



Can a passion for helping others be passed down from one generation to the next? According to one mother-daughter social work duo, absolutely! Meet Ruth and Hillary Villarreal, both of whom recently earned masters' degrees in the field of social work, graduating with honors from California State University, Long Beach.

Ruth began working at DCFS in 2002 when Hillary was just 10 years old. As Hillary watched the trajectory of her mom's career, she realized how much she admired the work. Then, when the time came in 2015, after Hillary graduated from college, she joined the DCFS family.

Both women pushed one another to do their best, and together they decided to pursue advanced degrees guided by the belief that enhancing their knowledge and professional skill sets would help them better serve children and families.

The Villarreal's are among 35 DCFS employees who earned master's degrees in social work this year. Through the Education and Licensure Section, DCFS provides learning opportunities and assists employees in furthering their educational goals.

All the while, this type of professional support helps the organization nurture a culture of workforce excellence that ultimately results in improved service delivery and better outcomes for Los Angeles County families.

This graduation season, DCFS also is proud to celebrate the educational achievements of 359 foster youth who earned high school diplomas. Of those graduates, more than half will pursue college degrees and have earned scholarships. Youth in foster care face unique challenges that don't always impact non-foster youth. These young men and women, however, have overcome significant obstacles to achieve academic success.

DCFS congratulates these young scholars, many first-generation college students, for exhibiting strength and determination in pursuit of this important academic milestone. Their future looks bright and DCFS social workers will continue to support them on their journey to success.

Join us in sending a special note of congratulations to Brianna who will be attending the University of Southern California in the fall. Follow us on social media as we highlight foster youth graduates all week!



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