



HomeStory

Stories from the California Home Visiting Program

Arlin's Story: Tiny Houses, Big Hearts

In 2014, Arlin and her fiancé Dominic beamed with happiness. Their tiny house business was thriving, as the popularity of these structures soared. Arlin was halfway through a healthy pregnancy, and both parents-to-be were learning about pregnancy and parenting when they enrolled in their local home visiting program.

Things changed, however, when Arlin suffered a late miscarriage. Her home visiting nurse provided much needed support for the grieving parents. "Without this program, I would have had no guidance of being pregnant, let alone coping with my tragedy," Arlin says.

When another pregnancy followed, Arlin re-enrolled in home visiting, gaining reassurance as she passed the halfway point of the pregnancy. At 26 weeks along, she and Dominic moved their business and transferred to the home visiting program in Shasta County.

"When I met my new nurse, Michelle, I was very shy, but once I got to know her I realized that she's a really amazing person. The transition from nurse to nurse was really smooth," Arlin says.



Arlin and her fiancé, Dominic, build and sell custom tiny homes, like the one above, in Shasta County. They have a thriving business—and a growing family—and have appreciated the help and support of the county's Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program.

Home visiting nurse Michelle recognized the hardship the couple had endured and continued providing reassurance, along with resources, like WIC, that could help them as they settled in.

"The program helped me cope and understand," Arlin says, adding that Michelle continued to reassure her that she had done nothing wrong during her first pregnancy.

When healthy baby boy Diego was born, Michelle provided wellness visits, milestone checks and parenting education, as all home visiting nurses do. Shasta County is part of the California Home Visiting Program and follows the Nurse-Family Partnership model, which meant Arlin and her family would have the support of Michelle until Diego turned 2 years old.



Home visiting nurse Michelle, far left, met her client, Arlin, when she had baby Diego. Michelle also helped when the family welcomed Emma and Maxwell into their lives.

“You can only Google so much, and online is not the truest form of information, but hearing it from a nurse, that’s completely different. That’s having a lifeline.” —Home visiting participant Arlin

Dominic and Arlin planned to have more children and were happy when they found out they were expecting again—this time with twins. Michelle continued providing education about parenting and caring for Diego, and now offered insight on carrying and raising twins. “I needed more information about something that was definitely different than having one child. Like, what do I do with twins? Can they sleep together? Michelle provided me help in so many ways,” Arlin says.



This tiny home includes a room with views, as Arlin, CEO of Liberty Cabins, son Diego and Dominic, architect/builder, peer down from the loft.

That help included advice and information on nutrition, self-care and following doctor’s orders. Being pregnant with multiples is a risk factor for preterm birth, so Michelle diligently monitored Arlin’s health, while also checking on Diego’s development and growth. The family flourished, and Arlin carried the twins to full term without incident, welcoming babies Emma and Maxwell into their hearts.

Now with three children under age 2, Arlin continues her role as CEO of the growing tiny house business. Dominic serves as architect and builder. The couple’s progress with their business and parenting has impressed Michelle, who has been to the tiny house shop a few times and has witnessed Arlin juggle children alongside a demanding profession.

“Arlin has a beautiful business mind,” Michelle says. “I’ve enjoyed encouraging her and Dominic, celebrating with them and just keeping tabs on how it’s going with the business. I just loved seeing her dealing in the professional business world, and as a home visitor we don’t get to see that side of a client all the time.”

There is mutual admiration and respect between participant and home visitor, and Arlin expresses a great sense of gratitude for her nurses and the home visiting

program. Without it, she says, “I would be lost in so many ways. I know if something happens to one of my kids, I can just text Nurse Michelle. You can only Google so much, and online is not the truest form of information, but hearing it from a nurse, that’s completely different. That’s having a lifeline.”



This tiny home includes a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, loft and even a living area that is large enough for the family and their home visiting nurse to gather.

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 a preventive intervention focused on promoting positive parenting and child development, with the ultimate goal of strengthening families and communities.

