.

'This is our time'

He had been part of home construction teams for years and wanted to start his own business with his wife, but they never quite knew how.



Tilia Sanchez discusses ways to improve her family's life with Buckner Family Coach Juan Valdez. (Buckner Photo / Mark Sandlin) "The opportunities for financial information got me," she said. "My daughters are growing. They need more space. We need more space. Sometimes, we're in a financial bind where we can't afford something better."

She sensed it was an opportune time for her family to start a business. For three weeks, they cut every expense they could, even going to a church food pantry for food, so they could save enough money to purchase the tools needed for a construction business.

The family was buoyed in the efforts by knowing Buckner staff believed in them. With the help of Buckner, the family knew they would succeed.

"We needed somebody to believe in us," Sanchez said. "We needed somebody to push us. When I went to that class, (Brambila) told me what I

needed to hear. I came home and told my husband, 'This is our time.' In three weeks, we started our own business."

The business is growing each day. Ricardo Sanchez and his staff work from sunrise to sunset constructing homes, particularly in the far northern suburbs of Dallas. The business' success has alleviated the financial stress upon his family.

"I can finally say we can pay our rent and not have to worry about stretching \$100 a week," Tilia Sanchez said. "I can finally tell my girls it's Saturday, and I can take them somewhere. That means a lot to me."

'Their future is bright'

The story of the Sanchez family is exactly what the Hope Center is trying to do across the Bachman Lake area of Dallas.

"Tilia and Ricardo have worked hard, learned new skills and applied them well," Brambila said. "Their future is bright. Their children's futures are bright. Hope truly shines here."

Tilia Sanchez still struggles with her illness. She's waiting on a kidney transplant and takes 20 pills a day. But she looks forward to each day with a new belief in herself.

"I can now set goals for myself that I know I can accomplish because I have great people that help me with them," she said. "Before that, even though I can do things for myself, sometimes you need that guidance."