

What RESILIENCE Looks Like...

☑ Mentors & Helping Others

Naomi Petersen is a Program Coordinator who runs the Independent Living Program (ILP) at Nexus Youth & Family Services for Amador County.

"I'm very passionate about the work that I do because, as the ILP Coordinator at Nexus, I get to be the person I didn't have in my life while I was growing up."

Naomi was placed in foster care when she was just one year old and spent the rest of her childhood in group homes and foster homes until she aged out at eighteen. After graduating, she began volunteering at the Contra Costa Employment & Human Services Department, working with Don Graves - the ILP Coordinator - and his team. "Don Graves was the most influential person when I was part of EHSD. He always had a positive attitude and he was full of encouragement to help us push through life,"

says Naomi. "I also remember Tim Hamp and Alfred Arroyos being part of the EHSD team. I am forever grateful for their guidance." Don shared, "Naomi's immense sense of community and her willingness to give back is admirable, her dedication and volunteer time served our program well."

As a teenager, Naomi became a mother. But, unlike three previous generations of women in her family, she was able to break a pattern of neglect and loss. "The last three generations of women in my family have either given up their children to adoption or their kids have been taken away. I'm the first one to have kids and raise them," says Naomi, who is now married and has a 22-year old daughter and 14-year old twin sons.

"My goal is to work closely with the young people of Amador County who attend my ILP classes, encourage them to move forward, problem solve, and make healthy choices no matter what their circumstances."



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