

WIB NEWS

FARMWORKERS RESOURCE FAIR

By Carol McHale - Program Development Manager, Job Link

On Sunday, March 3rd, HSD's Employment & Training Division and JobLink staff hosted its first-ever Farmworker Resource Fair in Windsor.

Job Link, along with EDB and CHD, coordinated the event along with our small but mighty planning team putting the event together in about two months.

The day was filled with surprises, starting with the last minute addition of the Mexican Consulate, who joined 44 agencies to provide resources and information to nearly 250 farmworkers and their families who attended, as well as 75 non-farmworkers and their families. Two food trucks provided free meals and Redwood Empire Food Bank provided free food and goods such as diapers. The E&T team raffled off gift cards for gas and essentials to get resources in the hands of farmworkers in our community.

Members of Danza Azteca Xantotl de Santa Rosa also blessed the event. County Administrator Christina Rivera, and Supervisors James Gore and Chris Coursey attended, along with HSD leadership. View the CBS News feature [here](#).



My Pathway Program Success Story:

Erik Perez Cortes Lands Full-Time County Position

By Pedro Guevara - Youth Coordinator

It is a beautiful sunny day in the Spring of 2023, Erik Perez Cortes is doing a hard day's work with his fellow Sonoma County Youth Ecology (SCYEC) crew members. Erik enjoys working outdoors on projects that will benefit his community, but he is looking for a change of pace and a different way to help people. He talks to his My Pathway Program (MPP) Case Manager about his career goals and learns of an Internship opportunity in the Job Link office that is only open to MPP participants. Erik does not have any prior office experience, but this opportunity aligns with his career pathway and interest in Social Services. After some encouragement from his case manager, Erik jumps at the opportunity to apply for the position. His case manager helps him apply and prepare for the interview, a few weeks later Erik finds himself putting on a different type of outfit in the morning because he is starting his first day with the County of Sonoma as an Intern. Erik is very excited and eager to learn about the different services that are offered at the Employment & Training division and how he will be contributing to the office. He starts off with entry-level tasks such as printing packets for clients and imaging documents for the Job Link Counselors. Erik is a quick learner and because the office is so busy he begins to take on more responsibility like answering calls/emails from the public, helping navigate customers in the Resource Center,



and assisting with the Job Link orientation workshops for prospective clients. Soon other teams at E&T, like General Assistance and SonomaWORKS are requesting Erik's assistance. He's always enthusiastic and willing to help and learn new tasks from his colleagues. "Erik has been helping with vital statistics requests and is doing a great job" said Kaela, a Supervisor on the SonomaWORKS team. In addition to his regular tasks, Erik participates on a Youth leadership panel for the Workforce Investment Board, a group of leaders in the community who represent business, industry, labor, education, and economic development. Erik mentions that this is out of his comfort zone, but he demonstrates great courage and talks about his experience in the My Pathway Program and ways to improve it for future clients.

Erik's friendly demeanor, hard work, and willingness to help the office where needed made him an asset to the E&T division. After 9 months of working and learning as an Intern, a full time Office Assistant position at E&T presented itself and Erik felt he was ready to take that next step in his career journey. Now when he stops by my desk in the mornings to give me a fist bump it is as a regular, full-time employee of the County of Sonoma. Way to go Erik!

David's Success Story with Job Link

By Nadia Venegas-French and Maureen Fifer

Amidst the tumultuous challenges brought forth by the pandemic, David Cruz found himself unexpectedly thrust into the role of family barber. What began as a necessity soon transformed into a profound calling, igniting a passion within him that he never knew existed. As he wielded the clippers and scissors with care and precision, David discovered an innate talent and a deep-seated desire to pursue barbering professionally.

In June of 2022, David's journey took a pivotal turn as he joined forces with Job Link. With their unwavering support and guidance, David seized the opportunity to enroll in the prestigious Ca Barbering and Cosmetology Apprenticeship Program, setting his sights on a brighter future.

However, the path to success was far from easy. David encountered numerous obstacles along the way, from mastering intricate techniques to navigating the complexities of the industry. Yet, fueled by his determination and unwavering perseverance, he tackled each challenge head-on, refusing to let adversity hinder his progress.

After months of rigorous training and dedication, David's hard work finally paid off on February 29, 2024, when he proudly received his barbering license, a tangible testament to his commitment and skill.



Today, David stands as the proud proprietor of "Mendo Made Salon and Barbershop," a manifestation of his dreams realized through sheer determination and grit.

David's journey serves as a beacon of hope and resilience, inspiring others to persevere in the face of adversity and pursue their passions relentlessly. Here's to the beginning of a flourishing career, where every haircut is a testament to the triumph of passion and perseverance.

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(Continued)

THANK YOU to our team contributors:

- **Anahi Ruiz**
- **Cynthia Castillo**
- **Dan Hernandez**
- **Dominca Plancarte**
- **Katie Greaves**
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- **Lilian Vieyra Torres**
- **Lupe Castaneda**
- **Nadia Venegas-French**
- **Sahari Martin**
- **Sam Rosvold**
- **Veronica Aguilar**

THANK YOU to our planning team:

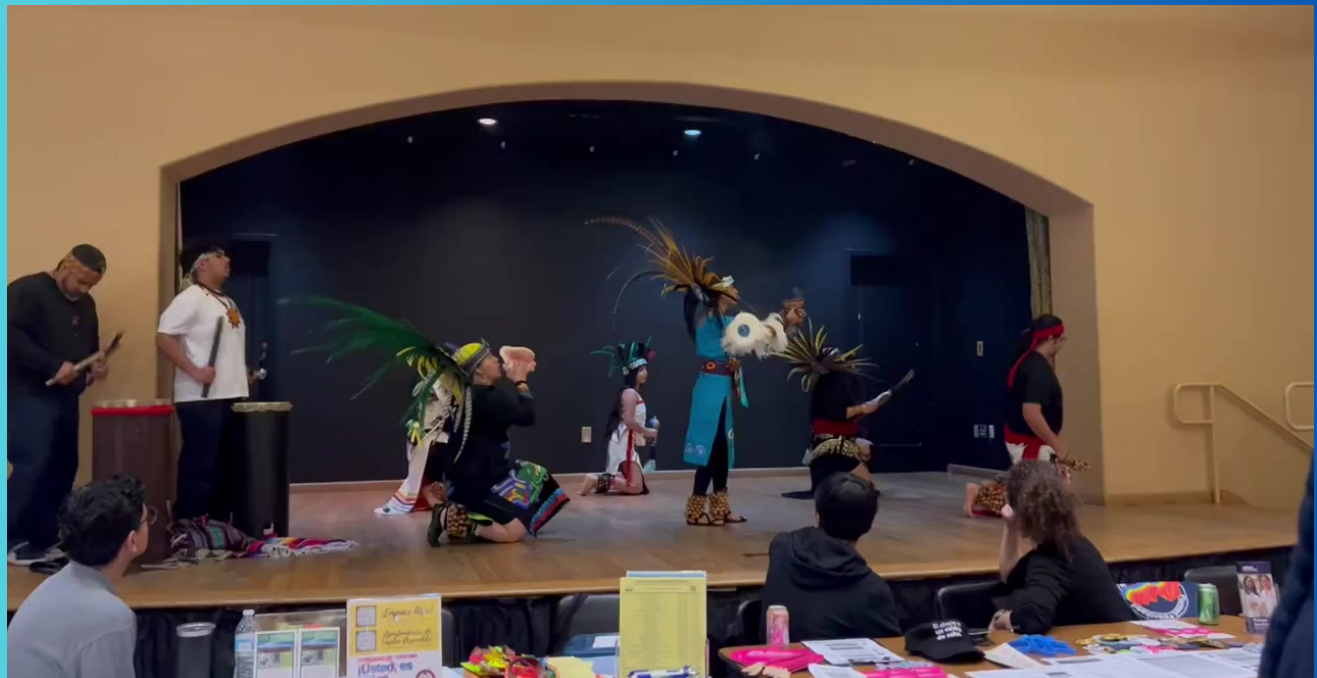
- **Vanessa Hernandez**, Job Link
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L-R in orange: Leticia Mendoza, Sam Rosvold, Cynthia Castillo, Domenica Plancarte, Sahari Martin, Nadia Venegas-French



Community members visiting sponsor tables



Danza Azteca Xantotl de Santa Rosa