



**Oregon State University**  
**Extension Service**  
**Marion County**

## **The OSU Juntos Program: Pointing High School Students towards Higher Education**

*By Yuridia Reyes, OSU Open Campus/Juntos Coordinator for Marion and Polk counties*



As a sophomore at Oregon State University I learned about OSU Extension's Open Campus and Juntos programs. Juntos (meaning "together" in Spanish) works to unite community partners to provide culturally-relevant programming for 6-12th graders and their parents. Juntos programming is designed to empower families with knowledge, skills, and resources to promote high school completion and encourage families to work together to gain student access to college. The goals of Open

Campus are to provide college access, degree completion support, and community engagement through a workshop series that delivers curriculum, monthly family nights, college visits, college-oriented programming, mentoring, advising, and clubs for student engagement.

From the beginning, I instantly fell in love with the program's mission to empower Latinx families around education and college access. I had never heard of a program that was centered around family engagement with a priority of including parents and students in the conversation of higher education. I saw myself and my family reflected in the values of the program. I remember wishing that a program like Juntos existed while I was in high school and we could have learned about college as a family.

During my time with Juntos, I began sharing my personal journey and experience as a Mexican-American and first-generation college student from a farm-working background in Woodburn during the family sessions. Every week, I would meet parents like my own, who had every intention to support their children in pursuing post-secondary education, but did not know where to begin. I met students who dreamed about college, but felt like it was not meant for them. This sparked my interest in outreach, and supporting first-generation students and their families in navigating the complexities of higher education.

I graduated from Oregon State University in 2019 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health, Human Development & Family Sciences, and a minor in Spanish. While working on my master's degree, I continued my work with Juntos through a graduate teaching assistantship and engaged in curriculum development, program evaluation, community engagement and continued to co-facilitate and coordinate the program in Linn and Benton counties. In June I graduated with a Master of Education in College Student Service Administration with a specialization in Transition and Habituation Support Services for Underrepresented Students.

I've had many favorite moments in my role with Juntos, but the most heart-warming is showcasing to students and their parents that higher education is meant for them, and possible. From reading award letters, to working through financial aid requirements, or just simply chatting about what's next in the journey towards graduation this is a rewarding program to be leading. The collaborative process with the student and their family is what makes it fun and fuels my motivation to advocate for students and their parents in higher education.

I'm excited to be back in my community and join OSU Extension as the Open Campus/Juntos Program Coordinator for Marion and Polk counties. My primary focus is to establish the Juntos program by engaging in collaboration, outreach, and programing with schools and community partners. I will be based at the Chemeketa Community Center in Woodburn where I can easily meet with students and offer one-on-one support and collaborate with community partners. My goal is to begin offering Juntos sessions this Fall through a mixture of in-person and virtual sessions. I'm excited to bring my acquired knowledge in higher education to work with the families in Marion and Polk counties to make their dreams of pursuing higher education a reality.

I have offices in Woodburn, Salem, and Dallas. If you want to talk to me about Juntos, here's how to reach me:

Email: [Yuridia.Reyes@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Yuridia.Reyes@oregonstate.edu)

Cell Phone: (503) 984-1432

Resources:

OSU Open Campus is a community-based education program at Oregon State University that seeks to provide local access to learning in order to address the unique educational needs of Oregon's diverse communities. For more information go to <http://opencampus.oregonstate.edu/>

OSU Open Campus Juntos Program - <http://opencampus.oregonstate.edu/programs/juntos/>