

Families Share About Kariñu



Jamie Frietas

What brought you to Kariñu?

When my son turned 20 months old, I noticed that he wasn't speaking as much as other kids his age, and he had trouble communicating with me which lead to challenging behaviors. As a mother, I try my best not to compare my child to others because not all children develop at the same rate. I knew there was something that could be done to recognize these concerns that I had for my son. So I decided to have my son screened by the staff at Kariñu.

How has Kariñu helped your child and family?

The results from the screening answered my questions and doubts. He was delayed in communication and a few other areas. I was quickly referred to Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) for his speech and cognitive development. I am receiving services from Kariñu for my son's social, emotional, and behavioral concerns. Finding out the results of the screenings became a very emotional time for me. My case worker was someone who helped me realize that I am a strong mother and the first step is getting help. As I continue to receive services from Kariñu and GEIS, I have noticed the progress in my son's development and behavior. This is my biggest motivation for me as his mother. Seeing where he was and how far he has come is the greatest feeling and I thank Kariñu for being there for me and my family every step of the way.

What would you like to share with other families?

You are not alone. You are the greatest advocate for your children. Don't be afraid to ask for help. If Kariñu cannot assist with your specific needs, they will find the help and resources for you. They also offer many family support activities that happen monthly. I try my best to attend these events. I meet lots of new people and make new friends who are going through the same challenges. I learn valuable information from the peer support that I use in our daily lives and it is all FREE!



Deborah Polmal

What brought you to Kariñu?

I always thought my son needed help with his speech. This was the main reason. I saw their ad on TV and flyers in other places. I read that Kariñu helped many families. As a mother, I knew I needed help. I didn't want people to think that something's wrong with my child. I called and spoke with a member of Kariñu's staff. She helped me fill out forms and I was happy and proud that I called.

How has Kariñu helped your child and family?

Kariñu showed me that there are many options to help my child. It's a good opportunity to learn and grow as a family. Kariñu helps my 10 year old daughter be a role model for my son, her brother. She does certain activities at home that help my son. Kariñu also helped me with other activities outside my home. For example, when we go to the grocery store, my son picks out the groceries. He's learning different concepts in the kitchen and the laundry room. Kariñu is also helping me through PATs (Parents As Teachers, a parenting curriculum).

What would you like to share with other families?

Kariñu is free and provides a loving support group. I wish that everyone would see how good Kariñu is. The outside activities are good opportunities for my son to be with people because he always kept to himself or just played with his sister. Now, he is not afraid to be with people anymore. It's okay to say I need help. It (Kariñu) helped me, why not you?



Mercedes and Angela

What brought you to Kariñu?

We are guardians of our child who is almost 5 years old and whom we've had in our care since he was 2 years old. What brought us to Kariñu was during one of our hearings, Judge Ingles suggested Kariñu for him. With it being our very first time in this kind of situation, we followed her suggestion.

How has Kariñu helped your child and family?

Well my partner and I both feel that Kariñu has helped our boy in so many ways...for one, his attitude changes every time for the better. He looks forward to seeing the staff of Kariñu on our scheduled appointments. He seems to understand them more as they really

express themselves at his level, and I know with a little more of these sessions he can be a complete whole. We can proudly say that Kariñu too has helped us as well. A lot of patience, understanding, and a whole lot of love and security are just about the four greatest things we can think of to keep our boy well-loved and safe from harms' way. We both just love him with all our hearts.

What would you share with other families?

To give Kariñu a chance to see what they could do for you and your family. All it takes is for you to listen and be heard. Ask questions and be open because we're sure Kariñu would be more than happy to answer any of your questions. Oh, and don't forget, a pat on the back sporadically for all you do and for whomever is also an assurance that you're doing something good. Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to do this for ALL of the CHILDREN and OUR FAMILIES of KARIÑU.



Annjenica Cruz

What brought you to Kariñu?

I was referred through GEIS to Kariñu because I was concerned about my daughter's development (specifically her speech) and behavior.

How has Kariñu helped your child and family?

Kariñu would come by for home visits and spend time with my daughter. During that time, they provided educational tools (books, games, puzzles, etc.) and strategies that I could work with her in her development. Currently, her speech and mannerisms have greatly improved from where she started and we continue to use the tools/strategies implemented.

They would also call to check on how the family was doing and provided a lot of support not only to my daughter, but to her little siblings as well. In addition, Kariñu invited us to several activities we could do as a family, such as Playport play dates with other Kariñu families. We were also able to attend their Peer Family Workshops that allowed parents to meet not only the rest of the Kariñu staff, but also with other parents to learn and share our experiences.

What would you share with other families?

I think Kariñu is a great organization. I would recommend any parent who is concerned about their child's behavior or development, even if you're unsure, to have them screened. I feel even with how big families can be on the island or how many people we know, there's still those moments when a parent can feel alone in a situation regarding their child or family. Reaching out to programs like these is one of the best steps you can take to find the help you need or a better mental wellness for whatever situation you may be going through.