



## **A TIME FOR THANKSGIVING: FELTON INSTITUTE OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

### ***Family Gatherings are When New Personal Challenges and Mental Health Needs are Often Revealed***

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 26, 2014) – For Yohana Quiroz, Felton Institute’s Children, Youth and Family Division Director, Thanksgiving is more than a yearly event. It is a daily celebration of gratitude. Nineteen years ago, Yohana faced the holidays as a pregnant unmarried teen worried about her future and that of her unborn daughter.

Quiroz entered Felton’s **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program**, known as TAPP, hoping to have more options and a better quality of life. Today, she heads the same division responsible for providing child development services to children birth to five years old and case management, health and parenting education to pregnant and parenting teens in high school.

“I was relieved to find a program that let me stay in high school. I received case management and wraparound services including free childcare so that my daughter could be in a safe environment while I attended classes in the same building,” reflects Quiroz. “It gave me piece of mind to know that my daughter was cared for by dedicated and passionate teachers. The program changed our lives.”

Just as Felton Institute’s social services established a foundation that helped Yohana build a successful life, the Institute’s mental health services have also transformed thousands of lives.

According to Felton’s Chief Operating Officer Al Gilbert, the holidays can be a very challenging time for high-risk teens and people dealing with mental health issues or substance abuse problems.

“Sometimes it takes a family gathering when people take stock in their relationships and have the opportunity to discover what is really going on,” explains Gilbert.

Mental health challenges facing a loved one, such as a child or parent, are difficult because people may not know how to help, understand the underlying cause(s) or know what resources are available.

Stigma around mental health concerns also contributes to a family member’s reticence to address sensitive issues. “Our programs empower the individual and place great value on family



involvement in our client’s treatment plan. We are sensitive to misconceptions that surround certain diagnoses,” shares Gilbert.

“Teens and young adults who may be experiencing symptoms of early psychosis or bipolar I disorder and live in the counties we serve, are encouraged to contact our **PREP** (*Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis*) and **BEAM** (*Bipolar I Early Assessment Management*) programs for an initial telephone screening,” recommends Gilbert.

Felton Institute provides an array of mental health programs and services across Northern California for children, teens, adults and seniors, everything from counseling and family group therapy to intensive care management for those experiencing severe mental illness. Felton also serves low-income and high-risk populations including the homeless and isolated seniors.

“We are here for families facing mental health issues and for individuals in need of human services during the holiday season and throughout the year,” affirms Gilbert. “Reaching out for help is the first step to treatment and recovery.”

For more information about Felton Institute and its wide-spectrum human and mental health services programs, please visit us at [felton.org](http://felton.org).

*If you would like to interview Yohana Quiroz, experts in mental health treatment or learn about additional success stories, please contact [cstump@felton.org](mailto:cstump@felton.org) or call (415) 474-7310 x665.*

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#### **About Felton Institute**

*For over 125 years, the Felton Institute has been responding to community needs by providing cutting edge, evidence-based human services that transform lives. Felton Institute serves as the umbrella organization for a wide-range of programs provided in San Francisco, Northern and Central California. The Institute includes Family Service Agency of San Francisco, which runs the Institute’s Children Youth and Family, Adult and Senior divisions, the award-winning PREP (Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis) and BEAM (Bipolar I Early Assessment) programs, as well as a nationally-recognized Research and Training division, which combines evidence-based practices to address some of today’s most pressing mental health needs.*

*PREP is funded in part through a [Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services \(CMS\)](#), Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation Award, through Funding Opportunity Number CMS-1C1-12-0001. The contents of this press release are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS or any of its agencies.*