Brittiney’s Story:  
From Homeless to Helping the Homeless

A year ago, Brittiney had given up. She was not excited about being pregnant with her third child and says, “I was not in good shape physically; I didn’t care, and I hadn’t cared for years prior to that. I just gave up.”

She and her boyfriend of nine years had recently moved their family from North Carolina to California to be closer to Brittiney’s family. “We were living with a cousin, and their expectation—and ours as well—was to quickly transition out, but we didn’t realize how big a difference there was in renting requirements from state to state,” she says.

Fast forward to this family of five now settled in a home of their own. Not only is Brittiney employed, but she has found her “calling” in her work at a local homeless shelter. There, she emphasizes resources and support, just as she received when she enrolled in Butte Baby Steps and met her home visitor, Margarita.

Home visiting pairs pregnant women and new moms with a trained professional who provides coaching, education and connection to resources to offer the best possible start for babies of at-risk families.

Brittiney joined the program when she was just a few months pregnant, and the empowered woman of today is not the participant Margarita first met. “In the beginning, she appeared very depressed, not caring about herself,” the home visitor says. “She had very low self-esteem. She did not appear to be excited about the pregnancy.”

What is Home Visiting?

Home visiting is a voluntary program that pairs pregnant and newly parenting women with a nurse or trained professional who makes regular visits in the participant’s home to provide guidance, coaching and access to prenatal care and other health and social services. Home visiting is preventive intervention focused on promoting positive parenting and child development, with the ultimate goal of strengthening families and communities.
Home visitors work with their clients until the babies are a few years old, and in those first meetings with Brittiney, Margarita made sure to offer resources for day-to-day stability.

“Her mind was in emergency mode, like what are we going to eat today,” Margarita explains. She encouraged Brittiney’s job search and quickly connected her with support for housing assistance, as well as weekly counseling to learn coping skills and how to deal with depression.

“As the home visitor and participant continue their journey, they are now out of "emergency mode" and focusing on child development and healthy living. Brittiney says that Margarita helps her look at her interactions with her children in a ways that are more positive, like finding humor in kids’ messiness: “It makes me stop in a moment where I would want to get frustrated and look at it differently.”

This participant’s resilience is astounding. In less than a year, Brittiney has found a home, a job, a sense of community and most of all, hope—for herself and for her family’s future.

“Honestly, without the program and Margarita, I don’t think I would have ever found my own place.”
- Brittiney

You could say life is more like a walk in the park for Brittiney’s happy children, now living in their own home with mom and dad.