



***Why did you choose to work in education?***

I came to the USA for college to study broadcasting. It was never my plan to stay. At that time, I met my ex-husband, got married, and found work in the city at CBS/Westwood One. After a couple of years, I saw that I was going to stay in the USA. I also saw a need for World Language teachers. I decided to change careers, as teaching was always another passion of mine. I decided that it was more meaningful to teach about

my culture, inspire and empower young people, and learn about the different cultures in South Orange and Maplewood.

***What is the best advice you've ever received?***

The best advice I got came from a friend who told me that even though we cannot control what others do, we can control how we react to it. That is extremely powerful. Many times, we take things personally and what we don't realize is that most people act according to their own experiences and values. Learning about others and being more empathetic is work that we must do every day.

***What is on your nightstand?***

My cell phone and rocks that bring positive energy. There are also books about personal growth and mental health like "How To Make Good Things Happen" by Marian Rojas Estapé, "Reinvent Yourself" by Mario Alonso Puig, "Think Like A Monk" by Jay Shetty, and "The Four Arguments" by Don Miguel Ruiz.

***Tell us something about you that we don't know.***

I studied broadcasting and I won Best Director at Montclair State University in my senior year. Several years ago, I created and was the president of a nonprofit to help minority women called WEWI (We Empower Women Inc.) which, among other things, has given scholarships to minority female students at Columbia High School. I also have a complete passion for soccer. I was a coach for our freshman

CHS team and we had an undefeated season. A couple of years ago, I received the Elizabeth A. Allen Award from NJEA, an award that honors a member or an individual living or working in New Jersey who promotes women's rights and equality for all persons, particularly in education.

***What are you most proud of?***

It's hard to say because I am very hard on myself, but I would probably say being where I am today in a country where I had no family or support system and also seeing my two sons become two good young men. Definitely, having the opportunity to be part of the journey of thousands of students.

***What is something that you do to "recharge your batteries?"***

Read about mental health and well-being and watch soccer, especially Spain in both male and female categories. Real Madrid, in my opinion, is the best soccer Club Team in history. When I can afford it, I visit my family and friends in Spain.

***What is the best or worst kept secret about the school where you work?***

We used to have a dress code at CHS that was not inclusive and targeted females, especially Latina and Black females. POWER (People on Women Equality Rights) got the dress code changed. Now it has a more inclusive language when describing what is appropriate or inappropriate to wear at school.

***What are words that you live by?***

**Power to the people!** Every life is important no matter the person's social economic status, race, gender identity, religion, or culture. Everyone deserves opportunities to grow and be heard.



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**South Orange**  
**& Maplewood**<sup>TM</sup>