

Carlos Rosario School

FALL 2021 SEMESTER



Reopen and Ready to Serve!

These past two years have been challenging for everyone, especially those in our school community. Many of our adult learners had to tackle the challenges of completing their education while also supporting their children's virtual learning. Some were left out of federal and local aid programs, causing financial hardships. And others had to adjust their academic plans to accommodate for shifting work schedules and growing demands on their time. To support our community, we distributed over 1,500 internet-enabled devices, raised over \$45,000 for our student emergency fund to support 110 students experiencing food and housing insecurity, distributed over 1,100 food boxes on-site, and served as a community vaccination site!

And yet, despite these challenges, our learners persevered.

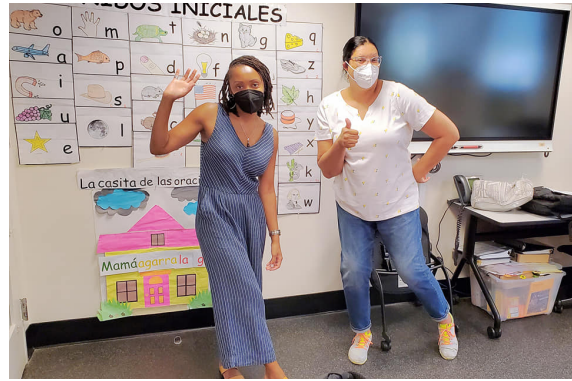
Today marks the first day of the Fall 2021 semester and as we reopen, we want you to know that we are here and ready to serve. We've developed three instructional models that will accommodate our learners' diverse needs and levels of comfort while ensuring high-quality programming. Our students will learn in-person, virtually, or will attend classes in a hybrid model (a combination of in-person and virtual). We believe these options will give students the support they need to continue achieving their goals.

Additionally, we've cleaned and sanitized our buildings, are enacting strict vaccination and testing protocols, and modified our facilities to allow for greater social distancing. We will also continue to adhere to health and safety guidelines from the CDC, and the DC Department of Health. The health and safety of our learners, staff, and community are a top priority as we plan to reopen, ready to serve.

However, **what is most exciting for this Fall is to see so many smiling faces back in our buildings, on video, and in classrooms.** Last week, our staff and faculty welcomed applicants and new students during registration and device pick-up. We were also joined by alumni from our IT program, who are volunteering to support device setup.

As a school community, our challenges don't define us. We are defined by how we persevere, stand in the face of adversity, and support one another. As we return to school this year, we want you to know that we are reopening and ready to serve.

In service,



Meet Vida

Life circumstances may have interrupted Vida's journey through school while she was younger, but our proud GED student never lost sight of her dreams.

When Vida was growing up, women were not encouraged to pursue an education as they were expected to marry and become a housewife. School was for men to study, earn a diploma, and find a good job. Eventually, pressure from society and her family caught up to her and she dropped out of school. Vida felt she had no other option than to take a chance and move away.



She came to the United States from her native Ghana in 1975. Vida worked hard for years in the hotel industry, taking care of herself and her daughter. Like many others in hospitality, Vida lost her job due to the pandemic. Not one to let challenging times stop her, Vida enrolled at the Carlos Rosario International School.

At the Carlos Rosario School, Vida found teachers and staff dedicated to helping students.

“Here [at the Carlos Rosario School], you can get everything you want. It is a place where people who have been forgotten in their societies, who

*are desperate for their future can find hope, education, and can thrive,”
said Vida.*

Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by our School, Vida is aiming higher. She began her journey by joining our ESL classes to improve her English. She began ESL 6 and graduated from Advanced English. Vida then continued with computer literacy class, where students learn how to use devices and navigate software and applications, including email. She has now completed our GED 100 class and has now advanced onto the GED 200 class. In addition to the GED program, and to the delight and encouragement of her daughter, Vida also signed up for computer classes. Once she has her GED in hand, Vida’s goal is to become a teacher. [Learn more about Vida’s story here.](#)

Continuous Innovation

Throughout the pandemic, we sought to find innovative solutions to support our students and community. We were able to make our ideas a reality through generous grant funding. Here are two of those projects and the impact they’re having!

Project Altruismo

Project Altruismo aims to develop the capacity of English language learning parents in our District by expanding equitable access to various workshops that help close the digital divide and present opportunities to support both families and schools. This project was developed and is led by Keith Juarez, Assistant Principal, and Elsa Haile, Evening Coordinator. Our school saw the rising need in connecting parents in our communities to resources tailored for them. As a result of Project Altruismo, participants have provided diverse content and resources in their native language, new and/or continued relationships, and created a sense of community. Workshops are delivered by a pool of 15 internal Carlos Rosario School presenters fluent in English, Spanish, and Amharic. Having this large pool of presenters provides us the flexibility to deliver the workshops at varying schedules as our partner schools request workshops at different times including weekends and evenings.

As of this month, seven workshops have been delivered to local schools and have four scheduled for the month of September. We have renewed and continued interest for the rest of the 2021-22 school year. Interested schools attended information sessions to learn more about the workshops and give feedback on specific community needs. [Learn more here.](#)

Small Business Virtual Marketplace and Technical Assistance Project

We recently soft-launched the [CR Small Business Virtual Marketplace Portal](#), a platform that features 20 of our small business vendors. The virtual marketplace is only a piece of this amazing business support project. Our 20 selected vendors have received technical assistance through the project, including workshops on marketing, operations management, scalability, pricing and cost of goods, and use of social media platforms. Workshops have been supported by Raul Medrano, Angela Neira, Carolina Gomez, and Jennifer Underwood as technical experts. Additionally, we offered participants professional media services through Washington Digital Media. As a result of technical assistance received, participants have created and improved business websites; created inventory management systems; improved or created their social media presence and self-marketing techniques; many have

also improved their storytelling and presentation skills.

Support our vendors by shopping on the portal[here!](#) Find local restaurants, shop for a gift (jewelry, handmade crafts); and even catering or organizers for your next event! Share with family and friends.

Doubling our Investment in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For the last two years, we've been continuously invested in our approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and yet we recognize that there is still more work to be done. As we plan to reopen, ready to serve all our school community, here are some of the ways we are centering equity:

- Our Board of Trustees has developed a plan to work with the Senior leadership team and the school community to move forward on our DEI goals. We continue to encourage our learners, staff, and the broader school community to engage with us on this journey.
- Ensuring that no Carlos Rosario School student is excluded from continuing their learning through providing internet-enabled laptops to each student; and three modes of learning.
- Continuing to provide equitable opportunities for adult immigrants and learners in the District of Columbia. Including career paths, accessible education, and culturally responsive language accessibility.

Get ready for the Achieving the Dream Campaign

There's nothing more important this year than helping our students achieve their dreams. That's why we're launching our annual Achieving the Dream campaign over the coming weeks and months. We would love your support in raising \$180,000 for student scholarships. Stay tuned for more from our school soon!

[Click here to learn more or pledge your support.](#)

[Donate now!](#)

Questions about giving?

Contact Alejandra Amaroli at aamaroli@carlosrosario.org.