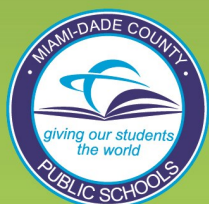


# SAVES Program

April 2017— First Edition



MIAMI DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## A WONDERFUL SUCCESS STORY

Ms. Maria Ramos was born in Venezuela to a family very involved in politics. When the political climate changed, Ms. Ramos and her husband were forced out of their homeland. They arrived in the USA in August of 1991 with a few dollars in their pockets and a suitcase full of dreams. They rented an efficiency and started working hard. She worked as a seamstress during the week, while her husband accepted any construction job offered to him. During the night, Ms. Ramos designed, created and painted children's clothes and sold them at a local flea market. They had to work seven days a week to make ends meet. Ms. Ramos also worked as a waiter during week nights and weekends at Kendall Lake Golf Club. This job gave her the opportunity to save some money to pay for a lawyer to work on her immigration status. Ten years later her asylum petition was granted.

Ms. Ramos became pregnant in 1998, and stopped working. She went back to work in 2003 when her son was 4 years old.

Ms. Ramos's sister was studying at The English Center (TEC) and recommended the school to her. Ms. Ramos contacted TEC in August of 2003 and registered in English classes in the regular adult education program. She attended a Curriculum Fair held at the school and learned about the SAVES program. Through SAVES, Ms. Ramos enrolled in ESOL and ABE classes. Later on, she realized that she needed to study something else to get a better job and she registered and graduated from the Accounting Assistance Program as a General Office Clerk and Help Desk Support Assistant. In addition, she decided to take the GED test and pass the test to help her son when he started school. TEC also gave all the accounting students, the opportunity to participate in a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program of the IRS. Through this program, Ms. Ramos helped students and the community to prepare their income tax forms. Ms. Ramos continued to study and in 2015 graduated with honors in Medical Billing and Coding.

Ms. Ramos indicated that she is really grateful to the SAVES program for all the benefits she received. She realized the importance of volunteer work in this country and decided to give a little retribution for all the assistance given to her by the SAVES program. In 2004, she volunteered in the SAVES program at TEC and soon after was hired as a part-time Client Specialist in this program. Due to her commitment to excellence, Ms. Ramos was offered a position as a SAVES District Representative in the SAVES District office. In this

position she assists and provides support to all 15 SAVES schools in M-DCPS.

After 26 years living in the USA, Ms. Ramos claims that this country teaches us to be brave, to persevere and to work hard to achieve and enjoy our dreams.

