



Resilience:
the capacity to recover
quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Dear Friends,

“Never let a good crisis go to waste,” counseled Winston Churchill. A year ago, few would have anticipated the world that lay ahead. The Boston HERC had to adapt quickly to face the unprecedented challenge of a global pandemic. Of course, Passport Coaches cannot meet with their Passport students in person until we can re-enter their school buildings. But our priority is to remain connected to our BPS first-generation Passport students in this season.

The same crisis that forced schools to close and sent Passport students home also served as a catalyst for the Boston HERC to create “a campus without walls” with Passport Coaches connecting with their students via a multi-tiered remote platform (via Zoom, emails, phone calls, and texts). This has allowed Coaches to connect deeply with their students – about their acceptance letters, financial award letters, scholarship applications, or just plain life in a frightening time. The crisis also served as a catalyst to provide, far earlier than we had envisioned, additional remote support services to our Passport Alumni. We are not through the crisis, but Passport students are resilient, as is the Boston HERC.

You make this work possible. It is possible with a team of persistent and dedicated staff and volunteers who deeply care for our students, but also with our philanthropic partners who have wasted no time in stepping up to the plate to offer emergency grants, strategize with us, and move program money to general operating funds to give us the flexibility we have needed to meet the needs of this time.

Thank you,



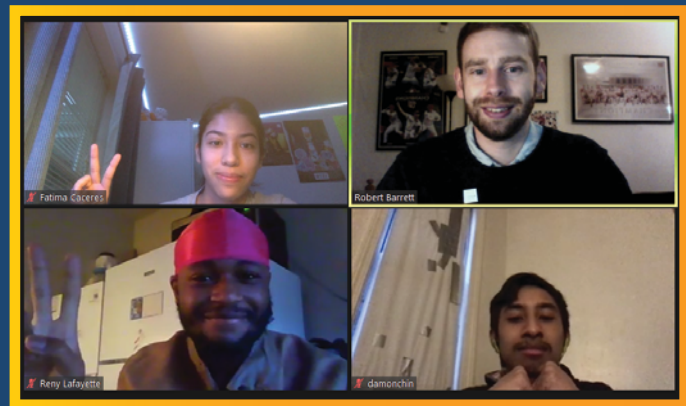
Sam Acevedo
Executive Director

PROGRAM IMPACT


SY 2019-2020

824 PASSPORT TO COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

At nine high schools and one community-based program.





 **97%**
OF 217 PASSPORT SENIORS GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL

 **81%**
ENROLLED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

 **150+**
ALUMNI ENGAGED IN PROGRAMING

 **9,700+**
HOURS OF WORKSHOPS

 LAUNCHED 4-WEEK [VIRTUAL] CAREER EXPLORATION CAMP FOR 9TH TO 12TH GRADERS

 77 STUDENTS JOINED A 10-WEEK WORKSHOP SERIES ON REMOTE LEARNING AND CAREER EXPLORATION



JESSENIA PINEDA,

Passport Class of 2016 and current BHCC student, CNA

Jessenia has the heart of a caretaker. Since she was young, she acted as head of household for her large family. She took people to appointments and physically cared for people at home. Sometimes she missed school at Margarita Muñiz Academy as a result and struggled with grades. When her Passport Coach, Neisha Gonzalez, told her that she could go to college, she was motivated to improve her grades to go to nursing school. But Jessenia's confidence took a hit in her first semester when her advisor told her the program would be too hard. She dropped out of college, bouncing around between retail jobs.

Over the years, Jessenia and Neisha stayed in touch. When Covid-19 hit, Jessenia lost her job and was pulling together donations to survive. With Neisha, she started imagining pursuing nursing again and mapped out a plan. Jessenia completed a CNA program and got a job on the frontlines of the pandemic as a CNA at Spaulding Hospital on the respiratory floor, often caring for patients dealing with the aftermath of Covid-19. She is taking classes at Bunker Hill to become an RN. She describes, "Other programs just drop you if you drop out of college. Passport was different, my Coach stayed with me after that."

The joy in Jessenia's voice is audible: "Now I really see the difference it makes to have a job that you love. For many years I was working retail, I didn't want to go. Now I love getting up, getting my scrubs on. If they ask me to pick up extra hours or stay longer, I do it. I feel so good taking care of my patients and I am so motivated to help them get home as quickly as possible to be with their families." She is also loving the flexibility that online classes give her. She can work at her own pace when she isn't at work. Her work helps reimburse classes, and she has other colleagues who are also pursuing their nursing degrees who keep her motivated.

Jessenia's hope is that her story will inspire others to keep striving towards their goals. Everyone's journey looks different, but persistence pays off.



IRENE SANTOS,

Passport Class of 2020, Regis College Class of 2024

This past Fall, Irene started classes at Regis College over Zoom, connecting to a campus where she had never set foot. Irene describes, "Some classes were recorded lectures, I had to be independent and teach myself. Sometimes my Wi-Fi would act up too, and sometimes professors thought I was just sleeping in. I was just feeling really angry being home all the time."

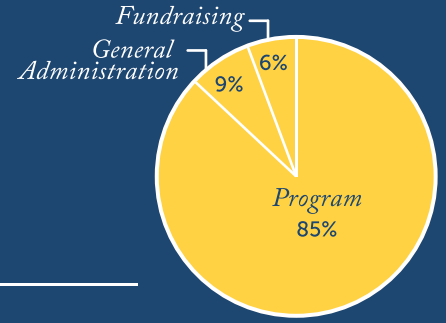
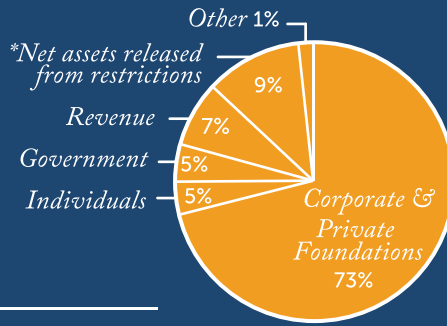
But Irene is proud to be someone who never gives up. She is the youngest sibling in her family and the first to go to college. "I want to change the trajectory of what is possible," she explains. Irene chose nursing because her parents have struggled with diabetes since she was young, and she often served as the family translator at medical appointments. She says, "sometimes neither my mom or I knew what to do and we'd go to the emergency room. With more knowledge, I know I could help her more, and also help a lot more people, especially because I speak two languages."

Even virtually, she has found ways to succeed. She visited professors during virtual office hours for help, and she often calls up her Passport Coach Robert, who she describes as a mentor, when she needs to talk through a challenge. Irene says Passport has played a role for her that no one else fills. She didn't have help from her guidance counselor and no one in her family was familiar with the college process. She adds, "Boston HERC is just really supportive too. You delivered groceries at times when my family was really struggling financially this year. It means a lot."

Irene finished her first semester with all A's and one B+ and feels much more confident. We have no doubt that she is going to help more people through her career than she can yet imagine.

AUDITED FINANCIALS

FY 2020



REVENUE AND SUPPORT: \$ 793,875.00

EXPENSES: \$ 646,292.00

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS: \$ 147,583.00

*Foundation grants raised in FY19 earmarked for FY20

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

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*East Boston High School
English High School
Jeremiah E. Burke High School*

*Josiah Quincy Upper School
Margarita Muñoz Academy
New Mission High School*



The Boston Higher Education Resource Center
62 Northampton Street, 4th floor
Boston MA 02118
bostonhere.org
617.221.6495

For 21 years, the Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC), and its signature Passport to College Program, has equipped first-generation youth to obtain a higher education, break the cycle of poverty, and become agents of change in their communities. 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.

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