CLAUDIA BACKGROUND
Claudia Veliz came to San Francisco from El Salvador in the 1980s to join her mother, who worked as a babysitter, in a factory, and at a commercial laundromat in the United States. It was a change that brought about a lot of different thoughts for her. “I was very sad. I was very angry. I was very happy. I was all those emotions together.” Claudia later married and had two girls, which contributed to a 23-year pause in her college education.

WHAT BROUGHT CLAUDIA TO CCSF
After moving, Claudia took college ESL classes. She was terrified someone would ask her questions in class, and she wouldn’t have the correct answer for her professors. “I kept going, telling myself I have to do it ... I wanted to do it. I wanted to be able to speak with other people and be able to openly speak like I was speaking my own language.” Claudia found inspiration in watching her eldest child’s motivation to graduate from college and looked to her as an example and role model for her own education.

CLAUDIA’S CCSF EXPERIENCE
It was her daughter who encouraged her to return to school, and the readings assigned in Claudia’s classes at CCSF echo her own odyssey, bringing her to a deeper discovery of who she is and being happy with her own transformative process. “It’s beautiful to feel that, to find yourself in that way: when you grow up and realize that this is going to change not only your life but make you happy. That is when you start doing it on your own.”

WHY CCSF WAS A GOOD CHOICE FOR CLAUDIA
After hard work, studying, and meeting all the prerequisites, Claudia took classes in math, psychology, child development, and history. Her excitement was coupled with a great sense of accomplishment. “It’s my time. I can go back and finish what I started. City College is everything for me.” She wants to work in the field of child development as a child-care provider. “I really appreciate and am thankful for these opportunities.”

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