Finding a “Calling” to Help People Experiencing Homelessness

For Karisa Cinco, finding a “calling” was easy. "When I walked through a new friendship building initiative, I knew I had found something special," she says.

Karisa, a San Diegans Helping San Diegans program participant, learned about the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) while attending a career fair at San Diego City College. After attending a class and volunteering at the Homelessness Program for Engaged Educational Resources (PEER) course, she decided to apply for a San Diego Housing Commission job.

Karisa, who originally worked as a residential coordinator, quickly became a case manager with San Diego City College. She was soon promoted to a certified case manager and then to a case manager at Legacy Project, where she works one-on-one with San Diegans experiencing homelessness.

"I feel energized when once I come in this door, seeing the clients, seeing their faces, and realizing that we have helped them," Karisa says.

"I've been a case manager with Legacy Project for a year now. We visit the clients every two weeks and help them with basic needs, such as food, transportation, and other important services." Karisa says.

"I've had the opportunity to work with a case manager and a legal aid attorney. I've been able to help clients access resources such as housing, transportation, and educational opportunities," she adds.

In addition, Karisa has volunteered at some events where she has had the opportunity to meet people who have been affected by homelessness. She has also participated in a number of seminars and workshops on homelessness, which has helped her better understand the issues and challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness.

"I think it's important to keep learning and growing in this field," Karisa says. "I want to continue to help others and make a positive impact in their lives."