

VIP

VIP Interview with United Through Volleyball

VIP 4th Annual Summer Service Project

First Day of School 2021

Dealing with school during COVID-19

Year 6
No. 27
FREE
Miami FL. Nov 2021

Very Important Purpose is hosting our fourth annual sleep-away summer service project for teens in Middle School and High School. We will be hosting this summer service project for six weeks. Teens who participate will be able to serve their community in various ways throughout the week. Each teen will receive up to 100 hours of community service at the end of their stay.

- Teens who participate will be able to serve their community in various ways throughout the week. Each teen will receive UP TO 100 hours of community service at the end of their stay.
- The teens will learn teamwork, communication skills, and leadership skills.
- They will gain an appreciation for their everyday life while working and helping local organizations.
- They will participate in daily forums with guests via Zoom that will encourage them to love themselves and others.
- They will have the opportunity to participate in various activities such as soccer, volleyball, Zumba, yoga, etc.
- They will be able to cook, bake, and participate in everyday routines.
- Activities such as Talent Shows, Karaoke Night, and Game Night will be part of scheduled activities.
- Throughout the week, students will work with different organizations like La Ventana de Los Cielos, The Ronald McDonald House Charity, Foster Care Systems, Humane Society of Greater Miami, a Beach Clean-up, and more.

It will be mandated that all campers receive the COVID-19 test and come back NEGATIVE in the days following up to the Summer Service Project. To ensure safety throughout the camp, all campers will have access to masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, etc.

Our 2022 Summer Service Project Dates are as follows:

There will be a parent meeting held via Zoom prior to the Camp (TBA)

- July 11th - July 16th (Boys)
- July 18th - July 23rd (Girls)
- July 25th - July 30th (Middle School)
- August 1st - August 6th (Boys)
- August 8th - August 13th (Girls)
- August 15th - August 20th (Boys)

Summer Camp Price: $800.00 per student

Price Includes:

- Accommodation at our Homestead Cabin “El Escondite”
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner all full days
- Transportation to all facilities
- 4 shirts that must be worn when out of the cabin














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SPECIAL THANKS FOR THIS EDITION:
All our partners for the Summer Service Project
(see page 13)

FRONT COVER PHOTOSHOOT BY:
Jessie Vee Photography



United Through Volleyball Interview Questions

1. **What is United Through Volleyball?**
2. **How long have you guys been playing Volleyball?**
3. **What sparked you to start this non Profit?**
4. **What is the mission of United Through volleyball?**
5. **What type of donations do you guys collect?**
6. **Who does United Through Volleyball aim to help the most?**
7. **Could you share an example or story that has motivated the work you guys do with United Through Volleyball?**
8. **What made you fall in love with volleyball?**
9. **How can our followers and viewers help support the work you guys do in United Through Volleyball?**
10. **What do you hope to have accomplished in United Through Volleyball over the next 5 years?**



1. In this organization, we collect gear, used or new, from players in different clubs in order to send them to the less fortunate volleyball girls in the Dominican Republic.

2. When we were both 8, we started playing at our elementary/middle school. After experimenting there for a season, we realized we loved this sport and wanted to go further in it. We started playing club at around 10 years old.

3. We have been blessed to play with all the right equipment for this sport, and wanted to give back to the ones who unfortunately aren't. Playing volleyball can be expensive, most of the money goes into uniforms that change every season. Being able to collect these uniforms can help many families, some even have to pay thousands of dollars every year.

4. Our end goal is to be able to give out the gear and equipment collected and being able to see all he young girls smile. The volleyball world is one big family and we want to make sure everyone is able to achieve their dream.

5. We receive volleyball gear: knee pads, spandex, practice shirts, volleyball sneakers, etc. If there is someone that does not own volleyball gear, we are open to accepting any type of running shoes and any type shorts and shirts that can be used to play sports.

6. Our target is to help the young girls that are less fortunate in the Dominican Republic. These girls do not have the resources to play with safe and correct gear, so we want to facilitate that.

7. Karla is Dominican and travels to her country often. On one of her trips, she was able to see one of her cousins play volleyball, and noticed that they were using the wrong gear. Seeing this gave her the idea of helping those girls that did have a lot of potential, but just the wrong equipment.

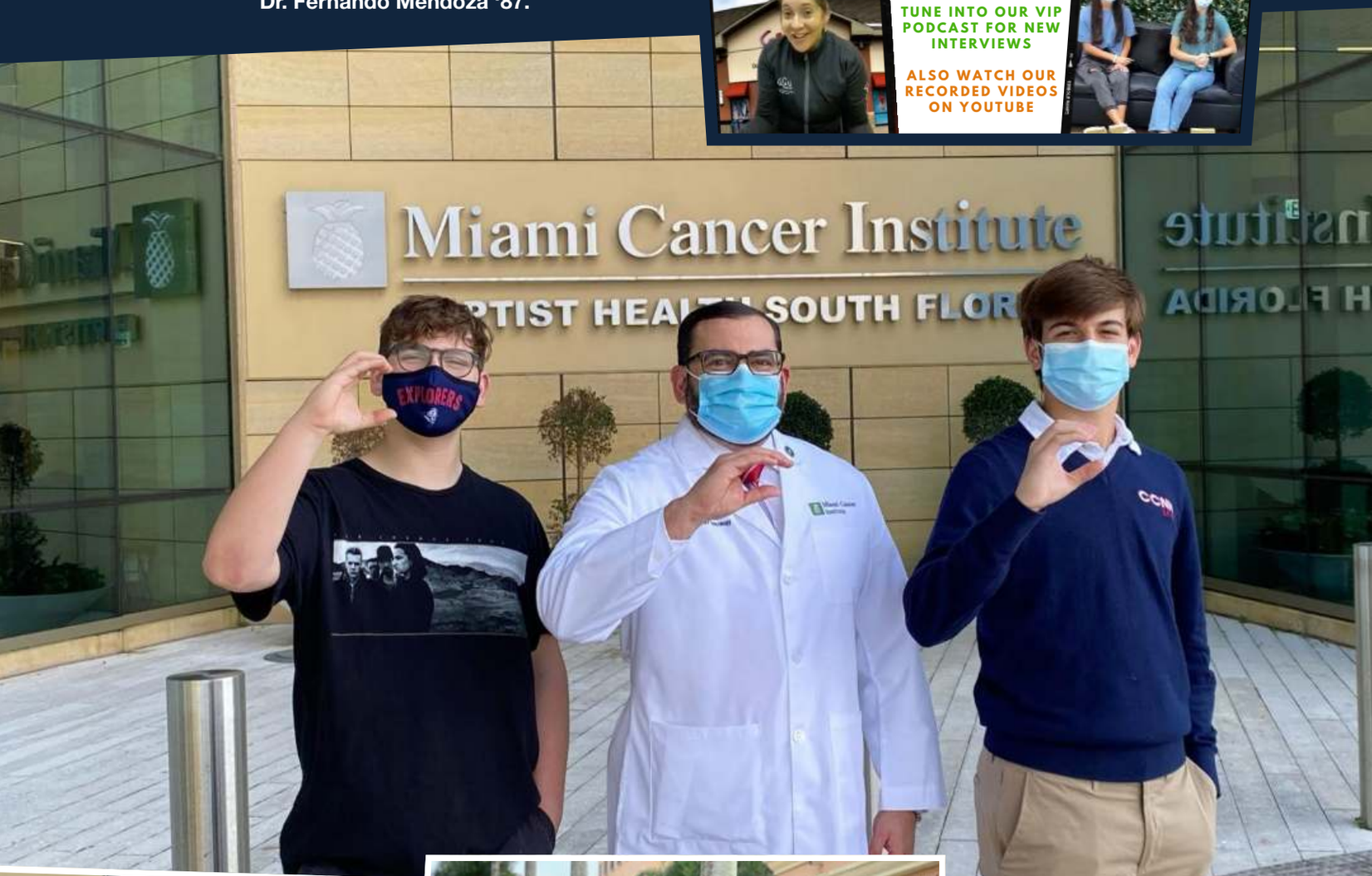
8. Since we started together and still play together, we have become a family. By becoming a family, it makes playing the game fun and makes us love the sport.

9. The followers can always help by just spreading the word of the organization, like reposting our posts and giving people a heads up about us. We never know who we might be talking to, so it's always good to give them invormation about the organization.

10. In 5 years, we hope our organizations expands, and we just don't only help the Dominican Republic girls, but the rest of the Caribbean. Since Corona hit us hard, we have been slowed down and very soon we will send our first delivery. Once we send our first delivery, we will just grow off of that.

As part of Christopher Columbus High School's CCNN Live program (Christopher Columbus News Network), a few Juniors and Freshman had the opportunity to visit Baptist Hospital and discuss COVID-19 research. CCNN Live's students Manny Naccarato '22, JP Garcia Casala '22, Mikey Novo '22 and Tommy Pozo '22 interviewed Columbus Alumni Dr. John Diaz '94 and Dr. Fernando Mendoza '87.











Article & photo credits to Christopher Columbus High School and CCNN Live on Facebook

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Getting Through School with the COVID-19 Pandemic





Your Name?
My name is Francisco Fernandez.

What is your age & what grade level are you in?
I'm 17 years old and am a Junior in highschool.

What school do you go to?
I go to Belen Jesuit Preparatory School.



Are you currently attending school virtually or in person?
I'm going to school through in-person classes.



What safety measures have been put into place as you've returned to in-person classes?
Belen has been very careful in making sure we all wear masks, consistently wash our hands, and wipe all high touch areas like our desks.



How has moving to virtual classes changed the way you learn, do extra curricular activities, and finish assignments?
Moving to virtual classes has honestly made me less active in all aspects of my day. Especially when doing homework, it almost felt optional and the incentive just honestly wasn't there.





How have you personally been affected by COVID-19?
I had COVID-19 in July but I only lost my taste and smell temporarily. My social life and ability to make plans to go out has basically been cut in half.

Christopher Columbus High School Class of 2020

by. Alexander Joel “AJ” Someillan

To put it simply, when school shut down, I was devastated. As a senior, it was really tough to comprehend the fact that I am no longer going to reap the benefits that all previous classes got: wearing the senior polos during the fourth quarter, going to grad bash, going to senior prom, and most importantly, going to my own graduation.

I’ve gone to plenty of graduations and, if I am being real, all of them were very, very boring. However, even though this several hour event felt like a drag at times, it was still something that I looked forward to from the moment I stepped into the halls of Christopher Columbus High School.

When I got the news that graduation was officially not going to be the same, I was disappointed, but I knew that the administration of CCHS had something up their sleeve. I knew that they weren’t going to let us go out like this. Time went by and a ton of things were getting canceled: grad bash, prom, etc. Time was running out, but then the CCHS Instagram posted something that made my jaw drop...graduation was going to be on the Homestead Speedway!

Man, was I excited! I had been to the speedway several times to work stories for CCNN Live and I had seen the annual race on my TV since I was a little kid. Being able to enter the speedway and actually take victory laps in my own car seemed like a pipedream, but it was actually soon to be a reality.

When I had arrived at the speedway with my family on the morning of June 20th, I knew it was going to be a special one. The way they had set up the track and stage was beautiful and it seemed like the pandemic had mysteriously disappeared for a few hours.

As I took several victory laps around the speedway and received my diploma, I was so proud and elated to call myself a Columbus Explorer. I had worked so hard to make it to this point and the school awarded the Class of 2020 in a way that I think is even better than the traditional graduation!

I’d love to take this opportunity to thank the administration of Christopher Columbus High School, but especially Mr. Thomas Kruczek for giving us seniors an amazing year, in his first year as School President. Mr. David Pugh and the rest of the staff at CCHS seriously made the Class of 2020 one that will never be forgotten, and I will never forget that.

VIP305MIAMI **CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

VIP305Miami held our first ever bazaar, Christmas Bazaar, on December 12th and December 13th. The event was held at our foundation and was a great success! Vendors and non-profit organizations were invited to participate in the event to help promote their small business, as well as promote our local non-profit organizations. The following is a list of vendors and non-profit organizations who participated in our Christmas Bazaar.











Vendors:

AB's Magical Shop @absmagicalshop
Alexa's Boutique MIA @alexasboutiquemia
Anita's Baking Delights @AnitasBakingDelights
Ari's Dipped Berries @arisdippedberries
Bella McGrath @mcgrathswimwear
Bolivian Groove @bolivian_groove
Cary Castro Designs @Carycastrodesigns
Coco Be Jewelzz @cocobejewelzz
Coffee Vibes Miami @coffeevibesmiami
Cosmic Herbals @cosmicherbals
Ditacchio Design @ditacchiodesign
D.R. Horton @drhorton
Dos Frijoles Y Un Cubano @dosfrijolesyuncubano
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Everything a Girl Wants @Everythingagirlwants_
Empanada Empress @empanadaempress
Faith Then Grace Designs @faiththengrace
Floretta Florals @floretta_florals
Formaggi E Vino @Formaggievino
G&A Custom Co. @gacustomco
Gabby's Gluten Free Goodies @gabbysgfgoodies
Jennys Marbled Joys @jennysmarbledjoys
Jewelry By Priss @jewelrybypriss
Liz-Couture, LLC @lizcoutureboutique
Miami Beauty Barn @miamibeautybarn
Miami Chains @miami.chains
Oh My Flan LLC @ohmyflan
Samis Handmade Jewelry @samis_handmade_jewelry
Smile @Smilehandmadecrafts
Tikiz 305 @tikiz305
Temporada By Sara @temporadabysara
The Real Crush Box @therealcrushbox
The Miami Mug Shop @themiamimugshop
Trapos Boutique @trapos_fashion

Non-profit Organizations:

Bandhwari Womens Project @ibhs_bandhwari
Fight Like a Kid @fight_like_akid
I See You @iseeyou305
United Through Volleyball @unitedthroughvolleyball
Very Important Purpose @vip305miami
Warm Ears, Warm Hearts Foundation @warmearswarmhearts

First Day of School 2021



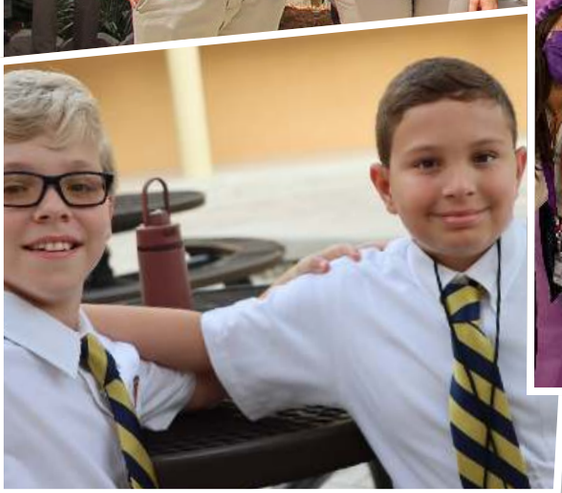
















Guide to Fitness

Tips on How to Be the Best Version of YOU

By. Amanda Vazquez
VIP Ambassador
Sophomore at St. Brendan High School

"There is no pill that comes close to what exercise can do," says Claude Bouchard, director of the human genomics laboratory at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana. "And if there was one, it would be extremely expensive."

Fitness is the measure of physical health and ability. Being physically fit is worth while, and here's why...

Did you know that fitness and exercise can make you happier? Exercise has the ability to increase the production of endorphins, a natural hormone known to contribute to overall happiness, in your body. As we all know, fitness also contributes to weight loss and muscular stability, in turn, reducing our risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Other benefits include better sleep and relaxation quality, clarity of kind, improved memory, clear skin, and chronic pain relief. Ultimately, fitness can treat depression and chronic disease, and offers worthwhile benefits, all while being enjoyable. I know that may seem like a false statement, but I promise if you keep reading you'll agree with me by the end.



1. A Healthy Diet

Don't jump to conclusions, I'm not putting you on an actual diet. You don't need to say "no" to the foods you genuinely enjoy in order to be fit.

What you need to do is say "yes" to incorporating more nutrient dense foods into your daily life as well.

Instead of eating Frosted Flakes for breakfast seven days a week, why don't you try eating some eggs a few times too? Once you understand that food is your body's fuel and you need to eat the absolute best to help it function to its maximum, you'll be set. Forget about counting calories. Forget about cutting out carbs. Eat your carbs, and your fats, and your protein. Your body loves all that! Just remember that your body will forever be yours, so learn to love it, and treat it with respect

Things you should work on to be the fittest version of yourself:

2. Perks of H2O

Yes. You actually need to drink water in order to function. Water is not only a necessity, but also the secret to clearer skin, less cellulite, more energy, etc. The trick is to drink half your body weight in ounces. So, if you weigh 120lbs, you should be consuming at least 60oz of water a day.

Water may not always be fun to drink, so you could always try adding lemon, watermelon, cucumber, or any fruit of your choice for that matter.

It's really about what works for you and your body. I also highly suggest investing in a gallon or half gallon water bottle. You fill it up once a day and drink that one bottle at your own pace. You can get one on Amazon, or even make your own with an empty water/milk jug and decorate it to your liking.













3. Exercise

This one is crucial. But, don't think it's necessarily crucial to run 3 miles a day...unless you like that, then go right ahead. I'm talking about a nice morning walk before breakfast, or a bike ride with mom, or even Just Dance. It's important to keep your body moving!

Now I already listed the long list of benefits from working out, so I'll keep this brief. If you're looking for really good exercise, I highly recommend HIIT cardio.

First of all, it gives you all of the benefits of running/walking/swimming cardio, but in the comfort of your own home (especially important in a time like this). HIIT cardio, also known as high intensity interval training, intensely works your body for a short amount of time (10-20 minutes), and leaves it burning calories for 48 hours after. Running only burns calories till you're done, but HIIT leaves your body working for two days straight! Consider that next time you're in the mood to work out!

P.S. Other AMAZING workouts you can explore are Yoga, Pilates, Strength and Training/Weight Lifting.

Now, why don't you try it? Go for a walk. Drink some water. Fuel your body. Who knows, you might just enjoy it...

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Very important Purpose

Vip Summer Service Project Camper Spotlight:

Matthew Morales Senior at Christopher Columbus Highschool

My experience at VIP 305 Miami Summer Service Project was quite good and I had a nice time over the course of the 5 days. I'd say it had a large impact on how I viewed service hours as beforehand I had always viewed them as a drag and something to not look forward to. I no longer dread working on service projects because I had such a good time and I really enjoyed working at VIP summer service project camp.











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We would like to thank the following organizations and businesses for dedicating their time to our campers throughout our VIP Summer Service Project.

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@themindsetpodcast

Dos Frijoles Y Un Cubano
@dosfrijolesyuncubano

VIP Beauty
@vip_makeup_hair

Pradas Bunch and Friends
@pradasbunchandfriends

Very Important Purpose
@vip305miami

Fundacion Entre Nosotras
@fundacionentrenosotrasmiami

GiGi's Playhouse
@gigisplayhousemiami

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



Luciana Macli
Doral Academy Senior

My name is Luciana Macli. I am from Miami, Florida but my parents are from Argentina. Some things we do are weekly asados with the entire family. We normally all meet at someone's house and eat picada and empanadas before we stuff ourselves with carne, chorizo and morcilla. We normally end the asado with different dessert assortments such as: chocotorta, which is chocolate cookies covered in milk and layered with queso crema and dulce de leche, alfajores de maizena and pretty much anything that involves dulce de leche. Another tradition we have is drinking mate. Mate is a caffeine-rich drink where hot water is poured in a container that contains dried leaves. The drink is passed around and is a way to bring people together.





Bani Gomez
Slam Miami Sophomore

Although I have lived in the United States my whole life, since my mother immigrated here before I was born I still have adapted a lot of my Venezuelan culture. Some traditions we keep are our religion, the way Spanish is spoken, traditional food, and celebrating holidays that come from Venezuela. My favorite out of all of these is our traditional food from Venezuela like arepa, tequenos, cachapa, and Hallcas to name a couple. I feel that food is especially important at least to me because it gives a sense of home that food in restaurants here cannot give.



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Congratulations to the Divine Savior Academy Cross Country team who placed 3 runners in the top 10 at the Larry Wooten Invitational on Thursday!
The Sharks were led by sophomore Jo Nunez followed by senior Sebastian Tenorio and freshman Mateo Sotelo.

Great job, go Sharks!





PACE celebrated an important win for the Girls Volleyball Senior Night and not only did they recognize their 3 graduating seniors, but they celebrated a back-to-back win against
iMater! We are so proud of you ladies!



The Sabres girls' cross country team had an outstanding weekend!





The varsity team competed at the Bishop Verot Invitational in Fort Myers, Florida, where they competed against 24 other schools. The team put forth an outstanding effort and finished in 2nd place! The team was led by Emma Hencock, who came in 3rd place overall and lowered her school record to 18:57. The remaining top 5 scorers were: Kaycie Aquilino, Daniela Alvarez, Gaby Page and Rachel Fernandez.
The JV cross country stayed in Miami to race in the STU Bobcat Catholic Schools Invitational where they took on other schools' varsity teams. The team finished in 1st place overall! The team was led by senior Leila Gonzalez who came in fourth overall to continue her strong senior year. The remaining top 5 scorers were: Kairen Vivas, Cristyl Rodriguez, Kaile Martin and Andrea Avila.

What do you enjoy the most about driving?

What is the best thing about driving / What do you enjoy about driving?

Driving is basically a necessity on the modern world, but it can still be dangerous if you are not adequately trained and have bad driving skills. That is why it is imperative that people learn how to drive safely so they can avoid collisions at any time while driving. The best thing about driving is that it gives you more freedom and more independence.



My name is Carlo Monzon. It is a family owned business and I am the President.

1. What types of services do you offer at the Andina Driving School?

We offer a comprehensive training program: learner's permit online and in class; defensive driving programs, road test, traffic school, and refresher driving program for those who have stopped driving for any reason.



2. How does driving school essentially work?

We provide the necessary tools to obtain a learner's permit and driver's license. We make sure that students learn how to drive safely, and defensively. In addition, we make sure that our students learn how to recognize the road signs, abide by the rules that are set by the Florida Division of Highway Administration (FDHA) while driving a vehicle.

3. How Important do you think signing up for driving lessons is?

I believe it's crucial. Learning how to drive with a certified driving instructor teaches one how to become a safer and more defensive driver. A top tier driving program prepares students in a way that an informal driving session cannot. Our program offers a comprehensive program as well as a comfortable and easy-going experience. It will feel like you are driving with a family member. That is our goal.

4. What driving courses would you recommend students to practice before taking their actual driving test?

We have different defensive driving program for everyone. Everyone is different, but feel free to call for a consultation.

5. What driving strategies do you teach in the Andina Driving School?

We emphasize the defensive driving framework. Though driving can be a freeing and recreational experience, it also comes with a great responsibility. Our program not only teaches students how to be in control of their movements but also be prepared for the driving of others.

6. How has Andina Driving School been able to ensure the safety of students and drivers during the Coronavirus pandemic?

With the era of Covid, we are living unprecedented times. This has caused all of us to be hyperaware of safety and sanitation. It is no different with our business. We make sure we wipe down our vehicles in between lessons, we offer hand sanitizer, wipes, and everyone is required to wear a mask. If someone has been infected, we stopped the lessons for a least two weeks, and require a proof of Covid test with a negative result. Aside from taking extra safety precautions, we offer a friendly and enjoyable experience for our students.

7. Could you tell us about a situation where your role as a driving instructor was truly tested?

We love to hear feedback from our students, be it positive or constructive criticism on how we can improve. Thus far – we have had great reviews. We train our drivers to be friendly and patient to ensure that on one has a bad experience no matter their driving skills. We all the share the road so we are all in this together!

8. What sets Andina Driving School apart from any other driving schools in Miami?

Andina Driving School has been operating and providing great service to the community for the past 30 years. We take our job seriously and are committed to teaching student how to drive safely. We make sure our instructors take their continuing education courses required by the state. We at Andina Driving School know that everyone wants to feel confident when driving, be it a teenager or an adult who is learning to drive for the first time. That is why we have gathered information from clinicians, researcher, driving instructors, educators. As a result, we at Andina our instructors are proud to say that our school has been recognized with driving awards by the city and state for many years. Come join us!

9. Where is your office located and how could our readers schedule a driving lesson at Andina Driving School?

Our physical address is **8584 SW 8TH ST. Miami, FL 33144** (inside festival plaza). Scheduling can be done via: email at **info@andinadrivingschool.com** or phone at **305-385-7272** or **305-271-8117**.



GOT GOAT?

BY: Maria Virginia Dinnella-Borrego, Belen's Communications Specialist

When Belen mom, Ana Lucia Rincon made the pilgrimage, El Camino de Santiago de Compostela in 2010, she asked God to help her find a mission, a greater purpose for her life. It was on that rugged path that she found not only what, but who she was looking for - Fr. Theodore Ilunga from the remote province of Kasai Oriental deep in the Democratic Republic of Congo,"He was praying for someone to help him. He was talking about Kasai and how kids go to school, and I said I want to help you. Our family wanted to get involved immediately."

In a 2018 report, UNICEF categorizes the challenges of the Kasai district as a children's crisis. More than 1 in 10 children die before the age of 5, while half of the region's children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. The report goes on to say, "The current situation in Kasai is a perfect storm of poverty, deprivation, and conflict for the most vulnerable children." Their suggested solution - "with a well-planned response and sufficient funds, they will have a better chance of weathering the storm."







Through Hope for Kasai, the Rincon family has been doing just that since 2012, in spite of continued violence and political turmoil in the area. They have partnered with schools across South Florida to fund water and building projects including a maternity clinic, a church and soon, a new school building.

But raising money is not the only way that HFK serves the people of Kasai. An important component is that students personally give to help their fellow students on the other side of the world have a good education. Rincon said in a 2013 interview by the Florida Catholic, "It's easy to give money. I want them to give of their time and effort."

Among the projects put forth by South Florida students range from collecting pencils and school supplies to sewing dresses and headbands to providing sports uniforms and equipment to enhance, not only their learning experience, but also help the boys and girls have the opportunity for recreational activities.
In 2016, Rincon's son, Manuel '21 and his classmates David and Nicolás Alarcon '21, wanted to build their own project for HFK at Belen Jesuit. "Ever since I was 8 years old Hope For Kasai has been a part of my life, and I always wanted to find a way to help on my own."

After learning that the monthly cost for a child in Kasai to attend school of $30 per month was prohibitively expensive for most families. Manuel and the Alarcons brainstormed to find a way that could give families a recurring revenue source to not only feed their families, but have enough funds to educate the average 4-5 children per household.

David shared the research that went into their choice. "While looking at the society of Kasai, we noticed that their main source of commerce was goats. Goats are multifunctional, they give the people all the necessary tools needed for survival, whether that be food, milk, a job, or a purpose." With that, the "Got Goat?" project was born.

"I'm very proud of these young men," said Margarita Guerrero, club moderator. "They are doing something out of the box and helping the people of Kasai. In addition to the goats, the club has done a pencil drive for the school there; our donation of hundreds of pencils was much appreciated as pencils are treasured by the children."

By the end, the club raised enough funds to sponsor 27 goats. That summer, they traveled for two days to reach the village of Mpiana Ntita. "Seeing the children chasing after the van we were in filled me with a joy unlike any I had ever experienced. It made the wear and tear from the travel disappear almost instantly," said Nicolás. His brother David echoed his feelings, "The culture in the Congo is beautiful; the singing, dancing, and traditions are filled with passion. Meeting the families and the children when we distributed the goats filled me with a sense of joy I had never felt."

Manuel emphasizes how the goat is truly a gift that keeps on giving, "These families are able to sell the goat offspring and goat's milk to make a profit. Being able to educate the younger generations would allow the village to eventually advance as a whole."







SPECIAL CORNER: INTERVIEW WITH GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE

1. What is GiGi's Playhouse?

GiGi's Playhouse was created to change the way the world views a Down syndrome diagnosis and send a global message of acceptance for all. We understand that many families are first time parents and they need us. Many young parents do not expect, or know in advance of their child's diagnosis, and they need renewed hope and genuine acceptance from day one. At GiGi's Playhouse families are never alone. From a prenatal diagnosis to career skills, we make a lifetime commitment to remain by their side. Families are empowered with all the tools their child needs to succeed! Back in the summer of 2002, Nancy Gianni gave birth to her beautiful daughter, GiGi. She quickly realized that GiGi could do the very same things that her other children do! What began as a mother's vision to change perception, and maximize her daughter's successes, has evolved into a global movement of acceptance. Nancy needed to get GiGi, and her other children, ready for the world ahead – and get the world ready for GiGi!
The very first Playhouse was created to be an inspirational and dedicated place for families to celebrate their child and benefit from free, purposeful programs that unleash joy, confidence and continuous improvement. More than 48 Playhouses empower children and adults to achieve their "Best of All" and to pursue their dreams.



2. When did you start working & being a part of GiGi's Playhouse?

In 2018 I decided to go to the first GiGi's Playhouse in Chicago because I wanted to meet other babies, children and adults with Down syndrome since my daughter Alejandra was diagnosed with Down syndrome. From the moment I stepped into the playhouse I felt welcomed and was congratulated on my daughter Alejandra's diagnoses, I felt like we were home. I was able to see all the free programs that GiGi's Playhouse provided to the families and that was when I realized that I needed to bring this nonprofit organization that is GiGi's Playhouse to our community.

3. What is it that inspired you to open your own GiGi's Playhouse location?

My inspiration to open my own GiGi's Playhouse was my daughter Alejandra. GiGi's Playhouse is a place to celebrate our diagnoses and to be able to learn and empower our community.

4. Is your daughter actively involved in the work you do for GiGi's Playhouse?

Alejandra loves to do the GiGi's at home programs and loves to be involved with anything having to do with GiGi's Playhouse. She feels happy when she walks inside any GiGi's Playhouse

5. What are the goals of the programs offered at GiGi's Playhouse?

Programs at GiGi's Playhouse offer foundational learning opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.
GiGi's Playhouse programs are a place for parents/caregivers to share ideas and network with one another. We invite caregivers to communicate their needs, questions and concerns with one another, and promote connections to be made in support of each other.
GiGi's programs embrace the family and help aid the development of a healthy, successful relationship between parents, individuals with Down syndrome and siblings.
GiGi's Playhouse programs support families in developing high expectations for their son or daughter with Down syndrome. Many families are blindsided by a diagnosis of Down syndrome in pregnancy or at birth. GiGi's programs aim to help parents overcome the diagnosis and maintain high expectations for their child to achieve success in social, educational and employment opportunities in the future. Our staff and volunteers support parents in maintaining high expectations, even through challenging periods of time. By encouraging their child to follow routines and participate fully, parents take a big step in recognizing their child's potential.

6.For our parent readers; what is something you would like other parents who recently found out their child has special needs or has a child with special needs to know?

For parents who will receive news that your baby may have down syndrome. Take a breath, close your eyes and know that you have been given someone so precious who will bring so much love and brightness and make your world so much more colorful!!

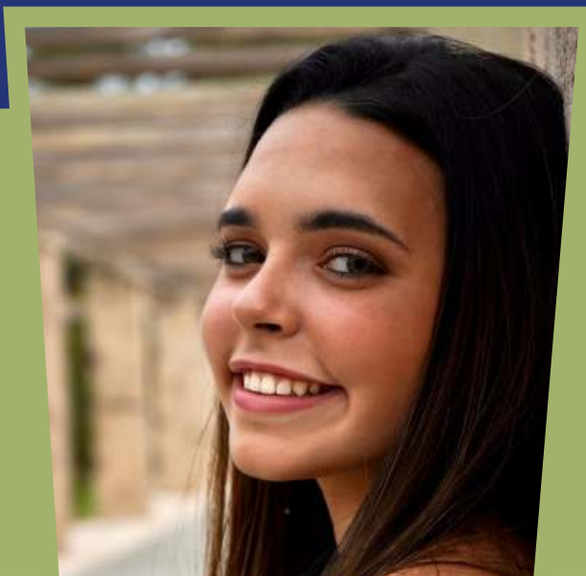
To hear the rest of our interview GiGi's Playhouse Interview

VIP AMBASSADORS



"I think we are all fortunate enough and blessed to have what we have today. It's super important to give back to our community and encourage unity, which in the times of this global pandemic is very much needed. Becoming an Ambassador gives me an opportunity to spread the word and take part in making a change."

VIP Ambassador Gabriela Fernandez
Senior at Coral Reef Senior High School



"I've been volunteering with VIP all year and really enjoy all the events. I find that it keeps me productive and involved, unlike other organizations which rarely have me helping the cause. I am very motivated and passionate in everything I do, and look forward to being as involved as possible as a VIP Ambassador."

VIP Ambassador Amanda Vazquez
Junior at St. Brendan High School



"What motivated me to become an ambassador for Very Important Purpose was the fact that it's community based. Many people believe in order to make a difference you need to travel or do things someplace else, but in reality there's many places that need our help right in our city!"

VIP Ambassador Luciana Macli
Senior at Doral Academy

"What motivated me to become an ambassador for Very Important Purpose was the work ethic. I enjoy helping and participating in making a change, so I want to help those who are less fortunate by giving back to my community. When I'm older I hope to help around the world by volunteering for The American Red Cross. As an ambassador, I always make it my responsibility to share awareness and promote Very Important Purpose's values to others."

VIP Ambassador Dajah Daniels
Sophomore at Coral Reef Senior High School





VIP Sandwich Donation Events

by. Maria Marante
A Sophomore
at Divine Savior Academy

"VIP 305 does multiple zoom sandwich events in which all the sandwiches get donated to Miami Rescue Mission, which is a shelter that provides help in ways of food, education, healthcare, etc. to the homeless. These VIP zoom events help to facilitate the distribution of food for the homeless shelter since it is not a simple job to provide and feed them daily. Especially that in these particular moments with COVID-19 it is even more difficult to meet the needs of each individual at the shelter.

In my opinion, to take an hour of the day to connect through Zoom and do something as easy as making sandwiches for people in need that will appreciate them is an awesome opportunity to support our community. This event is through zoom which is more convenient for multiple reasons such as; being from the comfort of your home, materials such as bread, ham, and cheese are quite accessible to get at any super-market, is covid safe not only for us participating in the event; but to the ones receiving it because we use masks and gloves to ensure that the sandwiches are made cleanly.



Also at the zoom meeting, we met Amber and Amarette the hosts of most of the events at VIP 305. They are really sweet, energic, and admirable for all the things they're doing at their age. Participating in events like the sandwich donation is putting our little seed in the dust; we are privilege to have a home where to sleep every night, clothes to wear, shoes to walk, and food on our table to eat therefore, we need to share our privilege and take a little of time to help those in need like the Bible says on Luke 3:10-11 What should we do then?" John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."







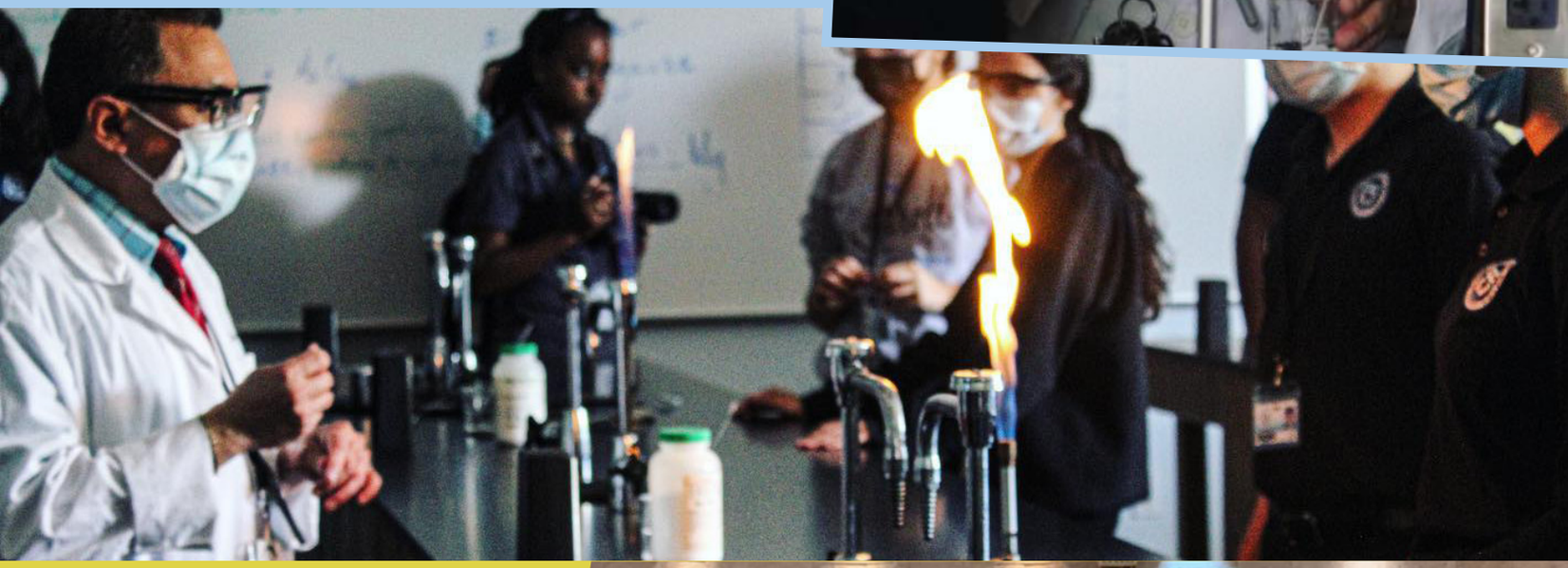






Students in Mr. Rodriguez's Honors Chemistry class tested various substances which resulted in a rainbow of flame colors.

Digital Photography students captured these experiments. The photographers were: Gabriela A., Nathalie A., Ruth C., Adrian D., Mateo G., Miguel H., Maraisa M., Johnny N., Paris P., Giovanni R., David R., Carolina S. Haylee S., and Daniela V.





The Achievers celebrate their Rite of Enrollment mass in preparation for their Confirmation. We pray for them on their special day and always. We ask that God guide them on their path to adulthood in their faith.

Printed Advertising in the Magazine

- 24 Page Magazine (9in. x 12in.)
- Circulation: 10,000 copies
- Marketing & distribution channels: Stores/ businesses/ schools
- District: Dade-County Region
- Free distribution

Social Media Optimization

- Social Media Setup (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Develop Fan Page
- Daily Social Media Updates (5 Days a Week)
- Feeds Social Networking Sites

Party Package

- Start to finish Event Planning
- Social Media Coverage
- Cover Page in our next Issue
- Photobooth Set Up
- Character Visits & Stilt Walkers
- Hora Loca and so much more!

VIP Pep Rally

- VIP Pep Squad
- Photographer
- Social Media Coverage
- Full Page in our next Issue
- Host
- Special Guests

Events and activities

- Give your business the right exposure by attending our monthly events
- Sponsors and Donors are always welcomed! Advertise with your company banners, brochures, and other promotional items..

Party Supplies

- Foam Machines
- Bubble Machines
- Smoke Machines
- Party Supplies
- Decor and so much more!

Volunteers & Interns

Are you a company or non-profit who needs teen volunteers or interns? Work with us and we will find the best candidates for you! Are you a teen in need of community service hours? Keep up with our monthly events for chances to receive community service hours.

Contact us at **info@vip-305.com**

VIP SUMMER SERVICE PROJECT

VIP announces our fourth Sleep-Away Summer Camp Service Project at El Escondite. For more information contact us at **info@vip-305.com**

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

A Marist Brothers High School *1958*

†

LEAD THE WAY

ADELANTE



Nick Ivonnet '22
Mas Honors Student
State Champion, Cross Country
Co-Founder, FernysCause

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