

25 YEARS OF SERVING SUMMIT COUNTY

FIRC Family & Intercultural
Resource Center



The Families of Summit County

This is our home

Summit County has been Edith's home since she was 7. When her family moved here from California, she started third grade at Silverthorne Elementary. English was a second language, but with the support of translators and teachers she found it easy to make the transition to English-speaking classrooms. As she grew up she developed a love of snowboarding through her participation in SOS Outreach and her family flourished here in the mountains.

Edith graduated from high school in 2013 and took classes part time at Colorado Mountain College, while she worked full time to help put herself through school. In 2015, she met her boyfriend Salvador, fell in love and in 2017, they found out they were having a child. Their first goal as expecting parents was to find a place of their own. The couple started looking immediately, but as their baby's due date approached they still hadn't found anything. The couple considered every option, even renting a single room from a shared apartment.

"We didn't realize how hard it had become to find a place to live up here," said Edith. "Everything was so expensive or unavailable. Sierra Madre had a waitlists with no estimate on when we might be able to get in and we almost gave up."



Fortunately, Edith found out about the FIRC Housing Works program and they were able to find a condo in Wildercrest that was perfect for their new family. The Housing Works program is run through FIRC and encourages owners to transition their short-term rentals into long-term housing to provide additional units for the workforce. The program offers discounted property management as an incentive to owners and helps with move in costs for renters.

“Housing Works has been such a great program for us,” said Edith. “I had no idea FIRC had so many services to help people in the community. We met with Kelly, our Family Support Counselor at FIRC, to get into the housing program and during the appointment she also helped me get enrolled in health insurance, prior to the delivery of our child, which helped us save on some major medical bills. Plus, over the last year, Kelly has been helping us develop a savings plan to work toward my future goals of becoming a dental assistant and saving for Salvador’s preschool.”

Childcare Struggles

Edith has now been a mother for a year and a half to a sweet boy, also named Salvador, but admits it has been challenging to be a working mom in Summit County.

“Childcare is so expensive,” said Edith. “People are paying \$80-\$90 a day for their kids to be in childcare and many of the centers don’t have spots available. Salvador and I decided we were going to split our work schedules so that Salvador (Jr.) always has someone to watch him and we can try to save money for our family.”

Edith and Salvador’s situation is common in Summit County. The average cost of childcare for families is \$1,300 a month. This steep cost is just one of issues that make childcare unattainable for many families. Currently, all five of the licensed childcare centers have waitlists as demand for services has passed the capacity of the centers. Families in Summit County must make difficult decisions to find jobs that provide flexibility so they can care for their children, while making enough money to continue to live and provide for their families. On average, Summit County locals work 1.5 jobs in order to make ends meet.

For Edith, Summit County isn’t just a beautiful place to live, it’s her home. Her entire family still lives here and she is deeply connected to friends and community. Salvador and Edith are doing whatever they can to provide young Salvador with the same experience Edith had growing up here.

“I feel like right now all we do is work, work, work,” said Edith. “It’s worth it though, because this is my home. My family and friends are here and I love everything about Summit County. I want Salvador to grow up here in our great schools and learn how to snowboard just like I did. It’s such a good place for kids, but right now it’s hard to not have the time to spend with him.”



Photography by Priscilla Balderas with Love, Pris