

## **Dreams Really Do Come True**

### **Education Matters**

SHERMAN, MARCH 17, 2015 – When Yazmin Villanueva found herself at age 17 a wife and mother suffering severe financial hardships, she made the difficult decision to drop out of school and go to work to help support the family.

Yazmin knew full well her employment options were limited because she had not finished high school; but she was nervous about going back to school. Enter Lou Ann Taylor, Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) Social Services Coordinator who introduced Yazmin to the Helping Our People Excel (HOPE) GED Program.

The GED classes are held at the Teach, Empower, Assist and Motivate (TEAM) Center where public housing residents and the community at large have access to a variety of social and educational programs such as; GED classes, English as a Second Language (ESL), and adult literacy classes.

Yazmin began GED classes in August 2013, worked hard and successfully passed her GED exam within just a few months. She credits her GED instructors Juanita and Norman Lance with giving her the support she needed to pass the test and encouraging her to pursue college.

Today, Yazmin is a student at Grayson College and is happy to say she is the first of her siblings to attend college. She earned scholarships from the Glaser Family Charitable Foundation, the Daniel B. Dupree Foundation and Federal Student Aid. Her dream is to graduate from Grayson College and go to nursing school.

Yazmin says her biggest supporters are husband Augustin, and seven year old daughter, Evelyn. "The joy and excitement on Evelyn's face when I graduated, filled me with pride", say Yazmin.

Yazmin knows doors will open now that she has her GED and is in college. She is very thankful she had the opportunity to complete the GED program and sees a bright future for her and her family.

For more information about the HOPE GED program, contact Lou Ann Taylor at 903-583-1264

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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**For Additional Information Contact:**

Lou Ann Taylor  
(903) 583-3336  
ltaylor@texoma.cog.tx.us

**For Statements or Interviews Contact:**

Susan B. Thomas, PhD  
(903) 813-3514  
stthomas@texoma.cog.tx.us

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