New director has passion to serve kids

Former Community Action Partnership leader retires

By Elsa Mejia

The new executive director for the Community Action Partnership of Madera County said she took over the post to ensure the organization stays on track in its strategic planning.

“We were all invested in creating our objectives,” said Mattie Mendez, who has worked for the organization for nearly two decades. “We were in the beginning of assigning objectives and initiatives when MJ Nabor announced that she was retiring. I really wanted us to stay the course and in order to do that I needed to apply.”

Nabor, who served as the executive director for more than two decades, retired on July 29.

The strategic plan which spans over a 10-year period, from 2016 to 2020, focuses on strengthening the organization by helping employees reach their full potential.

“We want to ensure we provide our employees with the support, resources and the knowledge of what is needed to move up within the agency,” said Mendez. “So here we’re providing the employees’ knowledge and skills to do their job but also to let them know that there are other jobs within the agency they may qualify for.”

Other goals include “community partnering, operational excellence and premier programs and customer service.”

“All the planning and work is for one ultimate objective: to help people become self-dependent and economically stable.

“Our agency has a lot of educated, dedicated and compassionate employees that really work hard to change the lives of the families and children that we serve,” said Mendez.

Programs under MCCAP include Victim Services, Head Start, Community Services, Community Outreach and Advocacy, and Child Care and Development.

Before joining the group in June of 1994, Mendez worked as an office manager for Palm Village Nursing Home in Reedley and for Beverly Enterprises in several Fresno County locations.

SEE MENDEZ, PAGE A2

Mendez

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Mendez started working as a health specialist for Fresno Migrant Head Start, which is run by CAPMC. In May 2004, she obtained her bachelor’s degree in child development and became an education specialist. In the winter of the following year, she accepted the Head Start director position for Madera Regional and Migrant Head Start.

Mendez gives much credit to her former co-worker Inez Rodriguez, who was the director of the Fresno Migrant Head Start in 1999, for inspiring her to pursue a career in child development.

“She sat down with me and asked me what my passion was and I said I wanted to serve children. I wanted to make sure that every child had a safe place to be during the day,” said Mendez. “She was instrumental in me working in this capacity. She was my mentor for this role.”

Mendez was raised in Reedley where her parents, Joe and Margaret Ybarra, worked in the fields. She would join them picking grapes, she said. She attended Reedley College and returned to California State University, Fresno, in 2002.

She has two daughters, one son and five grandchildren. Mendez has been married to her husband Angel for 32 years.

“My family is hard-working and dedicated to serving others,” said Mendez. “We’re never afraid to dream of the possibilities that one can obtain through hard work.”