



FULL CIRCLE

BOSTON HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR FRIENDS,

What does it mean to have come “full circle”? It has happened before. In 2014 Sheena Gail Powell, a BPS student and member of the Passport Class of 2010, came back “full circle” to the Boston HERC as a Passport Program Coach, after graduating from Boston College, the first in her family to earn a college degree. In the three years she served as a Coach (2014 to 2017), scores of first-generation Passport students from Charlestown and New Mission high schools followed suit, becoming the first in their families to go to college.

And it has happened again. In 2016 Ferlisa Comas crossed the stage as a member of Margarita Muñiz Academy’s first graduating class. Like many first-generation students at the Muñiz, Ferlisa had only recently immigrated to the United States; the Muñiz introduced the Boston HERC’s Passport Program that year specifically to support students like Ferlisa throughout their academic journey. For Ferlisa, an at-times harrowing college journey would follow – but the Boston HERC would remain a friend and a fan of Ferlisa throughout that journey. Until she graduated this year from UMass Boston. Just in time to become the first-ever Alumni Success Coach to serve the Boston HERC’s newly-minted Alumni Success Program. Ferlisa is now shepherding a cohort of first-generation Passport Alumni through their own college journey. Joyously, Ferlisa has come “full circle”.

Empowered by their own stories of transformation, these Boston HERC Alumni come back to their community as “agents of change” . . . as entrepreneurs . . . as public school teachers . . . as social workers . . . as nurses and physicians . . . as non-profit leaders. And, in one of the most beautiful expressions of “full circle”, they come back as vital members of the Boston HERC Team. Like Sheena. Like Ferlisa.

It takes time for a Sheena or a Ferlisa to come “full circle”. And it takes each of you, generous partners who believe that their “destination is greatness”. Perhaps even before they do. Thank you for helping us go the distance; thank you for helping them close the circle.

Thank you,



SAM ACEVEDO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PROGRAM IMPACT

SY 2020-2021



7
PASSPORT
COACHES

assigned to...



9
BPS HIGH
SCHOOLS



413
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

served...

CLASS OF 2021



100%
GRADUATION

209 of 209 Passport Program Seniors received their High School Diploma.

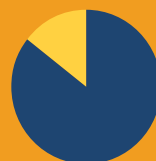


84.2%
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

176 of 209 Class of 2021 Passport Seniors enrolled in College or a postsecondary program.



96.5%
OF PASSPORT SENIORS WHO
ENROLLED IN THE SPRING
MADE IT TO CLASS IN THE FALL



84.8%
COLLEGE PERSISTENCE RATE
134 out of 158 alumni enrolled in college last fall are enrolled this fall.



FERLISA'S FULL-CIRCLE BROUGHT HER TO YOCARLY. YOCARLY'S FULL-CIRCLE WILL BRING HIM TO...ACHIEVING HIS OWN GREATNESS.

FERLISA COMAS Alumni Success Coach

Do something you love, have purpose, and get paid for it? Sounds too good to be true?

For Ferlisa Comas being able to give support to her students is what she wanted from the beginning. "I wanted to work with college students and I wanted a job that I loved". While participating in the Boston HERC five years ago, Ferlisa could not envision that one day her journey would lead her to become the first ever Alumni Success coach, here she is full-circle.

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Ferlisa moved to Boston in the 9th grade. She attended Margarita Muñiz Academy because she wanted to keep her Spanish heritage at the center of her studies. It was here that she learned of Boston HERC and connected with a coach who helped her apply to college.

Ferlisa graduated from Margarita Muñiz Academy and attended a foundation year at Northeastern University. For family reasons, Ferlisa needed to take time off from pursuing her education but she did not let this deter her. After a semester break Ferlisa transferred to Bunker Hill Community College and after completing two years transferred to UMass Boston, where she graduated in May 2021. Throughout her college experience Ferlisa maintained contact with her HERC coach who also assisted her in navigating the post college life.

Today, it is this relentless pursuit of achieving her college dreams that drives the work she does at HERC for her students. "I feel blessed!" she says. "I received so much support not only from HERC but other programs, like Success Boston, and I have the opportunity to give back what I once received." She knows she is making an impact when she hears from her students "Ferlisa, I do not know where I would be if it was not for you."

Ferlisa is one of many alumni. She knows there are more students in the City of Boston that would welcome the support of a coach. Her dream for the Boston HERC is simple: "I wish that we can hire more Alumni Success Coaches so that more alumni have access to these one-on-one relationships."



YOCARLY ALVAREZ Success Boston Participant

Yocarly Alvarez is among the first-ever 50 Passport Alumni enrolled in the Boston HERC's post-secondary Alumni Success cohort led by Passport Alumna, Felisa Comas.

Born and raised in the Dominican Republic, Yocarly moved to Boston when he was in the sixth grade. He attended the City on a Hill High School and connected with the Boston HERC as a sophomore. Currently he is a freshman at Bunker Hill Community College, studying criminal justice.

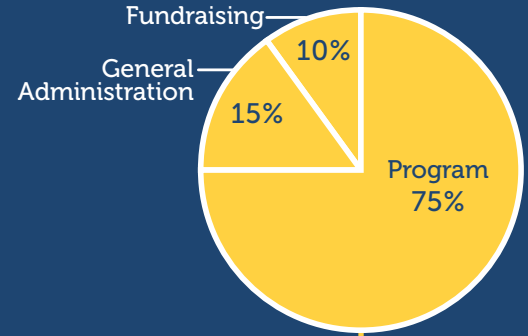
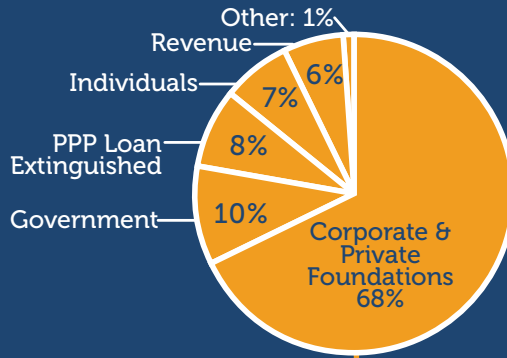
The Boston HERC prepared him for college. He always knew he wanted to go to college, but it was through "the help of my Passport Coach that actually guided me to make sure I applied and complete the necessary documents to get me here" he says. "I appreciated the help, especially around the college essay."

While he had one specific Coach at the Boston HERC, he certainly felt the support of many others at the organization that helped him with various aspects of the college application process as well as different life skills: time management being the most significant. Yocarly says "I would absolutely recommend HERC to other students. The Boston HERC prepared me so well with what was going to happen in college."

"If you are looking forward to going to college and need advice and help, it has to be the BOSTON HERC"

AUDITED FINANCIALS

FY 2021



REVENUE AND SUPPORT: **\$909,138.00**
 EXPENSES: **\$725,975.00**
 CHANGE IN NET ASSETS: **\$183,163.00**

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For over 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.