

University of South Florida Board of Trustees, The

Hillsborough HIPPY Parent Involvement Project



A few months ago, Natale enrolled her four-year-old son in the HIPPY program because she is committed to her children's education. Natale is a hard-working mother of 10 children, and due to the current housing crisis, she could no longer afford the rent where they lived. She had to move her family into a hotel room for what she thought would be a brief time until she could secure more affordable housing. She never anticipated the many roadblocks she would face in her search to secure a home for her family. As a result, they all lived in a hotel room for several months. Natale submitted many rental applications only to be denied repeatedly due to the size of her family.

Despite the homelessness, Natale continued to meet with her home visitor weekly and worked with her son on his HIPPY work each day. During one of those HIPPY home visits, she shared her struggles with her home visitor who referred her to Success 4 Kids and Families (S4KF) for support. One of S4KF's dedicated HIPPY case managers worked diligently to locate resources for Natale in the community. ASO funds were used to pay hotel expenses. At the same time, Natale negotiated terms with a company that agreed to rent to her and waited for paperwork to be processed.

Natale was integral in securing housing for her family. She made every call and attended every appointment with the resources that were provided. As a team and with ASO funds from the Children's Board, Natale and her family are living in a beautiful rental home. She has also been approved for a Habitat for Humanity home! Natale is looking forward to living in her seven-bedroom forever home in several months. Both agencies were determined to help this family during a challenging housing crisis. Natale's story is an excellent example of a successful collaboration. Shout out to Rhonda Gully, HIPPY Home Visitor, and Eliana Bello, S4KF Case Manager, on a job well done!