

## Umatilla County CARE

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Good morning Committee Members,

My name is Merysha Garcia, I am the Administrative aid for CARE. I have been in my position for the last eleven months, being a part of this team has been an exciting experience. Coming into this position I had not realized the impact CARE's role plays in our community. I often wonder how other families/schools outside of Umatilla county function without a role model willing to go above and beyond to find any sort of breakthrough for our less fortunate population.

From the seat of my own position I have gotten to understand our importance and how much our community relies on our comforting presence, and solution focused process. Our families, students, and community partners come to us with all kinds of questions, concerns, and insight. When our specialists are busy meeting clients or schools, I have had the opportunity to assist With running headlice kits to schools, taking parents to food banks when the month is coming to an end, paying for students ID's to get their drivers license, ordering birth certificates, taking clients to our local non-profit organization to look for clothing, purchasing hygiene essentials, submitting housing applications, finding childcare, and helping pay client bills. All of these things contribute to keeping students in school.

These are only a few ways we have been beneficial, but by providing support to our families as a whole gives our youth a better chance at succeeding. Families often share adult stressors with their children, this can contribute to fear, academic struggles, and education barriers. We enlighten our families to understand there is always support. Most of the time it is the generational consistency that makes us believe change is not possible, we come in to pave a new route in life. This allows the children to be children, allowing them to attend school, engage in new activities, and develop lasting resilience.