

FERNANDA & CHRISTOPHER'S STORY

Fernanda was 20 years old when she discovered she was pregnant in December 2020. She had been dating her partner, Christopher, for only three months. “My life at home with my mom and younger brother was disastrous. I felt scared and didn’t know what the next steps should be.”

The first thing Fernanda decided was to go back to high school to complete her education. When she was 18, Fernanda paused school to be the sole provider for her mom and brother. “I was close to finishing school, but I had to pay the bills,” she said. “Once I became pregnant, I knew I needed a diploma for better job options to create a stable future for my own family.”

Fernanda re-enrolled at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and looked for support through school resources. She said, “That’s when my school counselor recommended Nurse-Family Partnership.” LAUSD is the only school system in the country that offers Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) directly through the school district.

“I first met Fernanda through a telehealth visit when she was five months pregnant – this was during the height of the pandemic,” recalled NFP nurse



Californians Fernanda and Christopher first met nurse Christina (shown right) during the height of the COVID pandemic.



Fernanda and Christopher's 18-month-old daughter Valeria loves to play pretend with her stuffed animals.

Christina. “Her relationship with her mom was strained, but Fernanda and Christopher were fully engaged with the program during my visits.”

One of the first discussions Fernanda and Christopher had with Christina was how to find community resources for housing and employment. Christopher said, “The pandemic was preventing me from finding employment in my aviation mechanic field.” Also during this time, Fernanda was ordered to move out of her mother’s home. They met with Christina to complete a referral for housing assistance and job training. Soon, Christopher was working again and Fernanda focused on school.

“““

EVERY TIME WE HAVE SOMETHING EXCITING TO SHARE, CHRISTINA IS THE FIRST PERSON WE CALL.

-CHRISTOPHER



CHRISTINA IS THE BRIGHTEST RAY OF SUNSHINE IN THIS CRAZY LIFE OF OURS.

- FERNANDA

When she was seven months pregnant, Fernanda earned her high school diploma. While her mom declined her invitation to attend graduation, Christina joined Christopher in watching Fernanda walk in commencement. “She deserved to be celebrated because she earned that all by herself!” said Christina.

Unfortunately, Fernanda experienced health concerns during pregnancy. “After several hospital visits, I learned I had an anterior placenta,” she said. “Christina quickly set up a telehealth visit to explain what that meant. She shared her screen with diagrams to show that I wouldn’t easily feel the baby’s movement.”

Fernanda continued, “Then I learned I had gestational diabetes and that was worrisome because I knew it could affect the baby’s growth. Christina helped me with a food plan and Christopher made me healthy smoothies to control my sugar levels.” Christina added, “As a trusted resource, I wanted Fernanda to feel empowered in knowing what her body was doing.”

Fernanda and Christopher secured affordable housing just in time for their baby’s arrival. “Valeria was born on August 24, 2021, when I was 39 weeks pregnant,” Fernanda stated. Christopher added proudly, “I was so excited that Valeria was finally here and both my girls were healthy!”

But a month after being a new mom, Fernanda struggled with postpartum depression. She said, “I felt like I was drowning, especially without support from my mom.” Christopher noticed, “It wasn’t a good feeling when I would come home from work



Nurse Christina supported Fernanda through multiple health concerns during her pregnancy with Valeria.

and they would both be crying.” Fernanda opened up to Christina who shared, “She didn’t have to go through this alone. I supported Fernanda in connecting with a therapist and joining a postpartum group.”

Valeria will turn two this summer and loves playing with stuffed animals. Fernanda and Christopher are engaged and say, “We have thoughts of eloping but want to wait until our second child can walk.” That’s right! The couple are expecting their second child this August.

Now, both Fernanda and Christopher are employed by LAUSD, from the encouragement of Christina. Fernanda is a parent engagement coach. Christina said, “They are amazing examples of how to navigate challenges and celebrate milestones. It is an honor to be their NFP nurse!”

“Christina has been the support system that we didn’t know we needed,” said Christopher. Fernanda added, “Christina helped me become the mom I never knew I could be. When we reach new milestones, she is the first person we call.” Fernanda smiled and continued, “Christina is the brightest ray of sunshine in this crazy life of ours!”