We all need role models who can inspire us to reach our full potential, but not everyone has access to them.

HISPA is committed to mobilizing Latino professionals to inspire Latino students to discover their potential and ignite their desire to embrace education and achieve success.
Hispanics Inspiring Students’ Performance and Achievement (HISPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofi  t organization dedicated to developing the Hispanic and Latino educational pipeline and creating a workforce of highly-skilled leaders to contribute to America’s economic future.

HISPA mobilizes Hispanic professionals to serve as role models in educational programs in their communities to inspire students’ academic performance and achievement by demonstrating that they, too, can attain success through education.

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609.436.0417
Jason Zambrano participated in HISPA programs as a middle school student. HISPA had a profound impact on Jason—now an aerospace engineering student at Rutgers University—who credits the program as a critical part of his academic success.

“Growing up as a Hispanic I was always taught that I was a minority here in America. The derogatory tone that comes with the word “minority” was oftentimes discouraging. It made me feel like I was already behind in life compared to non-minorities and that I had fewer opportunities for success. It was not until I was involved in the HISPA program at School #28 that my perspective on the Hispanic community instantaneously flipped like a switch. This switch was like a light switch that flipped from off to on, allowing me to see goals and opportunities that I did not see before.

“To be able to hear and see successful Hispanic role models advise and speak to us about the importance of furthering our education was inspiring. It helped to build the foundation of my confidence that I needed to strive for success. What was once a strong belief that I was working in school for nothing now unraveled itself to just be a fallacy created by my own doubts. This is the internal transition that HISPA caused which gave me a sense of purpose. It built the ideology in me that hard work does pay off and that I should create visions for where I want to be in the future.

“My experience with HISPA has proven itself to be vital in how I see my education and the attitude that I have towards it. It developed me into the student I am today who has a passion to learn. I believe that everybody has undiscovered potential that is not shown to them unless they go through certain experiences that spark epiphanies. The guidance from HISPA has definitely created an encouraging atmosphere that gives you the chance to not only see your hidden potential, but to unlock it too.”
THE HISPA ROLE MODEL PROGRAM

The HISPA Role Model Program enables professionals to step into Hispanic majority classrooms of predominantly low-income, public school students to serve as examples for our youth. Since its 2008 launch in New Jersey, the HISPA Role Model Program has expanded to New York, Texas, Florida, and Pennsylvania. In that time, HISPA has mobilized 1,228 Role Models to make 1,545 visits, reaching 15,405 students. In 2019-20, HISPA completed 286 Role Model Program visits, reaching 2,295 students in 34 schools: 22 in New Jersey, six in Texas, four in Florida, one in New York, and one in Pennsylvania.

Creating a College-Bound Culture

HISPA’s programming is strategic and research-driven. Our programs target middle school students, given that studies reveal that early intervention and having a role model strongly correlate to the pursuit of higher education. Throughout the academic year, the HISPA Role Model Program arranges six school visits, each with one to three HISPA Role Models who emphasize the importance of education to future success and who introduce students to careers in the public and private sectors. The Role Model Program also engages students in STEM career exploration field trips: HISPA Youth Conferences and Corporate Visits.

Educational Empowerment

A diverse roster of Hispanic professionals—approximately 50% with a master’s degree or higher—shares their cultural backgrounds and educational and professional journeys, relating the key experiences that allowed them to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. These visits provide:

• A valuable opportunity for students to identify with Latino professionals
• Practical information (e.g., pathways to AP classes and out-of-school learning opportunities) and non-academic life skills (e.g., developing grit and learning about career opportunities)
• Promotion of bilingualism and biculturalism as assets in the 21st century global economy
A Record of Impact

Our research—tools and metrics designed and analyzed with our partner ETS—shows that the HISPA Role Model Program has a positive impact on student attitudes toward, and awareness of, college and career. Indeed, after experiencing HISPA programming in 2019-20:

- 94% of students learned more about possible careers
- 94% of students found the role models’ presentations interesting
- 92% of students were inspired to do better in school
- 93% of students were inspired to set going to college as a goal
ROLE MODEL PROGRAM KICK-OFF AND RECRUITING EVENTS
Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month 2019

Leading our Youth in Discovering their Potential
Our programs rely on the participation of volunteer role models to share their educational experiences and professional careers, relating the key events that allowed them to achieve their goals. These stories show students that they, too, can pursue productive academic and career development efforts. Our annual Kick-Off and Recruiting Events are essential to engaging community participation and recruit volunteers.

Basking Ridge, NJ – September 24, 2019
Hosted by Verizon SOMOS (formerly the Hispanic Support Organization, HSO)
Entertainment: Harpist Kiki Bello
Master of Ceremonies: Martin A. López, Verizon, National President SOMOS
Welcoming Remarks: Alizanette Rodriguez, Verizon
Keynote Speaker: Manuel Sampedro, Verizon
HISPA Call to Action: Dr. Ivonne Diaz-Claisse and Rod Colon, HISPA
San Antonio, TX – October 9, 2019
Hosted by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
Welcoming Remarks: Carlos Camacho, JP Morgan Chase and Adelante
Keynote Speaker: David Griffiths, JP Morgan Chase
“Leading our Youth in Discovering Their Potential”
Panel Discussion:
• Dr. Ivonne Díaz-Claisse, HISPA
• Dr. Valarie Martinez, Our Lady of The Lake University
• Sheriff Javier Salazar
• Felix Salinas, North West Vista College
Inspirational Speaker “The Value of Role Models”: Remmy Castillo, Entrepreneur
Closing Remarks: Andrea Howard, JP Morgan Chase
Our HISPA Imagine Day Corporate Visits immerse students in the corporate environment. Touring labs and facilities and working with technology alongside highly-skilled professionals introduce students to potential career opportunities and encourage them to envision who they want to become and what they must do to get there.

The Wharton School of University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA – September 27, 2019
30 students from Mastery Schools of Camden - East Camden Middle in Camden, NJ

Citi
San Antonio, TX – October 3, 2019
25 students from Gus Garcia Middle School in San Antonio, TX

NBC 10 & Telemundo 62
Philadelphia, PA – October 21, 2019
20 students from Jerome Dunn Middle School in Elizabeth, NJ

AT&T
Middletown, NJ – October 24, 2019
30 students from William C. McGinnis Middle School and Samuel E. Shull Middle School in Perth Amboy, NJ
WE ASKED OUR HOSTS: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE “IMAGINE DAY” MEMORY?

“The best memory I have took place as soon as I saw the kids get off the bus. They were all very well behaved and were dressed to impress. Like that they all seemed to really want to be here.” - Citibank

“Making an impact in the lives of the students.” - Merck

“[The] students...had the opportunity to learn about what we do; hear first-hand from our marketing and comms teams about our world-class brand and the amazing sports sponsorship activations we have; tour our call center; and even participate in a co-creation session with our IC team. But, best of all, they had the chance to meet and chat with each of [of our employees], and be inspired by their unique stories. What a day!” - Visa

**JPMorgan Chase & Co.**
San Antonio, TX – October 24, 2019
25 students from Anson Jones Middle School in San Antonio, TX

**Merck**
Kenilworth, NJ – October 25, 2019
30 students from Christopher Columbus School #15 and Elmora School #12 in Elizabeth, NJ

**Merck**
North Wales, PA – October 25, 2019
30 students from Eisenhower Academy in Norristown, PA

**Visa**
Miami, FL – February 18, 2020
42 students from Miami Senior High School in Miami, FL
HISPA AT A GLANCE

HISPA Role Model Program 2019-20: What We Have Achieved

OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

NEW JERSEY
- Abraham Lincoln School No. 14
- Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School
- Benjamin Franklin School No. 13
- Christopher Columbus School No. 15
- Daniel F. Ryan Elementary School No. 19
- Dr. Antonio Pantoja No. 27
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School No. 6
- Elmora School No. 12
- Grace A. Dunn Middle School
- Jerome Dunn Academy No. 9
- Juan Pablo Duarte - José Julián Martí School No. 28
- Mario J. Drago School No. 3
- Mastery Schools of Camden - East Camden Middle School
- Nicholas S. LaCorte - Peterstown School No. 3
- Passaic Gifted and Talented Academy School No. 20
- Passaic Preparatory Academy
- Samuel E. Shull Middle School
- School No. 10: Theodore Roosevelt & Anne Frank Annex
- Sonia Sotomayor School No. 25
- William B. Cruise Veterans Memorial School No. 11
- William C. McGinnis Middle School
- Woodrow Wilson School No. 19

NEW YORK
- Manhattan Bridges High School

TEXAS
- Anson Jones Middle School
- Brentwood STEAM School of Innovation
- Cable Elementary School
- Gus Garcia Middle School
- John Jay High School
- Memorial High School

FLORIDA
- Kinloch Park Middle School
- L. C. Swain Middle School
- Miami Senior High School
- Okeechobee Community Middle School

PENNSYLVANIA
- Eisenhower Science and Technology Leadership Academy

The HISPA Role Model Program has mobilized over 1,200 unique volunteers to date.

GROWTH OF HISPA PROGRAMMING

In 2008-09, HISPA had 15 Role Model visits.
To date, that number has grown to 1,545.

HISPA served 305 students in 2008-09.
Today, we have served over 15,000.
Representing the possibilities in public and private sector careers, these experts and professionals shared their stories and talents with HISPA this year.

Honorable Wilda Diaz • Mayor • City of Perth Amboy
Wilda Diaz was first sworn in as Mayor of the City of Perth Amboy on July 1, 2008 and was re-elected for a third term in November 2016. She is the first female to hold that office and is currently the only elected Latina mayor of Puerto Rican descent in the State of New Jersey. As she marks her 10 year anniversary in serving the City of Perth Amboy, she remains at the forefront of issues such as expanding programs for our children, youth and families, maintaining an open and honest government, business expansion, economic development, job creation and preserving the City’s history. Mayor Wilda Diaz is a life-long resident of Perth Amboy and a graduate of Perth Amboy High School.

Oscar Hernandez • Musician and Musical Director • The Spanish Harlem Orchestra
Four-time Grammy Award winner Oscar Hernández has long been considered one of the most gifted and prominent pianists, arrangers, and producers on the contemporary Latin, Latin-jazz and salsa music scene. Hernández came to New York from Puerto Rico in the 1940s and has achieved legendary status for his career spanning now over 40 years. He is the leader of the world renowned Spanish Harlem Orchestra and has performed and recorded with artists including Latin music king Tito Puente, Queen of Salsa Celia Cruz, and Latin pop star Julio Iglesias.

Federico Spagnoli • Regional President • Prudential
Federico Spagnoli is Regional President of Argentina, Mexico, Chile and responsible for strategic business development in Europe and Latin America for Prudential International Insurance. Prior to joining Prudential, Spagnoli held various senior positions with AIG, Circulo Asegurador, Zurich Financial Services and Santander Bank. Mr. Spagnoli graduated from the University of El Salvador (Argentina) with a master’s degree in law and received a M.B.A. from Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis and has the CPCU designation. In September 2018, he obtained his Post Graduate Diploma in Strategy and Innovation from the University of Oxford Saiid Business School.

Eduardo Coello • Group Executive
Latin America and Caribbean • Visa
Eduardo Coello has been with Visa for over 20 years. Coello is Group Executive, Latin America and Caribbean, responsible for all of Visa’s operations across 44 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. Prior to this he held several leadership positions including Country Manager for Visa’s Mexico operations. Born in Mexico City, Coello received his degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Monterrey Technological Institute in 1987. He completed his master’s degree in Business Administration at Instituto Panamericano de Alta Dirección de Empresa in 1997.
WEB PLATFORM: 20,000 INSPIRATIONAL STORIES FOR OUR YOUTH

In 2017, HISPA began the ‘20,000 Stories for 2020’ project, a dedicated effort to expand its programs and ramp up the number of stories shared by HISPA Role Models. One of these programs is ‘20,000 Inspirational Stories for our Youth’, a web-based platform to collect Hispanic role models’ stories and share them in one place, all in a way that is easily accessible by Hispanic youth, their parents, teachers and counselors. This platform is especially critical in light of the coronavirus pandemic, which has caused schools to close and many programs to come to a halt.

“HISPA Role Models are experts in story-telling. For 13 years, we have mobilized successful, highly-skilled Latino professionals to share their stories and serve as role models for Latino youth,” HISPA President and CEO Dr. Ivonne Diaz-Claisse said of the launch of the platform. “However, HISPA is based on the belief that everyone deserves access to role models. With ‘20,000 Stories for our Youth’, Latino students everywhere will be able to access these stories, regardless of whether or not they are enrolled in HISPA programs.”

As of July, of the 393 students who viewed “20,000 Inspirational Stories”:

• 97% of students learned more about possible careers
• 94% of students found the role models’ presentations interesting
• 95% of students were inspired to do better in school
• 95% of students were inspired to set going to college as a goal

STUDENTS SAY

“Thank you for making this video and for encouraging me to work harder in school and to get better grades.”

“Thank you for reminding me to be brave and never look down at my dreams when I feel dreamless. Also thank you for saying, ‘It’s not too late to achieve your dreams as long as I continue to pursue it.’ Right now I’m going back and forth on what I want to learn in college but this gave me a little motivation to find out what I love to do as my dream career.”

“In this presentation I see that she was [in] a bullying situation and that she continued going to school to do better. I thank her because I have that situation but I see that we don’t need to give importance to those comments, we need to follow our goals. THANKS.”

“Thank you, I really did see that it is important to do out best, and not just be comfortable in a position but strive for better.”
Events planned

held at Stone Oak and
will last up to 30 minutes.

@ 2 p.m.

October 23 @ 2 p.m.

October 24 @ 2 p.m.
Hispanic college students often face unique professional challenges—including less access to leadership development, career networks and role models—that affect their future educational and employment opportunities. In 2019-20, with the support of PSEG, HISPA delivered two sets of six Latinos in College workshops in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, providing these opportunities to the students of New Jersey Institute of Technology. The Latinos in College program brings a variety of leadership and professional development opportunities to help foster academic and professional success. In the words of one alumnus, “The program literally changed my life.”

WE ASKED OUR LATINOS IN COLLEGE: WHAT DID YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THE PROGRAM?

“I wanted to let you guys know how important this program is for students in college. Everything that was taught gave me so much invaluable information and tips for me in my first year, which eventually landed me an internship for my first summer in college. I really appreciate all the people helping the program make an impact on students like me. I really appreciate all the help and support. Thank you!”

“Your story gives me hope that no matter what life throws at me I can turn it around and use it to empower myself and others.”

“I really needed to hear you today. You said, ‘Make my dreams and purpose non-negotiable and accept that quitting is not an option.’ I was considering taking a semester off but not after this...moving forward in my purpose.”

“You made me think that impossible is really ‘I’m possible.’ I’m going to write that on a note to remind myself. Thank you so much for sharing.”
“[I would like to thank you for] taking time and effort to visit our school and show us how important never giving up is. Thank you also for showing us an example of hard work that we could relate to.”

“I liked how they went through a lot of things and to look at where they are now and it inspired me that to have an education is an opportunity and you should take it. This presentation showed me that you might have a rough start but you can make it to where you want to go.”

“What I liked was how they told us they started small, they started to build their career and that really inspired me and kind of gave me [an] idea of what want to do when I [grow] up.”

“I learned that if you work hard, even if you are from another country, you can do anything.”

“[What I learned from my visit was] to never be ashamed [of] yourself or your background but embrace it instead.”

“Le doy gracias porque en ese momento yo no estaba segura si seguir adelante aquí, o regresar a mi país de origen. Me dió la inspiración, la fuerza para seguir luchando por esos sueños que quiero cumplir, me dió la inspiración a saber que cada minuto que estoy sentada en la silla atendiendo a clase va a valer la pena cuando esté graduada y con títulos universitarios a mi favor. Es un gran ejemplo y por eso le doy gracias.”

“La verdad es que si me gustó, me inspiró en muchas cosas que me han ayudado a seguir adelante, pase lo que pase siempre tener la mirada en alto, ser valiente con todo, pase lo que pase. A mi me gusta cantar y bailar, leer y escribir mucho, a mi a la verdad me han pasado muchas cosas pero siempre sigo adelante y gracias por todo sus consejos por que no solo a mi me hizo seguir adelante sino también a muchas compañeras.”

“I liked that she gave me a stronger idea of college, because [I] want to go but she made me feel more confident.”

“I liked that he told his story in a funny way but mostly that he inspired me to raise my voice and not be afraid to show the world who I really am.”

“Lo que me gustó de la presentación o de la charla que dió Sonia es que ella me inspiró a seguir adelante y a nunca darme por vencida.”

“I liked the talk because it was telling me that with the right mindset and work ethic you can accomplish anything.”

“A mi me gusta mucho la historia de el presentador se parece mucho a la mía cuando yo llegué a los Estados Unidos me gustó mucho saber que alguien también pasó por lo mismo que yo, que no era la única.”

“I enjoyed their presentations because they made me think of ways I can change the way I solve problems and how I can do better or try harder in life to be successful no matter what my circumstances.”
ROLE MODELS SAY...

“Amazing and incredibly fulfilling! The kids were great. They were very interested in our presentations and asked a ton of great questions. I will definitely be signing up for another session.”

“I had an amazing experience talking with these middle school students and empowering them to start thinking about their future. Everyone was nice, and I’m glad I had this opportunity to speak at this school.”

“This second experience is by far the one that will live with me forever...[T]he counselor wanted to share with me the feedback from the kids and she shared with me the Thank You notes they left. That pulled at my heart and I was tearing up with joy. My first session, I had no idea I made an impact [on] those kids.”

“It was a wonderful experience! The teachers and children were very welcoming. We had a very engaged group of 91 students.”

“I’m always moved and inspired by the students and their genuine ability to dream. I spoke to a room full of six graders who were primarily Spanish-speakers. The energy and participation made it fun!”

“The experience was amazing. Both the students and facility were very welcoming and the students were tuned in.”

“It was great to know even a little of my story could help kids and positive to be outside of my comfort zone.”

“Our overall experience was very positive. We learned that we can inspire children with our own stories.”

“Fantastic. The students were very receptive and the teachers were amazing. There was a lot of engaging conversation with students and it was totally a positive experience.”

“The school staff were very cordial and it was great they had my presentation available. Thank you HISPA for what you do for our future leaders and the opportunity to be a role model for those future leaders.”

“Excellent visit. The teachers were warm and welcoming and the children well behaved, attentive, engaged and insightful.”
“Thank you for two inspiring years of collaboration. HISPA and the visiting speakers have made an impact on me and I refer to some of those speakers as models of how perseverance is essential to success. Many of the HISPA speakers mirror the lives of our children, and their success stories validate the aspirations and hopes of our students. Any one of the speakers may not have done this, but collectively, over the course of the year, they will have heard at least 12 presentations of Hispanic people who overcame economic and language challenges and refused to be dissuaded from their plan before they had fulfilling careers. The common thread of each presentation was that life is a challenge, so students should set goals, work hard, network along the way, and never give up.”

“Communicating and connecting to the students’ experiences engaged them all in a great discussion about making short-term goals and long-term goals. The speaker’s strength as a role model was the ability to instill in our scholars the love and passion to achieve their dreams.”

“All of the presenters were AMAZING! They all carried out the HISPA message with great pride and attention to Hispanic details. They were all able to really relate to the students and give prime examples of how to achieve goals and dreams and overcome obstacles.”

“He was positive and many students have come to me and said he has given them motivation to believe in themselves more to overcome any challenges they are currently facing.”

“They showed that with hard work and dedication our kids can do anything. They made obstacles real for our students and showed them how they overcame such obstacles. I love how they used photos and personal messages!”
Additional financial and in-kind support for HISPA programming was provided by:

- Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School
- ALPFA
- AT&T
- The State of New Jersey - Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development
- Elizabeth Board of Education
- Investors Bank
- Novartis
- Office Depot
- Perth Amboy Public School
- PNC Bank
- Princeton University
- Prudential
- Refinitiv
- Rider University
- The School District of Palm Beach