Problem:
Located in the Pajaro Valley in California, Watsonville is home to a large Mexican migrant and immigrant community. Poverty, parents who work long hours in the fields, and the difficulties of migration contribute to students and their families experiencing family stress, substance abuse, gang involvement, and child abuse and neglect.

Solution:
Guided by the Mexican cultural value of ‘family first’, provide family-centered services that are comprehensive, linguistically accessible and culturally competent in school and community locations.

Program:
Project partners with the academic counselor at Watsonville High School and offers weekly meetings to help parents understand schools and the connection between mental health and school success. Newcomer groups welcome newly-arrived students. The school’s multidisciplinary team also refers students to project staff. Additional support services are scheduled at the community center, La Manzana.

Impact:
Teens report being more comfortable as members of two cultures, are better able to cope with pressure, and are better able to navigate conflicts at home and school. Parents are more involved with their children’s school, a predictor of better academic success.