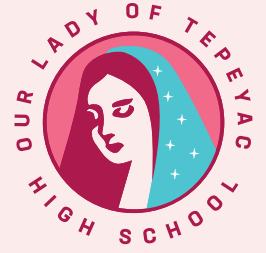


Empowering young women since 1927

TEPEYAC TIMES

OPPORTUNITY. UNITY. SERVICE. EXCELLENCE



Student Spotlight / *Miriam Gama*

Before the school year even started, one of our seniors, **Miriam Gama**, went above and beyond engaging in her community. She was determined to start her senior year the best way that she could. Although this summer looked different, she maintained a positive attitude and took advantage of the endless opportunities in the city.

Miriam was a part of two organizations, the *Pilsen Alliance* and *I Learn America*, where she explored ideas and dialogue. The *Pilsen Alliance* is a social justice organization committed to the philosophy of building social consciousness for personal and social collective transformation. Miriam shared, "Before joining *Pilsen Alliance* I was unaware of political identity struggles and misinformation. I wasn't very interested in social topics that didn't include me, but when I became part of PA and gained



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The other organization, *I Learn America*, was an opportunity where Miriam heard the stories of struggle and success from immigrants or children of immigrants/ first-generation. At the conclusion of the program she enjoyed watching the “*I Learn America*” film. “I had great facilitators who taught us how storytelling can help us grow and help others as well. We created and shared our stories,” she said.

Miriam is a great example of a Tepeyac girl; she didn't sit back, instead was driven to make a difference with her voice. We can't wait to see and hear all of the wonderful things she will do throughout her last year at Tepeyac.

A Successful Summer Bridge Program

At the beginning of August, we hosted the Summer Bridge Program where we welcomed the Class of 2024. The newest Tepeyac class was immersed in a week filled with “getting to know” each other and their school activities. These young women did a wonderful job! The program gave them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the school, learn the must-knows about Tepeyac and to make friends; feeling prepared for the 1st day of school. There was 100% attendance and they participated in all of the activities that were planned.

Despite the fact that the girls had been out of school for a long time, they showed up with a positive attitude ready to tackle each day. Their willingness to participate, be flexible and follow the safety guidelines was exemplary. We are looking forward to their accomplishments this school year - working hard, making lots of friends, building strong relationships with their teachers, and participating in class and beyond.



Freshwomen make new friends and show off awards

Welcome *New* Colleagues

Lexie
Hays



Hi! I'm Lexie Hays. I graduated in May of 2020 from the University of Dayton, where I studied health science and minored in psychology and social work. Upon graduating from UD, I decided to seek out a service program where I could work with students. This meant leaving my northwest Ohio home to travel to Chicago for a program I am doing called *Amate House*. I live in Little Village with seven other volunteers who also serve in and around the city.

Here at OLT, I work in the Resource Center. My day consists of working one-on-one with students to give them extra academic assistance and support. It has been a wonderful experience so far working at Tepeyac! I have been overwhelmed with feelings of welcomeness and support from both the students and faculty at OLT. The students are such passionate and driven young women and on many days, I feel that I am learning almost as much as I am teaching! I am excited to continue to work with students and their families as I explore a future in teaching.

Veronica
Romo



My name is Veronica Romo. My students call me Ms. Romo or Ms. R. I am so grateful for the opportunity to teach a subject I am truly passionate about, history. This is my first year teaching and having grown up only a few minutes from OLT, I can say I feel right at home. My intentions as an educator have always been to give back to the same loving community that has raised me. As a Latina, I value and want to foster an education where students are able to see a diversified history filled with people that look like them.

My time at OLT has been one of gratitude. The staff and students are an absolute pleasure to be around. My students are invested and motivated to get the education that they deserve; constantly asking questions and are always in contagious bright moods. They feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions regarding what we learn. Moreover, their funny remarks and commentary create an enjoyable atmosphere for all students, present and virtual.

Catherine
Viola



Catherine Viola grew up in Fort Worth, Texas and recently moved to Chicago. She graduated from Villanova University with a major in Mathematics and minors in Statistics, Business, and Classical Studies. Through the Alliance for Catholic Education, Catherine is pursuing a Master of Education degree from the University of Notre Dame. At Our Lady of Tepeyac, Catherine teaches Geometry and Algebra 2 as well as a STEM elective course.

What Catherine enjoys most about Our Lady of Tepeyac is the all-girls education. She says she can feel the power and support that shows through when girls can be girls and they reach for their goals. Teaching in a Catholic school proves to be very rewarding for the integration of faith and intellectual success. Catherine is looking forward to getting to know the students better and accompanying them in their growth and formation.

Welcome Fr. Tom



Fr. Tom, our new pastor, with Joni Thompson

We are pleased to welcome Fr. Tom Boharic to the Tepeyac community! We look forward to a great school year with him. He brings his wisdom, patience and empathy to guide and strengthen the parish and its community bond.

He led us in prayer at the start of the school year with a beautiful mass for our Faculty and Staff. Fr. Tom has jumped right in; he joined our grade school on the first days of school and spent time greeting the students and their families. Most recently he also led a beautiful Junior Ring Mass in our courtyard, joining our students in reflection during the homily. He also graced the courtyard at the end of the mass and engaged in conversations with our families. The Tepeyac community is eager to have him be a part.

Tepeyac's Annual Appeal: *The World Needs More Tepeyac Girls*



Our world is changing and things will never be the same. We have all been impacted by the recent pandemic, global protests for racial equality, judicial decisions for young immigrants, and political unrest. **Tepeyac families have been impacted tremendously over the past few months.**

The need for tuition assistance has grown exponentially this school year and Tepeyac is not turning our families away for financial reasons.

We dug into resources and used emergency funds allocated for scholarships, but that still isn't enough to meet our families' needs right now. **We are now up to 63% of our families who lost jobs or had hours cut by 50% or more.** We continue to give out grocery gift cards, protective equipment, hand sanitizer, and masks to help lighten the burden.

Despite these challenges, Tepeyac young women continue to make the most of every opportunity, embrace the small ways we have found to celebrate and restore a little bit of normalcy, and have ambitious goals to improve our world. **Our young women are using the outstanding education and empowerment they receive at Tepeyac to impact their communities through meaningful dialogue, service, and social activism.**

Impact families. Improve society. Invest in the young women of Tepeyac through our Annual Appeal for Scholarships today. This year, 97% of our students receive a need-based scholarship to attend Tepeyac. Your support helps us provide deserving young women the opportunity of a quality, Catholic education infused with leadership, service, and social justice pedagogy.

Make a gift today at ourladyoftepeyac.org

Though Struggling, Families Receive Help



In the past 6 months, Tepeyac families have struggled in record numbers due to Covid-19 with health issues, unemployment and work hour reduction, leading to financial hardships. The pandemic has affected Little Village and the surrounding neighborhoods in greater numbers. One OLT family lost their father due to Covid-19; others have been hospitalized. By June, 63% of Tepeyac families had lost jobs or had work hours reduced due to the shifts in the economy.

Many of our parents work in the hospitality industry, a sector of the economy hardest hit since March. One father recently pointed out, "I've worked in the hotel kitchen for 27 years, my job dried up when the pandemic took hold of the city." The mother of a freshman who works as a waitress at a local restaurant on what was once a bustling 26th Street in the heart of Little Village pays her portion of the tuition with her tips, which have greatly lessened over the summer months. She is now on a payment plan so she has more time to collect the funds needed. Another mom of 2 daughters at OLT worked for many years in the trucking industry; she lost her job in April, since fewer trucks are needed to deliver food to restaurants in and around the city. Tepeyac parents were relieved to learn the school had set up an Emergency Fund.

Emergency Fund Results

Thank you for the generous outpouring of support for Our Lady of Tepeyac High School's Emergency Fund to help our school families affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Your gift at work:

120

Grocery gift cards have been distributed to our families

900

Hot meals have been distributed to families, so far

60

Families have received additional tuition assistance; will continue as needed

28

Families have received help with PPE including hand sanitizer, paper towels, hand soap, disinfectant spray cleaner, and masks

Our efforts to support the ongoing needs of our families due to the pandemic continue. While food insecurity has become more prevalent for families, we have been able to lessen the burden on our families and relieve their worries about tuition. We are so grateful to our amazing friends and donors! Your gifts really are making a difference.

Alumnae Spotlight / Taylor Shufford, Class of 2012



“ During our time at Tepeyac, we all knew they were developing and fashioning us up to succeed in college, but we never actually noticed how they prepared us for post-graduate life.”

Taylor has always been a force to be reckoned with. She is driven, passionate, and full of a contagious energy that lights up a room. Taylor shared a bit about her Tepeyac experience and how it has affected her career choices. My time at Our Lady of Tepeyac High School gave me an advantage in the post-graduate life I didn't know it would. During our time at Tepeyac, we all knew they were developing and fashioning us up to succeed in college, but we never actually noticed how they prepared us for post-graduate life.

I lived an hour and a half away from Tepeyac, waking up every morning and taking public transportation no matter the weather or how I felt each morning, which taught me to always be on time for work. Participating in softball, student council, yearbook, student ambassadors, and clubs taught me to always use my voice and never hide my talents. The teachers and staff provided us with faces of strong, educated, loving, and attentive women that many students may not have had at home. The sisterhood provided friends and family that many of us never had before; lifelong friendships that have held for years.

I have moved into a career as a marketing and development director for a Catholic school in Chicago, St. Sylvesters. I was so inspired, welcomed, and challenged at my Catholic grade school, St. Sabina and high school, Our Lady of Tepeyac. I want to spread the word and make a Catholic education possible for the next generation of Black and Brown children in Chicago.

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