

Hudson County Community College Alumni Association Invites You to

THE RISE and VOICES OF ALUMNI



Karina Arango

Class of May 2022, Associate Degree in Human Services

Before finishing my associate's degree in human services at HCCC, I felt I was at a dead end. I was depressed at the job I was in and thought that it served no purpose whatsoever. The job did not fulfill me mentally or financially and was simply adding unnecessary stress. My life in general has been a rollercoaster of challenges, traumas, and instances of frustration. However, I have yet to let that deter me from my goals. One main obstacle that challenged me to the core was finishing my degree in seven years! Having to work full time, maintaining a household, and the everyday ups and downs that life puts in our path, I had to stop and resume my educational journey a few times. However, I finished in May of 2022 and now I am pursuing my bachelor's degree.

Currently, I am a Student Success Manager at Hudson County Community College. I work for CEWD with the AWPP program which stands for Academic Workforce and Pathways Program. This program deals with the incarcerated population that is housed at the Hudson County Department of Corrections who want to pursue a college degree while they are waiting for sentencing or release.

HCCC degree not only contributed to my current role at the college, but it also paved the way for the journey that I am on today. It has allowed me to not only be employed where I was once a student, but it has also allowed me to help people, which is something that I enjoy doing. Dealing with the incarcerated population has opened my eyes to the fact that we are all human and make mistakes. I have always been an empathetic individual, however working with this population has elevated said empathy and understanding a great deal. The role I play in their lives is minimal to the impact that they have all had on me.

Besides thanking my brother and mother, who are my immediate family, I must thank two people. One is Ms. Maria Sarmiento. Thanks to her confidence in me and her guidance, I was able to obtain the position that I have today. I also must thank my supervisor, Mrs. Anita Belle, for her guidance and positive contribution to my professional growth. The support of these two women is not only appreciated, but it's a support that has led to an ever-growing friendship and sisterhood.

My advice? Never give up. Life will sometimes come in and turn everything upside down in the blink of an eye. However, your tenacity and perseverance in life is what allow you to continue always pushing forward. Life is a journey and not a race. Enjoy all the memories made, all the struggles, but most of all enjoy everything you learn along the way.

Join us as Karina shows her passion, mission, and story via ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87199770285>

81 Sip Avenue, Journal Square Campus, Student Center Multipurpose Room

Thursday, November 14, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

