



Stephanie Colón

SABIS® is a global education network that operates Pre-K and K-12 schools in 16 countries on four continents. Around the world, in both the private and public sectors, SABIS® Network schools currently provide over 70,000 students a high-quality education that prepares them to achieve success.

Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS), a member of the global SABIS® Network, is a tuition-free, public charter school located in Holyoke, Massachusetts. HCCS is one of 12 SABIS® public charter schools that currently educate over 8,000 students in six states across the U.S. The K-8 school opened its doors on September 12, 2005, and has been enrolled to capacity (702) ever since.

This is a story about a shy student who developed her talents at HCCS and used the foundation she built at the school to become the first in her family to go to college.

Stephanie Colón joined HCCS as a second grader on September 12, 2005, the same day the school opened for the very first time. She was shy, but behind her reserved facade was a curious young girl eager to learn and discover her talents. Her curiosity quickly helped her build a record of academic success, and thanks to her active involvement in SLO® – she was an Academic Prefect, peer tutor, mentor for younger students, and a cheerleader – Stephanie also overcame her shyness.

On June 22, 2012, Stephanie completed Grade 8, and as HCCS is a K-8 school, she had to move to a local high school to complete her secondary education. She had always wished that HCCS were a K-12 school so that she could graduate from there, but, knowing that it was not, she was determined to show her new school the strong foundation HCCS had given her. *"Thanks to HCCS, I was able to enroll in accelerated classes in high school. The SABIS® curriculum prepared me for advanced classes in high school, and now in my senior year I am taking Advanced Placement® courses."* She is finishing her Advanced Placement® (AP®) courses in English, Physics, Spanish, and Calculus and has a GPA of 3.90. She is also a member of the National Honor Society, a U.S. organization established to recognize outstanding high school students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

As a "first-generation-to-college" student, Stephanie joined the Northfield Upward Bound Program, a federally sponsored academic program that assists students who will be the first in their family to achieve a bachelor's degree. The program assisted her with college and financial aid applications. She applied to College of the Holy Cross, Fairfield University, the University of Massachusetts in Lowell and Amherst, Providence College, and Emmanuel College and was accepted at all of them. She is still in the process of deciding which one to attend.

Reflecting on her time at HCCS and the future ahead of her, Stephanie commented: *"HCCS is and always will be my foundation. I learned how to become a hard working student through the SABIS® Educational System. The school always pushed me to achieve my fullest potential, so I developed the drive to push myself to the limit. I know I am successful because of my HCCS foundation."*

We wish Stephanie all the best in college and beyond.

HCCS

hccs.sabis.net

Tel: +1 413 533 0111

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