

00:00:04 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Hello welcome to this new episode of Hablemos Autismo and this is your host Tony Hernández Pumarejo and I have the honor and privilege of interviewing a person who is very special to me and who has definitely done a lot for our community. It is the last one, especially in Puerto Rico.

00:00:26 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

YY has been through creation innovation and I have the first to interview. Her name is Katyria Figueroa. This she is the owner of the restaurant, the first inclusion restaurant for our community, autism in Puerto Rico and she is a mother. She has two children and one of them has autism, is he autistic or does he have?

00:00:51 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Earthquake and we've gotten a little bit of the restaurant's history. How this restaurant called de mi tierra was created and I believe that this interview is of great help and a great blessing for our community, so I have a first interview today with Mrs. Katyria Figueroa, Katyria, thank you for being with me today. In this episode let's talk about autism.

00:01:05 Katyria Figueroa

Of course.

00:01:12 Katyria Figueroa

Thanks to you my love for inviting.

00:01:14 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Thanks to you, whether or not I had the privilege of that you had invited me to come to the restaurant in my country and when I went there I think it was already 1 year ago.

00:01:28 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

This one was in Puerto Rico and I saw the different areas that you have in the restaurant for our comfort, for our family. YYYY I thank you very much for what you have done with our community. But before talking about what it is, about my land, what the Inclusive restaurant for our autism community is, I think let's talk about you. I want to ask you first of all, how is autism?

00:01:53 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

It changed the life of you and your family. How did autism change?

00:02:00 Katyria Figueroa

It hasn't been easy, I can't tell you what it has.

00:02:03 Katyria Figueroa

Been easy because.

00:02:05 Katyria Figueroa

It hasn't been easy, sometimes as a mother you get frustrated, right? Me now and.

00:02:11 Katyria Figueroa

And sometimes he even despairs because.

00:02:14 Katyria Figueroa

It's something new, it's something that you don't know how to deal with the situation, but.

00:02:20 Katyria Figueroa

Overall, everything has gone well for us, I like it, I like being there as you say, I like seeing the baby, I like learning.

00:02:28 Katyria Figueroa

They are true experiences that one gets and not so much from my baby's family, but from different people, because there is Restaurant, different families go and each one carries different stories.

00:02:43 Katyria Figueroa

I have learned a lot.

00:02:45 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Excellent and let's talk a little about your son. When was this diagnosed with autism? At what age?

00:02:50 Katyria Figueroa

He was 2 years old.

00:02:52 Katyria Figueroa

I already knew about both of them.

00:02:55 Katyria Figueroa

Because of the little things that the behavior did and.

00:03:00 Katyria Figueroa

Thank God we realized it early because it was like after a year or so we had already realized it and two years later they diagnosed it.

00:03:09 Katyria Figueroa

I knew that.

00:03:11 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

OKAY, it was like a confirmation.

00:03:14 Katyria Figueroa

If it was one, were we already prepared? Yes, I was well prepared.

00:03:14 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Since it's 10.

00:03:19 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

OK, how has that development been for your child, how old is he now?

00:03:25 Katyria Figueroa

He is 5 years old, going on 6.

00:03:31 Katyria Figueroa

It's been uphill at times hasn't it? Because he is functional, but he doesn't speak clearly, he understands what he doesn't. As I tell you, he doesn't tell you the prayers, it's like the little things that he wants. OO little things.

00:03:46 Katyria Figueroa

But overall everything has gone well for us, is it really something different? It's something that I like because I enjoy it with him.

00:03:56 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

YYY what do you like to do? What are hobbies?

00:04:00 Katyria Figueroa

Well, look, he really likes cars, he really likes water, he really likes eating sand.

00:04:09 Katyria Figueroa

He really likes to eat plasticine.

00:04:12 Katyria Figueroa

He doesn't like shoes, he doesn't like clothes.

00:04:17 Katyria Figueroa

And well, you know little things that as a mother you try to deal with.

00:04:24 Katyria Figueroa

Develop with it, but it's not easy, it's not easy.

00:04:28 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

It is not easy, but it is a process, but it is worth it, but it is worth it and it is worth fighting for this process every day to be able to carry out and give the tools in this case to you as a mother of your child. so that they have the tools so that they can move forward in life, which is the most important thing.

00:04:52 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

It is and that is so YY Katyria.

00:04:52 Katyria Figueroa

So be it.

00:04:56 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Exactly and Katyria I want to ask you, do you know why when I saw this for the first time a little while ago?

00:05:05 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

This one about opening that there was an autism restaurant in Puerto Rico. I was like wow, this is serious, is it true? It's not me, I read about you from this restaurant in the newspapers.

00:05:21 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And I was really moved when I saw that this is a gesture that was made before for our food, for my autism community.

00:05:31 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Ask this who inspired you in this concept of my land, of this concept of creating this restaurant, how did it start?

00:05:42 Katyria Figueroa

OK, well, I was obviously inspired by my son AND we go to different places, but we didn't like the treatment they gave the baby, well.

00:05:53 Katyria Figueroa

As I have said many times, sometimes he screams, sometimes he rolls his eyes.

00:05:58 Katyria Figueroa

Well, he is not still and his behavior is not typical.

00:06:03 Katyria Figueroa

And I told my husband that as their chef I told my husband that they promised me that if at some point in our lives we managed to obtain it.

00:06:12 Katyria Figueroa

A restaurant or they were able to get something for the evening of food that.

00:06:17 Katyria Figueroa

What promised me that we were going to include that community in our establishment, that is, in our restaurant?

00:06:24 Katyria Figueroa

And so it was, they diagnosed it and I quickly made a sensory room in the first Restaurant I had, which was the Carreta fire pit.

00:06:33 Katyria Figueroa

And that was a guaraguau strike, people went.

00:06:37 Katyria Figueroa

It was something, it was something nice because I love this that I.

00:06:41 Katyria Figueroa

And we did it and here we are and we are going to continue because this is what we like, it is born to us.

00:06:48 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

No and I thank you and I thank you for doing this initiative for our community, you know? If I don't know if you, if you know, your team, your family, faced some challenges in creating this restaurant, I don't know if I can share it.

00:07:04 Katyria Figueroa

Well look, I said wow, how am I going to do it?

00:07:11 Katyria Figueroa

How do we start? There was as if it were a little room in the restaurant.

00:07:19 Katyria Figueroa

And there we decided to create a sensory room.

00:07:23 Katyria Figueroa

So that? For when parents come, their children come into the room, play and are free without being judged. He understands that the parents are calm looking at him in a mirror, because the restaurant is like a little mirror. That was the first, now the second, which is from My Land.

00:07:41 Katyria Figueroa

We also have the sensory floor and I have an area in the back where there are swings, a trampoline and it was a lot of challenge, but.

00:07:52 Katyria Figueroa

It's something that's good, you went and had it locally and it's something very nice. It really is something very nice to see the family.

00:08:01 Katyria Figueroa

Sharing with your child, while they eat, they play is something very nice, it is empathetic.

00:08:06 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes and not only is it inclusive only for children with optimists, but as you know very well, autism reaches adults, including me. YAnd, I know that many of the adults, that is, adults, that you know that I know that are my friends and are your friends, have also gone to this restaurant and.

00:08:27 Katyria Figueroa

Many have gone to many and write to me all the time. I want to go to your business. I'm.

00:08:33 Katyria Figueroa

For the bar yes.

00:08:34 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And so YYY to comment a little, this is how our connection began, half of it because I wrote to him one day and I told him, look, one day I'm going there.

00:08:45 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And, thank God, it was possible for us to meet, your husband, your family, your workers. In that restaurant they were very friendly.

00:08:46 Katyria Figueroa

We met.

00:08:58 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

I would have liked to stay longer because I was like what you say in English, it's a road trip, that is, I was going through, that is, guiding, visiting different things.

00:09:06 Katyria Figueroa

But then you're going to come, I'm sure you're going to come and you're going to what?

00:09:10 Katyria Figueroa

Over here.

00:09:11 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, yes, I, I need a vacation there in Puerto Rico.

00:09:13 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

But that is another, that is another topic, but especially more in that area of Boquerón than the west, southwest of the port. Yes, what is the southwest of Puerto Rico, which is if you have not been, you know if you are, you are not Puerto Rican and no and you want to visit Puerto Rico, well I always recommend the salary, yes.

00:09:16 Katyria Figueroa

Of course.

00:09:34 Katyria Figueroa

Cabo Robo.

00:09:35 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

That it is a beautiful, spectacular area, that you are going to have a great time.

00:09:40 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, but nothing going back to Mi Tierra as part of creating this inclusive environment for our families, you know that there is a challenge that our Autonomous Community, the person when you face, is what food is.

00:09:57 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

You know that it is a challenge that you know families face and since your restaurant menu is flexible for families, if you can share a little more detail with us.

00:10:09 Katyria Figueroa

Yes, well, normally you know that in autism it is French fries, not rice.

00:10:19 Katyria Figueroa

Let me see what else tostones, but I have cauliflower pizza on the menu. Is that like one of the favorites because it's gluten free and there are moms who prefer, at least my baby doesn't like pizza, but I have the arrifier where I put the nuggets and I put the chips and there like that?

00:10:40 Katyria Figueroa

It's variable because you can't eat the same thing all the time, but I do have, I have different things, at least for the children. They always order cauliflower because it's like moms prefer it, but there are other things that I mentioned to you.

00:10:56 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, I mean it has a variety of menus and YY brings that flexibility, of course, you know that each person with autism has different challenges and not everyone in the world is the same.

00:11:07 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Be us.

00:11:08 Katyria Figueroa

There is everything on the menu, they order whatever they want, but usually they always order white rice and nuggets.

00:11:14 Katyria Figueroa

French fries and white rice? Yes, always, like the same.

00:11:18 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, I can testify to that because for a while I only ate nuggets and chips many times, that was the thing. I don't do a traditional thing anymore, but this was when I was growing up and what I remember when I'm going a little further back.

00:11:38 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Well, I went to Burger King, my mom took me to Burger King to get the tenders and chips from there.

00:11:43 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

I tell you that.

00:11:44 Katyria Figueroa

With fries.

00:11:44 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, especially the chicken tenders there.

00:11:48 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

From here, no, there is nothing here in the United States, it's not the same there when I was little and had that chicken tenders at your school, that's very good, that was something else. That fascinated me, so can you vote for it?

00:12:00 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

That only I was obsessed with that.

00:12:01 Katyria Figueroa

All McDonald's, nuggets and potatoes, at least in mine it's McDonald's nuggets and potatoes.

00:12:03 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

No yes, forgetting so much Manolo, yes, but with what Buger King opens, Ah, that was something else, but that is part of the process and I am glad that you and your restaurant are flexible. As part of that inclusive mission for our community and I don't thank you very much for what you are doing for our community. This Katyria, to my experts always.

00:12:26 Katyria Figueroa

Thanks to you.

00:12:27 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

This YY I punished before I had the interview this I want to give you a chance if you have a message not only about your restaurant, but what autism is, you have as a businesswoman as a mother of a child with autism . What message do you have for our society in terms of what needs to be done to help each family that needs to be diagnosed with autism?

00:12:56 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

In being able to achieve the best quality of life.

00:13:00 Katyria Figueroa

For me there is no limit to I don't even know how to explain it to you. I've been through so much with him and all the mothers, right? They share a diagnosis with me?

00:13:13 Katyria Figueroa

That there are no limits? No, there are no limits. For me there are no limits and I think that is one of the most important things that I always contribute and I always say that there is no limit.

00:13:27 Katyria Figueroa

We are still here to see her as a mother of blue children because.

00:13:31 Katyria Figueroa

It's not easy, but it can really be done? No, there is no limit for me there is no limit.

00:13:37 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

You reminded me to have our friends also who is a chef.

00:13:42 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

You think you think emilita maybe I I eh hey how he says it without limit and it's the truth.

00:13:44 Katyria Figueroa

Believe daughter, I love him, I love him, I love Cris.

00:13:52 Katyria Figueroa

Yes, the limit is always in my mottos, there is no limit. Oh, I love him. The restaurant air seeing us yes.

00:13:59 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

He is.

00:14:00 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes you are a friend, friends, our friends and you are a very, very friend of mine and.

00:14:03 Katyria Figueroa

I love him.

00:14:06 Katyria Figueroa

He is very beautiful.

00:14:08 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

But, but with which one? What is most important is without limits and moving forward. That's what I always tell parents and you are an example of not being able to limit oneself, so this Katyria, how can

they follow you, how can the people who are tuning into this podcast, learn from your restaurant, how can you Can they support your initiative?

00:14:28 Katyria Figueroa

Well look, you can follow me on Facebook from my old Restaurant. What happens is that if you put my land Restaurant, I think there are several.

00:14:36 Katyria Figueroa

Several locations have the name, but if you put my land autism you will go directly to the restaurant. So on Instagram like Mi Tierra Restaurant tik tok like Mi Tierra Restaurant. You're going to find us quickly because that's what you're going to see.

00:14:43 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Okay.

00:14:52 Katyria Figueroa

Colors.

00:14:53 Katyria Figueroa

And do you already know what the restaurant is?

00:14:55 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Although the colors of autism you see autism, well you know what.

00:14:57 Katyria Figueroa

Yes, no, and that's it, well, the giant chair I have, right?

00:15:00 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Oh no no you can't send me the chair. I think I think I sat in that chair once if I'm not mistaken.

00:15:07 Katyria Figueroa

Its the first time.

00:15:10 Katyria Figueroa

Autism inclusion You already know what a beautiful party it is, well, you sat down, you went and saw it.

00:15:15 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, yes, that was something spectacular. Sometimes I have had that as my profile on my social networks. No, I very much love. I remember that very well. YAnd I like YY whatever, I'm going to put the links once it's published.

00:15:30 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

I am going to put the links to all the social media pages of Mi Tierra in the episode.

00:15:35 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

So that then the audience that is watching us and that is not listening, then they can follow your page and they can learn more this and I And And I always tell them, I think I told you once, if you don't I'm wrong, if I don't tell you now for the first time, I say that we need many De Mi Tierra restaurants throughout the world for our food.

00:15:43 Katyria Figueroa

Of course.

00:15:56 Katyria Figueroa

Oh, don't forget the activities.

00:15:57 Katyria Figueroa

I do Ah.

00:15:57 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

The activities? Yes, yes and.

00:16:00 Katyria Figueroa

He says, this is the third year, yes, this is the third year that he did the activity. His name is Donald, a toy that gives a smile to.

00:16:08 Katyria Figueroa

Throughout Puerto Rico I collect dance toys for our community.

00:16:15 Katyria Figueroa

And this year they collected 1,456 toys. So at Christmas I bring an elf who has Down syndrome and Santa Claus with autism and we deliver gifts to different children with disabilities. This is the third year that I did it now in December and now this would be the fourth year that it is true that we continue with the tradition. It is a very nice project and it is a project that I love, I love that Christmas is coming.

00:16:44 Katyria Figueroa

To do the activity of delivering toys and they cooperate with me, the people cooperate with me, I saved myself in San Germán, it is one of the largest stores here in Puerto Rico that they give me.

00:16:57 Katyria Figueroa

Well, a countless number of people who, if I tell you, I won't finish, but there are many people who have supported me quite brutally since the first year that I started, well, the tradition and the project, so I invite you next year Let's see if you come and give me something in December.

00:17:13 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

The favorite dries up, I'm crazy out there for a Christmas in Puerto Rico that I haven't been in a long time.

00:17:20 Katyria Figueroa

Whenever you want.

00:17:21 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, I always tell people and I say it and they say what I said. The best Christmases are from our island, the best Christmases are from the coach, there is no, there is no, there is no competition, there is no.

00:17:28 Katyria Figueroa

In Puerto Rico cow yes.

00:17:32 Katyria Figueroa

Of course.

00:17:34 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Well Katyria, many blessings to you, always here for you and for your loved ones, for you, for the people in your restaurants and we will move forward.

00:17:36 Katyria Figueroa

Thank you my love, the same for you.

00:17:45 Katyria Figueroa

Thank you, my love, thank you for this and thank you for ensuring that the interview is so wonderful and that you are always handsome.

00:17:53 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Oh thank you well it's thanks to you how good this has been.

00:17:55 Katyria Figueroa

Ha ha ha.

00:17:58 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

A kind of.

00:17:58 Katyria Figueroa

Take care of yourself my love.