

## **SERGIO'S STORY    *A MODEL FOR LIFE, WORK AND THE CHURCH***

My name is Sergio Castaneda, I come from a migrant family who has traveled from Mexico all the way to the state of Washington in search of a better life. During my teen years I was blessed to have faith driven folks take an interest in the outcome of my teenage life. As a young at risk Latino male I was involved in high risk situations. These folks had a sincere interest in the welfare of my life and were intentionally putting themselves in places to catch me when I fell and help me restart again. As an adult myself and following the examples these people I have come to follow in their footsteps, early in my twenties I committed myself to being intentional about the way I live my life. Constantly looking for ways to see people move forward in their life, not just in the life of youth but their entire family.

**For the past year I have been involved with Pasco's First Lutheran Latino Outreach Ministry in various** ways, supporting leadership, interviewing parents to learn how to best support them, home visit to offer clinical advise to families who are struggling with addiction and mental health in some of the poorest areas of Pasco. Through my involvement with this ministry I have met with people from Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and have heard heart wrenching stories about family members being murdered for not succumbing to drug cartels, fathers speak about youth back in their home country give to alcoholism and drug abuse due to the lack of opportunities but I have also heard stories of hope, people sharing of how God has sustain them on their journey.

I have held several positions in which I am able to serve youth and families both in urban and rural areas from Chicago to Los Angeles.

Recently I am hired by *Lutheran Community Services (LCSNW) whose mission is to partner with individuals, families and communities for health, justice and hope.* My position is a care coordinator in the WISE program.

We follow ten principles that guide our work:

Family Voice and Choice, Team Based, Natural Supports, Collaboration, Community Based, Cultural Competence, Individualized, Strengths Based, Persistence and Outcome Base.

Using these principals we lead families through a process in which we establish rules, form a family vision, team mission, find strengths, address needs and find expected outcomes for needs, come up with ideas, action plans, and encourage the youth whose support within the team he/she wants to complete action plans. In the team included is the family, care coordinator, a therapist, a family partner, youth partner and a direct support specialist. All of this happens in the community with the family as the primary player.

It makes me think of Jesus moving into the neighborhood and addressing people directly. **Pasco's First Lutheran** reflects Lutheran community service in that way. We are partnering with individuals, families and community in this case one community and together seeking hope, health and justice together all in the context of Love, making things right. It is a beautiful thing.