Yolo Crisis Nursery: ‘Baby Whisperer’ Connie Cordero retiring after 16 years

By Jane Eadie

Nearly every time I visit the Yolo Crisis Nursery, I am welcomed by Connie Cordero with a warm smile and an infant in her arms. As our longtime Infant Room Teacher, Connie has a special connection with babies that is like no other. Children instantly trust and feel safe with Connie, earning her the affectionate title of “The Baby Whisperer.”

Connie joined the nursery staff in 2003 with a passion to make a difference for Yolo County’s most vulnerable children — those too young to have their own voice or care for themselves. Her goal, no matter how briefly she cares for them, is to leave a lasting impression with each and every child entrusted to her care. And what a difference Connie has made over the last 16 years! All too frequently, children arrive under extreme duress, but Connie’s peaceful and kind presence immediately eases them and makes them feel safe. The nursery has served over 5,000 children since opening its doors, and Connie has touched the lives of almost all of them. She has been their constant.

“It warms my heart to walk into the infant room to see Connie singing, dancing, and playing dress-up with the babies,” said Heather Sleuter, executive director of the Yolo Crisis Nursery. “Connie’s dedication to our clients is extraordinary and the positive impact her work has had on our community is immeasurable. Connie’s contributions are so extensive — she will be almost impossible to replace.”

Connie’s work transcends her direct care for the children. In addition to serving as the Infant Room teacher, she manages our Care Packages program. Through this program, we collect
donated essential baby and child items from the community to provide customized care packages for parents to quickly get them necessities and ensure their children are well-cared for and safe. To learn more about donating items or to request a care package, please visit yolocrisisnursery.org/give/#wish-list or call 530-758-6680.

Connie has also played a critical role in shaping the culture of the Yolo Crisis Nursery. She has been responsible for numerous staff and volunteer trainings and she, herself, is a model for respectful, empowering, and compassionate care for our client families.

“Connie has a serene and kind way about her that is also very powerful. Kids come in having been through some pretty terrible stuff. She is able to calm them and make them feel safe and secure,” said Dr. Dave Nakano, retired pediatrician and Yolo Crisis Nursery volunteer. “If there were a picture next to the definition of mother in the dictionary it would be Connie. She may be the most warmhearted person I have ever had the privilege of knowing.”

Every child and family we serve is different, but each one is in crisis and all are in need of aid, having little or no support systems of their own. With a little help at just the right moment, families can avert crises. Rather than free-falling, they instead turn towards a more promising future. Since opening our doors in 2001, the Yolo Crisis Nursery has a 97% success rate for keeping children out of the child welfare system and Connie has been an integral part of that success.

Connie is set to retire in mid-August and, after a 16-year career helping other families, she plans to spend more time with her own children, her nine (soon to be 10) grandchildren, and first great-grandchild. The Board of Directors, Friends of YCN and the entire nursery staff would like to express our deep admiration and utmost appreciation for the selfless service Connie has given to the children of Yolo County. It is our sincere hope that Connie will continue to be a friend of the Yolo Crisis Nursery and come back to visit every now and then.

The Yolo Crisis Nursery offers voluntary, free, nurturing crisis and respite childcare for ages birth through 5 years, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Equally important are our wrap-around services that help parents resolve the problems that brought them to our door. The nursery strives to preserve families. Families that stay whole become stronger.

If you would like to help a Yolo County family at just the right moment, please consider supporting the nursery by volunteering to hold babies, joining the Friends of the Yolo Crisis Nursery, helping with a fundraising event like our upcoming Barn Dance on Saturday, Oct. 19, or by making a financial donation. If you would like to dedicate a gift to the Nursery in Connie’s honor, you may do so at www.yolocrisisnursery.org/give.

The Yolo Crisis Nursery could not survive without the generosity of our community, and we are grateful for your support. Thank you on behalf of the children and families we serve.

- This article was written by Jane Eadie, President of the Yolo Crisis Nursery Board of Directors