



OUR

Promise FEATURES

Integrity - Perseverance - Inclusivity - Innovation - Excellence



Mayra Munoz: Bringing Care and Connection to West Valley

For this month's Promise Feature, we visited West Valley to highlight the work of Autism teacher Mayra Munoz, who has been with the program since it first began ten years ago. With over 20 years of experience in the field, Mayra has grown into not only a teacher, but also a mentor and leader who has helped build the autism program into what it is today.

At the Heart of the Program

Autism teacher Mayra Munoz sees the classroom as more than a workplace. It's where her two decades of experience, personal family ties, and her passion for students all come together.

For the past ten years, she has been at the heart of our District's autism program, working with different staff members to help it grow from just a handful of classrooms into what it is today.

"At the start of the program we had four classrooms, two pre-formal and two elementaries," said Mayra. "In just 9 years we've grown to ten classrooms."

Each day at West Valley, Mayra leads her classroom with the support of her six staff members who she calls her work family. "I can't do my job without them," said Mayra. "They truly have the biggest heart for these kiddos, and we treat them like our own."

Together, Mayra and her staff focus on helping children learn to communicate, which Mayra calls the number one goal of the program.



For many students, challenges come from not being able to express their needs, wants, or feelings. “I love seeing their eyes light up when something finally clicks and they make eye contact with me like, ‘Oh, you get me,’” said Mayra.

In addition to teaching in the classroom, Mayra mentors new autism teachers in our District and serves as West Valley’s 504 Coordinator, SST Coordinator, and PBIS Tier 2 Lead. Each of these responsibilities ensures that students across the District receive the support they need.

From creating 504 plans for medical needs to coordinating SST meetings for those struggling in the classroom. As PBIS Tier 2 Lead, she also brings teachers, behaviorists, and specialists together to ensure students receive the right supports.

With two nephews on the autism spectrum, Mayra has seen firsthand the importance of strong, compassionate support systems. “I love the teamwork [that comes with this profession]. The collaboration and working closely with speech therapists, behaviorists, occupational therapists, adaptive PE teachers. It’s multi-leveled. I [also] love this age group too because they’re babies and they just want to be loved and they want to communicate with you.”

Mayra’s personal connection and passion shine through in everything she does, reminding students, families, and staff that they are understood, supported, and never alone on their journey.