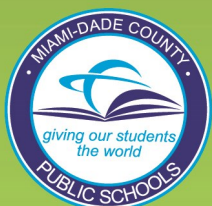


SAVES Program



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MIAMI DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Empowering Dreams with SAVES

Yoanna Melendez Gutierrez, a Cuban immigrant born in 1991, pursued her educational goals with unwavering determination. After earning a bachelor's degree from a university in Cuba in 2017, Yoanna harbored a strong desire to further her studies, prompting her to immigrate to the United States in 2022. This decision stemmed not only from her educational aspirations but also from the economic challenges impeding her professional growth in her home country. Upon arriving in the United States, Yoanna sought asylum and began her quest for educational opportunities.

In August 2022, Yoanna started her English course at Miami Coral Park Adult and Community Educational Center. Embracing the refugee program known as SAVES, Yoanna found herself welcomed into a world of free education, with access to books for up to five years. Enrolling at the High Beginning Level, she received essential materials such as the Future 2 textbook, Oxford Picture Dictionary, and workbook. Completing the trimester with exceptional attendance, Yoanna expressed deep gratitude for the opportunities provided by the SAVES program.

In December 2022, Yoanna utilized the SAVES program to obtain a translation of her degree at no cost. Subsequently, she applied for a position at a private school and se-

cured a full-time teaching position at Jose Marti School in Miami-Dade in January 2023. Continuing her English studies, Yoanna has advanced to the Low Intermediate Level. Additionally, she began the first trimester of an accounting course in January 2024, embracing her new academic journey with enthusiasm and determination.

Yoanna's story is a testament to the transformative power of the SAVES program, demonstrating its effectiveness in facilitating educational and professional growth. Starting with English language acquisition, Yoanna seamlessly transitioned to improving her career prospects through vocational training in accounting. Her journey exemplifies the realization of ambitious dreams through perseverance and the supportive framework provided by the SAVES program.

Dreaming big is not just a possibility but a tangible reality, achievable through the combination of determination and access to educational opportunities facilitated by programs like SAVES!

