

CARE Grant 2024

Student Recipient Testimonials

The CARE Program is geared toward EOPS students who are single parents receiving CalWORKs/cash aid and have one or more children in the household. CARE aims to assist students to increase their educational skills, enhance their employability, becoming more confident and self-sufficient, and encourage success with the transition from cash aid to financial independence.

The CARE program offers grants each semester to eligible students participating in the current term. Eleven students have been chosen as recipients of this grant opportunity for Spring 2024. Each recipient received a \$2000 grant, the students have provided testimonials on how the CARE program assists them in their educational journey at BCC.

On behalf of the SPS team, we congratulate all eleven CARE grant recipients.

GRANT RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. STUDENT MUST BE A CONTINUING EOPS/CARE STUDENT.
2. STUDENT MUST BE IN PROGRAM "GOOD STANDING."
3. STUDENTS MUST BE REGISTERED IN 12 OR MORE UNITS WITH A 2.0 OR HIGHER GPA.
4. STUDENT'S UNMET NEED MUST BE GREATER THAN \$5,000.
5. STUDENT MUST BE FIRST TIME GRANT RECIPIENT.

Alejandra Avila

Continuing EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs Student Program of Study: COSMETOLOGY AS

My name is Alejandra, but I go by Ali. I am twenty-six years old and a single mother of three. My kids are ages five, three, and one. I am a first time college student aiming to get my cosmetology license but also completing my general education in order to receive an associates degree. I put this journey off for so long for multiple reasons. One of the main reasons is that I do not have family nearby which made me feel like I would not have the proper support system that I felt I needed. I was very intimidated on my first day on campus. The CARE program welcomed me with open arms and I felt ready to take on this academic year. They provide child care stipends, school supplies, grocery cards, benefits cards, book vouchers, CARE clothing, easily accessible counseling, and other things I am grateful that I am able to utilize. Book vouchers are provided each semester which is great considering I am taking other classes in between my main ones. The cards are such a huge help because I use them to buy diapers, wipes, clothing, and shoes for my little ones. I cannot even begin to express what a huge help this is, it is a huge load being taken off of my shoulders. The CARE program also has workshops which I think are great because you get to sit and socialize with people in similar situations. Everyone has a different approach when it comes to daily tasks and struggles and I like to hear and share solutions. These workshops also teach and introduce new skills that may be useful later on in life. Overall, I think the CARE program is amazing and makes my double life as a full-time mom and full-time college student easier. I definitely recommend this program to anyone and everyone. Thank you to the entire CARE staff, you guys are amazing, my children and I appreciate everything!





Brenda Topete

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: COSMETOLOGY AS

Dear EOPS/CARE program (Samera Kabir, Nora Aguayo, Griselda Montano, Mattie Mendibles, Brianna Garcia, and staff)

As a current EOPS/CARE student I have to say the CARE program has been a key component in my college experience, it has given me so many benefits and opportunities. As a single parent there are times when life can become challenging, or obstacles are encountered, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you for all the support and guidance. The encouragement and the feeling of being important is amazing. There are so many things I have learned from the workshops and conferences the program offers. For a student like me, it felt like a bunch of doors opened. The resources (access to counseling, priority registration, educational workshops, book vouchers, school supplies, laptop, daily meals and weekly pantry, weekly benefit cards) provide me with tools to succeed in my courses.

As a returning college student, I was afraid of this new chapter in life, but EOPS/CARE really helped me feel at ease and helped me become acquainted with the variety of resources and benefits of being a part of the program. They truly go above and beyond to make each student feel like they are important and never alone. Everyone in the program is very helpful, caring, supportive, friendly, understanding and encouraging. I am grateful for the program and the staff, especially Special programs specialist, Griselda who has looked out for me since day one. And has been an amazing person and friend through my Cosmetology journey.

The EOPS/CARE program has made me feel more confident in my college journey. I have made friends and met staff. I have received a greater understanding of college and the expectation and the importance of taking advantage of all the amazing resources available. I am a senior in Cosmetology and expect to graduate this year. Thank you to EOPS/CARE program and staff for making my educational journey one to remember.

Breauna Washington

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: COSMETOLOGY AS

Hello, my name is Breauna, or Bree for short. In 2022 I enrolled in the Cosmetology Program here at Barstow Community College. I was stressed because the program has so many required materials and books that are mandatory, and I was not sure I could afford to be in the program. So, I applied for EOPS to see if I could get any help or resources, and that was the best idea ever! I never knew EOPS/CARE could be so beneficial not until I started attending school at BCC. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and appreciative to be a recipient of the CARE grant. The EOPS/CARE program has been there for me every step of the way. With all of the help and assistance this program has provided me, it has made being a full-time student and full-time mother so much easier. CARE Program has helped me during my time at Barstow Community College so much: weekly grocery cards, transportation, diapers for my babies, and Walmart cards. It can get costly and tough trying to balance life as an adult and school but with EOPS/CARE by my side, I received book vouchers and tutors. Might I add, the staff is good at what they do and everyone in the office is always nice and respectful to me. The staff are like family. They understand you and if they can not help you, they will try their best to find a resource that can help. There's never been a time I walked out of the EOPS office unsatisfied. They go above and beyond. It's exactly what I needed to help push me through college. Being in the Cosmo Program, you are at the school from 8 am-4 pm but no worries, you can get your breakfast and lunch from the EOPS office. That is such a blessing when you're hungry and can't afford to eat out every day. Without this program, I may have given up by now. I am thankful to have a team on my side like EOPS/CARE.




Crystal Eames

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: LIBERAL ARTS AA



Before I went to school, I was lost on what I wanted to do with my life. I knew I wanted to help people, especially the elderly. So, I decided to further my education, so I knew Barstow Community College was the school for me. Then I was introduced to the Care Program, the best thing that could happen to me. Or anybody else for that matter, that wants to further their education. There is a lot of help and opportunity, with the Care Program. Like they help with books and school supplies. They also help you with benefit cards for doing workshops or meetings with the wonderful staff members. They even have meet and greets, so we can get the opportunity to meet our staff and the other students and Barstow Community College. We even played some great games to see how well we know our staff and the program. I even won some great gear from the games. Even for the holidays they invite you and your families out to the holiday events. I cannot speak for everybody else, but it always feels like home. I love when I call or even come in and they know everyone's name. It does not matter how big or small something we need help with, they always find the time to help us. There are requirements for this program: we must do an orientation, a mandatory staff meeting and two counseling meetings. We can do workshops for benefit cards, but they are not mandatory. To me the Care Program helps so much to help us succeed in life to make something of ourselves. They ask for so little in return, to me that is a program I am honored to be part of. Because of this program, I have the things I need to succeed with my career goals and to be able to help others. I am grateful for the Care program and all their help.





Cathy Rosales

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: PSYCHOLOGY AA

My name is Cathy Rosales, I'd like to share my incredible journey, a story of transformation, resilience, and the power of second chances. I am 41 years old, with three children, two of them adults and I have one 15-year-old to raise, and in addition I have three beautiful granddaughters. I became a mother at an early age (15) I faced so much judgment, doubt, and countless obstacles that seemed impossible to overcome. Despite the odds stacked against me, I was determined to prove everyone wrong. But as the years went by, I found myself slipping into a self-destructive cycle. I didn't finish high school, I was in one unhealthy relationship after another, pregnant with my second child at (19), struggling financially, and in and out of jail. Couldn't hold down a job and am now pregnant with my third child at (26) And battling addiction in the midst of it all for two long decades till I was (35), drugs and alcohol shackled my ambitions, clouded my judgment, and left my dreams shattered. I found happiness in temporary highs, believing they would fill the void within me. But with every passing day, that void only grew, swallowing me deeper into darkness. Today, I stand as a testament to the transformative power of perseverance and self-belief. I have learned that our past does not define us unless we allow it to. It is within our power to break free from the shackles of our mistakes and rebuild ourselves into something greater. Scared to death, I chose to accept this new phase in my life and fight every day to not return to what I was so familiar with. It was not easy, and the path to recovery was full of challenges. But with sheer willpower, therapy, and the support of loved ones, I began to rebuild my life bit by bit. A little over five years now clean and sober. It was during these years that I found redemption, both spiritually and mentally. Through my faith, I was able to regain my self-worth and find the strength to face the demons that had tormented me for so long. I enrolled in Adult ED, eager to get the education I had missed as a teen. It was a tough road, but I committed myself to my studies and graduated at (40 years old) showing myself and everyone else that it is never too late to chase your dreams. I did not stop there. I enrolled at Barstow Community College to major in Psychology, so I can help others just like me. Today I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences and express my deepest gratitude for the incredible programs at Barstow Community College, particularly the EOPS CARE Program. Let me tell you, CARE has been an absolute lifesaver for me. They've provided me with academic support, financial assistance, and encouragement every step of the way. As a single parent receiving public assistance, the CARE program has been especially helpful in helping me transition from dependency to self-sufficiency through education and training. Thanks to CARE, I've had access to priority registration, personalized counseling, textbook loans, workshops, transportation assistance, childcare support, and so much more. These resources have made all the difference in my educational journey, helping me overcome financial barriers and thrive in my studies. I can't express enough how grateful I am for the opportunities these programs have given me. The staff at EOPS CARE have been incredibly supportive, and I wouldn't be where I am today without their help. Their dedication and commitment to helping students like me succeed are truly commendable. In conclusion, my journey with The EOPS CARE Program has been nothing short of transformative. They've provided me with the support and resources I needed to pursue my dreams and create a better future for myself and my family. I hope my story serves as inspiration for others facing similar challenges, showing them that with the right support, anything is possible. Thank you!

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Desiree Harris

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT DEGREE OF STUDY: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS

Hello, my name is Desiree Harris. I am currently attending Barstow Community College to achieve my bachelor's degree in child development. After successfully completing my two years here I will transfer to Cal State San Bernardino to finish my last two years where I will receive my degree. I am currently completing my second semester at Barstow Community College.

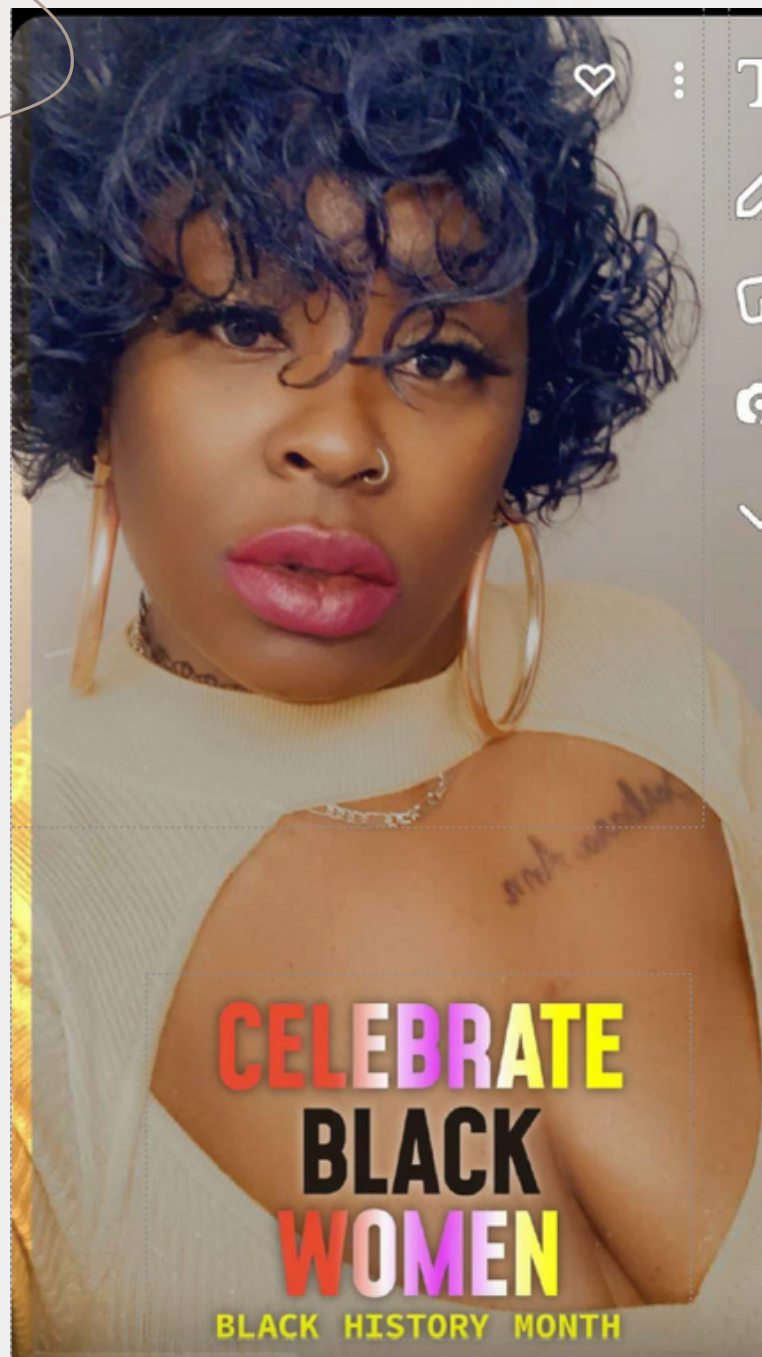
I am 43 years old and recently became a single mom with three little girls ages 11, 10, and 6. I also have a 24-year-old son who resides in Arizona. My life overall has not always been great. I went through a lot of unexpected circumstances that discouraged me from wanting to achieve and be successful. As a kid growing up, I had always had the dream of being a nurse. I got older and of course that changed. I had my son at age 19 and he was the only child for 13 years up until I had my oldest daughter in 2012. Then came my middle daughter in 2013 and my baby girl in 2017. My youngest girl dealt with a lot of medical issues as a baby. That part of my life was very traumatizing. She spent Christmas in the hospital of 2017 at St Mary's Medical center in Apple Valley CA where I resided at the time. She was rushed by ambulance to Loma Linda Hospital on one occasion and on the second occasion was airlifted in a helicopter to Loma Linda Hospital where she ended up in ICU. The feeling of seeing your little one airlifted to a trauma center and knowing you cannot ride along to be with your child is a heartbreaker. I honestly thought I was going to lose my baby. It was that serious. By the grace of God, she made it through, and she is a healthy 6-year-old beautiful little girl today.

Raising three little girls is a big responsibility and a challenge as well. They require attention and time which is something I try to stay consistent with. It was hard trying to better myself without the true support that was needed. I left an 11-year relationship and decided to move to Barstow with my daughters. I made the move and decided that I wanted more out of life. I wanted to create a better future for my girls and myself. I enrolled myself into Barstow Community College. It was one of the best decisions I have chosen to make within my life. Shortly after starting the fall semester of 2023, I was informed of all the resources available for low-income students and families. One of those resources being the EOPS/CARE program. This program has helped me with vouchers for books that are required for my classes, unlimited school supplies, and they have an awesome staff that are dedicated to meeting your needs and making sure your school journey is successful. They also offer benefit cards to eligible students for gas, food, and other personal needs. Christmas of 2023, they had a toy giveaway for families with children. My kids were able to receive a gift and food too. There are so many helpful resources available to new students. This program has been great for me and my children. I was so undecisive about what I wanted to do with the pieces of my life. I thought about it for a while and deciding to go back to school to further my education was the best decision I could have made. Thank you to the staff of EOPS/CARE for helping me to have a successful and bright future!

Dwanya Jones

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT

DEGREE OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY AA



Hello everyone, this has been the best decision I have made thus far. Where do I begin? One day I decided to make a change and return to school to better my life with a career change. For so many years I wanted to return to school at the time just was not right. My focus was raising my children and providing for my family, so I stayed busy with work and all the extra activities my children had for me. So, with losing my job and now my children all grown it is time for me to accomplish the goal that I have always wanted to accomplish. I did not know how but I knew it had to begin. Recently moving to Barstow I made my decision to enroll in community college. I walked into admissions and had a few questions, but by the time I left the office, I had completed my registration and my financial aid and had scheduled to meet with a counselor. I was so pleased with myself. My classes were beginning in August, and I asked myself if I was ready and if I was not, that was too bad. I had so many questions, but I did not want to seem like I was a beginner. I was so afraid and the lady in the admissions office said there were many people there to help So, they sent me to Building K. When I arrived at building K I met with Mrs. Grace she Was so helpful and so encouraging She explained the EOPS Care to me and told me if I needed anything just to let her or anyone in the office know and they will help me I felt so relieved and I knew she cares and was willing to help me towards my goal I didn't quite know how to do MLA format on my very first essay and she gave me the tools to accomplish my essay. I had to come into the office to meet with Mrs. Grace on another occasion and she ask me how it turned out and I told her I did wonderful, and she told me "See I knew you could." The smile she gave me I was like yes, I can. On another occasion, I came into the office they had just finished the very first produce market I had come in with a question Mrs. Grace was like put your book bag down and she handed me a bag and she said put whatever you need in this bag and she also gave me another book bag with many school supplies I was so grateful for them in the office the staff is so helpful and encouraging. Maddie is another amazing positive force within the office, encouraging me to never give up and her heartfelt advice and suggestions if I feel a little overwhelmed with certain situations. We all have some amazing support within this program, and I would not trade it at all.



Jasmine Barrow

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS



They say it takes a village. However, they never specified who would actually be apart of that village. Maybe because most people would assume it would be family, as in blood relatives. The care program is that for me, they are apart of my village. Not only do they offer free services such as weekly meals and benefit cards, counseling, first dibs on job offers, visiting another school, or anything related to school events. Also, they encourage me to stay on top of my college plans while informing me on opportunities that's available. As a returning student and a single mother, at that, the EOPS/CARE program helps me tremendously. This program alone has made the transition into college easier. The counseling session have helped me stay on top of my college plans and to consider other options such as which school I want to transfer to and the best way to achieve that goal.

Not to long ago I was facing hardship with my rent, mentally there was so much going on. At one point in time, I thought school was not going to last long for me. It broke me for a little while because I graduated high school at age 15 years old, I was ready for college. So, for me to start and possibly have to stop, yeah it shattered me a little bit. Then I was informed about the care program and honestly this program is the balance I needed to keep me afloat while in school. Shortly after being enrolled, I was referred to another program that help with rent and therapy. The family events EOPS/Care have played a part, in me feeling like the program is a huge part of my village. The energy is always positive and helpful. Any problems I have encountered, a team member from the program always goes above and beyond. I feel seen as a student and mother.

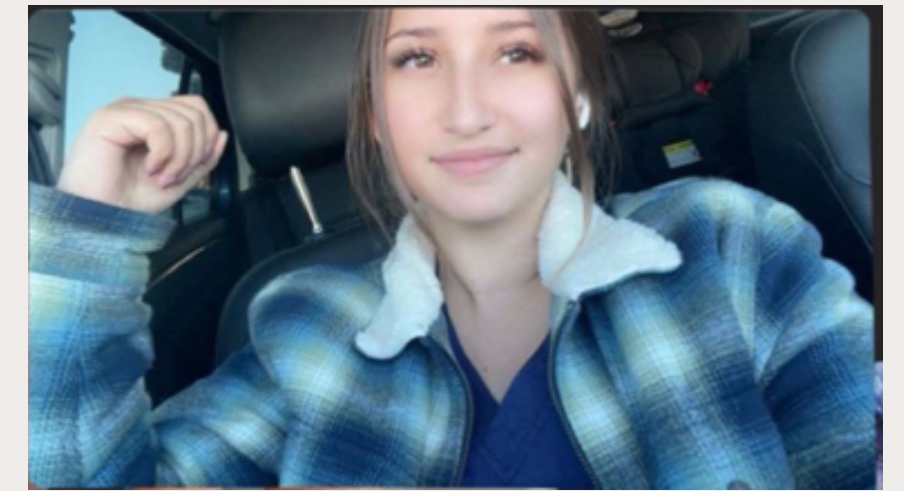
While enrolled in this program, I have yet to feel alone. Any confusion I had about transferring schools, tutoring, or filling out applications they have referred me to the right person. In a sense this program helped me gain my confidence back. Even when I walk into the SPS building, everyone is always smiling, happy, helping, and open. The safe space that's provided there is unmatched. The counselors are super warming, and compassionate. As of recently I have been going through a lot of family problems and have missed a few appointments. Instead of the counselor getting upset, they were very understanding, compassionate, and made me feel safe enough to open up. For someone like me that's not an easy thing to do. But it happened because these programs don't even really feel like that honestly, its more of a school family to me.

In my opinion, EOPS/Care are programs that should be offered in a lot of colleges. Mainly because they are the true definition of wanting to see people be successful. That's because they actually try to find the resources to help an individual grow as a student and person. Not to mention the help they offer allows a student to really focus on succeeding in school and not being overwhelmed by their circumstances. Plus, with this program you will become exposed to different situations/backgrounds that'll better help you in the future. Now I can confidently say that I am ready when it comes to transferring schools next year fall.

Mercedes Renteria

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT

DEGREE OF STUDY: COSMETOLOGY AA



My name is Mercedes Renteria; I'm a single mom to a two-year-old girl. We live in Oak Hills area and after having my daughter, I wanted to go to school to become a cosmetologist. I have always had a passion for art, and I feel like I would do really good with nails. Plus, I've watched my mom go through cosmetology school when I was little, and she was able to make a great living from it. I loved how my mom was able to be so involved with everything I did growing up and that's something I want to do with my daughter, I want to be there for all the core memories that she'll have growing up, but also make a good living for us. I had heard about Barstow Community College, cosmetology program being online. I thought it would be a great opportunity to save money in childcare. So, I signed up to get my cosmetology license and my associate degree. I started my course in the fall of 2022, and I had then found out that the cosmetology course was going to be in person starting that semester. I was very worried on how I was going to afford gas from oak Hills to Barstow every day due to the course being in person. I then found out that my textbooks in total, were going to be \$400, and my cosmetology kit was going to be \$785. I didn't know how I was going to continue going to school and afford my education. One of my instructors had mentioned about the CARE program, she said that it's for students who are single parents. So, I signed up and accepted less than two days. And CARE team explained all the benefits and requirements of being a part of the program and for being a full-time student, taking 18 units a semester as a single mom, it's not hard to keep up with all the requirements to stay in the program and get ALL the amazing benefits. They are very organized and are so helpful to any questions you have. The program has helped me with the cost of school textbooks, school supplies, school kits, grocery cards, childcare, and I was just made aware that they are going to help me pay for my cap and gown for my graduation. Once you are accepted into EOPS, which is another great program. You are automatically screened for CARE. In addition to EOPS requirements, a CARE student must be 18 years or older. Is a single parent, head of household, with a dependent child and is currently receiving cal-works aid for themselves or their child/children. To retouch on some of the benefits for CARE are weekly \$25 grocery cards and or every workshop you attend you get \$100 either in grocery, gas or Walmart benefits cards. You have to attend two counseling meetings and one EOPS/CARE staff meeting. After attending those three meetings, you receive benefits cards too. And there's so many more benefits that come along with the CARE program. I highly recommend filling out an application to be a part of a program. They have really helped me succeed in my education. And hopefully by me writing my experience will motivate others to take advantage of this opportunity.



Noemi Gamez

CONTINUING EOPS/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: PSYCHOLOGY AA

The CARE Program has been a huge part of my success in my college experience. As a single mother, I have found it challenging to find a place where I belong and feel accepted. This program is it! Everyone is so welcoming and helpful. I have always said that my goal was to return to school and start a career that aligned with my passion for helping others but work and kids have always been my priorities. Now that my children are older, I decided to try this college thing. I was overwhelmed with the amount of information and time management that went into juggling everything. I know that I would not have been able to continue in college had CARE staff not been there to support me. At times, it was as if they were practically holding my hand every step of the way. Weekly emails remind me of upcoming events or opportunities, encouraging me to try new things and fully immerse myself in this experience. I have been able to attend conferences and tour universities because of this program, which has motivated me to want to continue with my education and be able to transfer into the best college that will suit my and my family's lifestyles. The services available to CARE students go above and beyond what you would expect in school. I know that if I need help with anything, the staff is always readily available and will help in any way possible. The counselors are always happy to help me choose my classes, ensure I stay on track, and suggest ideas. The staff guides me on how to navigate the school site and encourages me to take advantage of the tutoring offered onsite or online. I have taken advantage of this resource often. Another huge benefit is that in this program, we receive a \$500 book voucher to help purchase our books for the semester. This has been such a blessing because, as we all know, college books are not cheap! I could go on and on about this program's opportunities, but I would encourage all students to see if they qualify, try, and take advantage of everything it offers. I can confidently say that I have become more successful because of this opportunity to be part of the Care Program.

Rita Orozco

CONTINUING EOP/CARE & CALWORKS STUDENT
DEGREE OF STUDY: PSYCHOLOGY AA



I, Rita Lee Orozco, am a full-time student as well as a full-time employee. I began Barstow Community College as an Adult Education Program student who started college first and then one week later graduated high school with the BCC Adult Education. The E.O.P.S/Care Program has assisted me in so many ways that I do not even know where to begin. I was living in a shelter located here in the city of Barstow, this is a result of a disease I contracted in my life known as addiction. I quit school at 13 years old due to active drug/alcohol usage, and in my recovery, decided to pick up my education where I left off.

Soon after my student status became active, I was transitioned from the homeless shelter and housed as a BCC college student in the New Hope Village Program. In this transition, I gained visitation to see my two children. I was accepted into the E.O.P.S/Care Program and issued gas cards and food benefit cards weekly. These cards helped me get to Victorville and back to pick my kids up for our weekend visits at my New Hope Village residence. The gas cards also helped me to drive my kids back to their placement in a timely manner. In these moments of progress, I every now and then suffer the uneasiness of temptation, which leaves me with feelings of inadequacy.

Although my disease is in remission which is only possible without the use of drugs and or alcohol, there is no cure for me. If I use and or drink again, I will die, and the toughest part of my sickness is I endure temptations. I feel shame within myself when I feel these enticements. I have a spontaneous and happy-go-lucky type of charisma that I was born with. In my lifetime I have been dual diagnosed with mental disorders and the disease of addiction. The E.O.P.S/Care staff help make me comfortable and have been my incentive that I can step up to my educational goal and get my associate in psychology.

I go back to the K-building because they help me better understand how to utilize my school and my benefits as a student. The E.O.P.S/Care program continues to email me and update me on all the schools' fun activities. I am just learning to use the computer more and more and I try to keep up with all the information available to me. I am not ever treated differently due to my age or my diagnosis. There are days I stop by the K-building just for the conversation I get to have with the staff. Everyone has been more to me than just there to help with all the programs available.

I have a career goal to become a drug and alcohol counselor. I want to reach back into the depths of hell to help those who know the desperation of using and drinking even when we got a mind to quit. The E.O.P.S/Care staff have been a strong example of how to be and treat others. I unfortunately have been a bit undone from a lifetime of active addiction and admit that I am renovating from within. I embrace the new me and continue to grow and learn daily with the help of the program.