

MOM MARGARITA

When she was 14-years old, Margarita was addicted to drugs and in and out of the juvenile justice system. During one stay, she discovered she was pregnant. Officers transferred her to a maternity home in Georgetown, Texas.

A director at the maternity home shared information about Nurse-Family Partnership with Margarita. The idea that a nurse would stay with her throughout her pregnancy and the first two years of her baby's life meant a lot to Margarita, and she joined the program. "I didn't know much about babies or pregnancies and didn't have a good support system. I thought a nurse could teach me what I'm supposed to do," says Margarita. She was soon introduced to her nurse, Desiree, a Nurse-Family Partnership nurse at Any Baby Can.

"It isn't always easy to talk to someone new and I didn't want to be judged as a teen mom. I was also worried about being in and out of juvie, but Desiree made me feel wanted," Margarita shares. She goes on to say that Desiree is a caring and loving person and they hit it off right away. Margarita found someone that she could share anything with – and that meant a lot to her. "She is like a second mom helping me out."

When Margarita's baby was born, her frequent crying frustrated Margarita. Desiree helped Margarita learn how to soothe her newborn by singing to her baby. Margarita shares, "It worked great!"

Margarita returned to high school and picks her baby up from daycare each day when school ends. She and her baby's father play in the park with their baby, and Margarita looks forward to continuing her education after high school. She's considering careers in nursing, juvenile counseling and corrections.



Margarita and her daughter.



NFP nurse Desiree, Margarita and her daughter.

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And when Margarita thinks about her two years of sobriety, she knows she will not slip back into her previous habits. "I used drugs as a way to cope with my problems, but once I found out I was pregnant everything changed. I got it all together. There is never a day when I want drugs. I cope now by writing in journals."

Desiree has seen Margarita's love for her baby flourish, and feels honored to support Margarita through this part of her life. "I am incredibly proud of Margarita's personal growth," says Desiree. "It's been inspiring to see Margarita blossom as a mother and as a woman. Throughout our time together, I have encouraged Margarita to be the author of her life and it's uplifting that Margarita wants to share her story and give hope to other teen moms. Margarita shared with me 'If I can do it, they can too!'," says Desiree.

"I enjoy walking alongside my clients and helping them learn to advocate for themselves and their babies," shares Desiree. "Margarita has turned her life around, achieved a lot of personal goals in a short amount of time, and has so much potential success still ahead of her," Desiree concludes.

As she continues the second year of the program, Margarita feels better about the next part of her life. She describes herself as more confident and supported, and encourages other first-time moms to call Nurse-Family Partnership if they are in a hard spot, frustrated or need help.