



CAROLINA MENDEZ
Passport Class of 2012
Assistant Clerk, Apellant Tax Board



RUBY OKECHUKWU
Passport Class of 2014
Registered Nurse, BSN Candidate



JIMMY DIAZ
Passport Class of 2016
Mechanical Engineering Major



AMAIA JOHNSON
Passport Class of 2020
Future School Counselor



JAROL MARTINEZ
Passport Class of 2019
Pre-Law Major



EMILY MELO
Passport Class of 2008
BPS Middle School Teacher

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

of Equipping Youth to Thrive in Higher Education



**BOSTON
HERC**
Destination...Greatness!

DEAR FRIENDS,

What does it take to close the opportunity and achievement gaps afflicting generations of first-generation Black and Latino youth? What does it take to alter the trajectory of a high school student's life?

For one thing, it takes time. For another, it takes dogged dedication to a mission. Since our founding in 1999 – now, 20 years ago – the Boston HERC has existed to equip first-generation students of color to achieve a higher education, break the grip of poverty, and become agents of change in their community. As part of that mission, our Passport Program connects 1 st-generation students of color, in the classrooms of (currently) 9 non-exam BPS high schools, with Passport Program Coaches – who are themselves 1 st-generation.

These are Coaches like *Neisha Gonzalez* ... and students like *Javier Suarez*. When they met in the classroom of BPS's Margarita Muñiz Academy five years ago, Javier resisted the idea of college. And told Neisha as much. But Neisha was tenacious. Javier graduates this May from Regis College with honors, having served as President of Regis' Latin American Student Organization. And Neisha? Neisha is now a Senior Program Coach training a cohort of new Passport Coaches to "failure-proof" students like Javier.

"It takes 20 years to make an overnight success," crooner Eddie Cantor once observed. It has taken the Boston HERC 20 years to develop a model, and nurture the relationships, to propel 200 first-generation Seniors per year on to college and to Boston's 21 st-Century workplace. There is Greatness in these youth. And we are just getting started. The goal is to see a Passport Coach in every non-exam BPS high school, as – together – we close the achievement gap, one Coach, and one Javier at a time.

For all you do to support Passport students, thank you,



SAM ACEVEDO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THANK YOU TO OUR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTNERS: Boston Community Leadership Academy, Brighton High School, Charlestown High School, Dearborn STEM Academy, East Boston High School, The English High School, Jeremiah E Burke High School, Josiah Quincy Upper School, and Margarita Muñiz Academy.

PROGRAM IMPACT

FY 2019



564

9th -12th grade

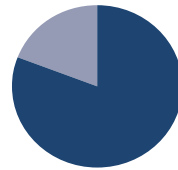
STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
PASSPORT TO COLLEGE



83% SENIORS (200) ENROLLED
IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



AT 33 DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS



81%

OF THE PASSPORT CLASS OF
2018 PERSISTED FROM THEIR
FIRST TO SECOND YEAR OF
COLLEGE*

**The single greatest indicator that students will graduate within 5 years.*



10,000+

HOURS OF PASSPORT WORKSHOPS



20

COLLEGE FIELD TRIP VISITS

2,500+

PASSPORT TO COLLEGE
ALUMNI TO DATE

POWERED BY

125+ PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS



8 BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTNERS



FROM PAST ALUM...

// PASSPORT GAVE ME ALL THE RESOURCES I NEEDED AND FOUGHT WITH ME AND FOR ME, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, TO GET TO COLLEGE. I AM SO GRATEFUL. //



...TO NEW GRADS

FLORECITA CARÍAS MEJIA, Boston HERC Class of 2003

Florecita is a Vice President at BNY Mellon, 10 years into a successful business career, who never takes anything for granted. She arrived to Massachusetts as a 6 year old from Guatemala and throughout her life, has pressed herself not to underestimate what she is capable of.

Florecita first considered college in her sophomore year of high school when the Boston HERC came to her youth group.

“There wasn’t anyone in my family who knew about college, it was a subject that never came up before that,” she says. Florecita shared her plan with her school guidance counselor and he laughed at her, asking her what business she had to be thinking about college. This shook Florecita for a moment, but being the poised young leader she was, she pressed on. She surrounded herself with positivity at Boston HERC and her church and dove into the SAT classes HERC offered. She explains, “Sam [the Executive Director] told me I could be anything I wanted to be, and I believed him.”

Through Boston HERC, Florecita was introduced to the scholarship program where she earned a full ride to Gordon College. She knew she wanted to succeed in business to be able to support her family and found a businesswoman mentor to help show her the ropes. While still in college, she interned at BNY Mellon and has continued moving up the ranks there ever since.

Today, Florecita is happily married with three beautiful children who she challenges to do all they can through hard work and faith and gives back in every way she can, including to the Boston HERC. She encourages today’s Passport students to “Never limit yourself. Go for your dreams. The worst that can happen is you don’t do well, but you will just get yourself back up and try again.”

ERICK JUAREZ, Passport Class of 2019

Erick Juarez is thriving at Gordon College majoring in computer science and linguistics, with a passion to make a difference for immigrant families. But in spite of his talent, he almost didn’t get to college at all.

Erick was the model Passport student: hard-working, joyful, and fluent in four languages. He was one of those kids who you just know is going to take off academically in college.

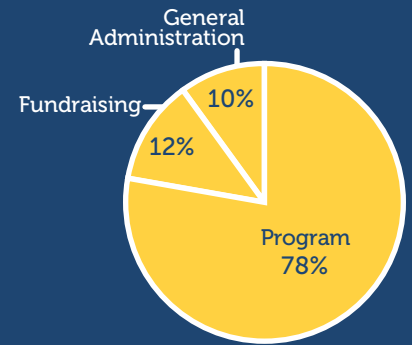
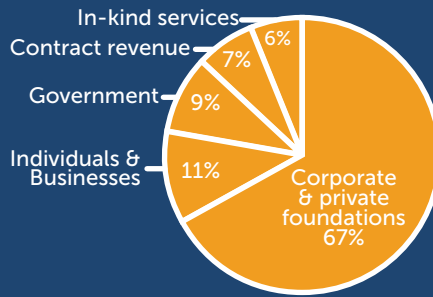
By last Spring, Erick was making his final college decision. But a few weeks before Decision Day, he went off the radar. As Erick describes, “I started doubting myself and I gave up on going to college. High school was sometimes hard and I didn’t think I could make it.” It’s a familiar circle of anxieties that can get the best of first generation students.

Coach Robert quickly put a plan together for Erick to get back on the college track. Most importantly, Robert made the trip up to Gordon College with Erick, where Erick met with professors and had lunch with Latino student group leaders. Erick says this was the day that “you made me realize I could do this.” He started remembering why he wanted to go to college in the first place: “I thought about how my parents sacrificed themselves to give me a better life in this country. I knew I could be the one to make the change in my family, to be the first to go to college.”

Now Erick is excelling at college, just as we knew he would. He credits Passport for preparing him: “Passport didn’t just concentrate on applications, it also taught us what college is about. I learned to use calendars and agendas for the first time. I also learned a lot about visiting and communicating with professors.” The sky is the limit for this young scholar, and the HERC team can’t wait to follow his journey.

AUDITED FINANCIALS

FY 2019



REVENUE AND SUPPORT: \$664,050.00

EXPENSES: \$615,554.00

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS: \$48,496.00

It takes a village to power the Boston HERC. Thank you to all of our philanthropic partners who make this work possible.

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For 20 years, the Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC), and its signature Passport to College Program, has equipped first-generation youth of color to gain access to a higher education, break the cycle of poverty, and become agents of change in their community. The program is Latino-led and culturally-sensitive, and dedicated to first-generation, low-income youth who are attending under-resourced, non-exam Boston Public High Schools.