



HomeStory

Stories from the California Home Visiting Program

Faraha's Story: Giving Back to Her Community

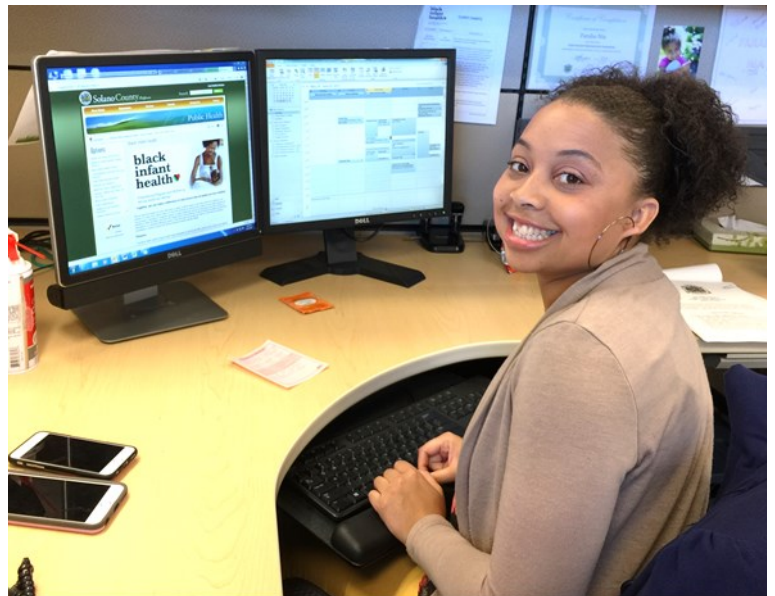
Faraha was a mother-to-be experiencing symptoms of preterm labor that required medication to stop its progression. This occurred when she was just 16 weeks pregnant, and then again at 20 weeks. "I had numerous hospital visits and two admissions during my pregnancy," she says. "I was a first-time mom and to have such a traumatic, high-risk pregnancy was so stressful."

During one of those hospital stays, a social worker asked Faraha if she would be interested in Solano County's Nurse-Family Partnership, which is a California Home Visiting Program. This voluntary program would send a nurse to her home on a regular basis during pregnancy and through her child's second birthday.

Faraha was "really excited" about having a home visiting nurse who would meet with her and provide information and resources about pregnancy, child birth, breastfeeding, child development, parenting and goal setting.

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.



Thanks to home visiting, Faraha followed her passions for higher education and a job that would allow her to give back to her community. She is now a Family Health Advocate for Solano County's Black Infant Health program and also attends graduate school to earn her master's in counseling.

Soon after joining the program, Faraha's home visitor identified that the young woman was at risk for depression, which had been triggered by her pregnancy. Faraha was referred to counseling with Robyn, a home visiting social worker who ultimately shaped Faraha's future.

Inspiration and education

While the baby's health was Faraha's top priority, she also thought about her next steps as an adult and single mother. "Pursuing my education was really important to me," she says. "When I found out I was pregnant, I didn't know if [college] was something I could do."



“The home visiting program not only helped me as a mom, but also with my growth to become the mom that I am now.” — Faraha

Faraha turned to her home visitor, Rhonda, and home visiting counselor, Robyn, for support—and both encouraged her to pursue her education. “Faraha did not think school was possible,” Robyn explains. “But because of our experience in working with so many home visiting participants who have set and achieved goals, we were able to show her how continuing her education while being a new parent was possible: This is how you can set it up, this is what you need to do and this is how to make it work.”



Faraha, left, gained inspiration for a career in the Black Infant Health program from her home visiting social worker, Robyn.

Robyn knew that Faraha wanted to find meaningful work that would allow her to give back to her community. The two talked about a program called Black Infant Health (BIH), which aims to improve health among African-American mothers and babies, and Faraha honed in on a goal to work for BIH. Not only did Faraha graduate from home visiting when her daughter was 2 years old, but also from college, attaining a bachelor’s degree in Sociology in 2015. “It was really exciting because I did keep in touch with Robyn, and I texted her that I got my degree and said ‘I’m ready!’” Faraha says.

Realizing goals and dreams

“I knew Faraha was always interested in social services, and I saw that she had the capability of pursuing that dream,” Robyn says, adding that together they had mapped out what needed to be done for Faraha to achieve her goal. “I always saw the potential in her, and she definitely followed the path. Faraha utilized all of her resources and built upon the strengths that she developed during her three years in the home visiting program.”

Faraha is now a full-time Family Health Advocate for the Black Infant Health program. “I feel like this position is definitely giving back what was given to me, and it is an honor to be able

to serve the community like I was served by Robyn and Rhonda. When I got this job, I called Robyn and I cried.” Because of her success, Faraha is also pursuing a master’s degree to become a licensed counselor.

The home visiting program also left a positive mark on Faraha’s daughter, who was born at 35 weeks, lethargic and with a fever, and spent time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Nurse Rhonda carefully watched the baby’s development over the ensuing months and years. When she noticed a delay in growth and motor

skills, the home visitor helped Faraha find resources to keep her daughter healthy. The “baby” is now 5 years old and thriving physically, emotionally and socially.

“I got pregnant and had to go through the system myself as a Welfare-to-Work mom, food-stamp mom, as a mom whose partner is in prison, to a single mom. Having gone through that process made me more aware of the difference I want to make,” Faraha says. “The home visiting program not only helped me as a mom, but also with my growth to become the mom that I am now. It helped me better myself, and now I’m in a position that I’ve always wanted to be in. This job at Black Infant Health is like my dream job and something I’ve wanted for a long time.”



Knowing she would be a single mother, Faraha wasn’t sure she could go to college while working full-time and raising a baby. Her home visitors showed her how she could continue school and achieve her goals. Her daughter is now 5 years old, and Faraha is working for the Black Infant Health program and getting her master’s degree.

