

## It's That Time of Year...

**O**n September 5th - after two years of starting the school year virtually - all of our students were in attendance to begin the 2022 - 2023 academic year! It has been absolutely wonderful to see our students, from kindergarten through high school, back on campus. The hallways echo with happy salutations, the classrooms are filled with inquisitive minds, and the park and soccer field are charged with laughter and smiles galore. We are wishing our 22 teachers all the best as they help our 320+ students' minds expand and support them on their educational journeys!

And in addition to our K4 - high school programming, this year we have began a partnership with *CONQUITO*, a local nonprofit organization, and we have opened up four onsite classrooms for students between the ages of 16 and 25 to receive certifications in carpentry, construction, digital technology and urban agriculture. With Center graduates and neighboring young professionals, there are a total of 80 participants in these certification courses.



# Hip Hip Hooray, Graduates!

Over the summer, our 24 high school seniors celebrated their academic achievements in style - with their graduation being held at the Ecuadorian National Assembly! Twelve students graduated with their diploma in general studies and 12 students graduated with a technical education in metal working and metal mechanics. Three of the graduates received partial scholarships to the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE).

Samantha Chin - daughter of María Buñay and Rodolfo Chin, former Center members and current Center staff - was the valedictorian of her class and shared her joy for her classmates' accomplishments throughout the years.



*"Here, I learned how to blossom as a person; here, I was taught values. I am truly grateful for this...here is where we have all formed a friendship that will last a lifetime!"*

We congratulate our second-ever graduating high school class! May you all carry your Center experience in your hearts and may it help guide you in your next chapter.



# Upcycled Fashion Is All the Rage.

**H**i, everyone! My name is Silvia Pesántez and I'm the team lead for the Center's Sewing Division. It's been a whirlwind since I helped reopen the workshop at the start of the pandemic. I remember when we were making masks and biohazard suits for our coworkers who were going out to pick up donations and dropping off food kits to our families...now I look at how far we have come and it's beyond my wildest dreams.

At the beginning, some of my team didn't even know how to use a sewing machine, but I could see that they were eager to learn and I knew that, if given the opportunity, they would exceed any and all expectations. These women are fighters. They are single mothers and their families are their driving force. They needed this opportunity to prove to themselves that they *can* learn something new and be successful. Now, each member of my team is able to use three different types of sewing machines, designing and creating high quality pieces; clothing, accessories, and more!

We had our first-ever fashion show in late July at *La Compañía Jesuit Church* to share our *suprarecicla*, or upcycled designs & showcase the Center's ecological fashion proposal. Upcycling is where you take a

clothing item that is no longer viable - torn jeans or a ripped dress shirt, for example - and create a completely new item with the usable fabric. To date, we have utilized more than 600 pairs of "unusable" jeans to create fashion-forward trench coats, groovy jumpsuits, spacious tote bags, coin purses, hammocks and more.

My incredible team of Center moms has come so far, and are currently completing a design certification course, with the added bonus of creating their own graduation dresses. These women are my inspiration, and I could not have wished for a more supportive group of women to be by my side to change the world of fashion here in Quito. I wish my team and my friends all the luck on their final exam!



# Thank you Lumen Christi and St. Mary's Visitation!

Our Parish supporters are truly one-of-a-kind. Two in the greater-Milwaukee area, Lumen Christi, and St. Mary's Visitation have supported our families for 30+ years. They also both held their annual mission appeal weekends in September. These appeals are important for sharing our story and updates, as well as raising funds to support all of our programs. We are truly grateful for the love and commitment to our mission and community.

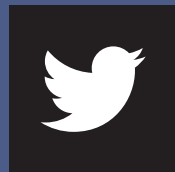


**Please mail contributions to:**

**Center for Working Families (C4WF)**  
12605 W. North Ave. #130  
Brookfield, WI. 53005-4629

**Serena Steele, Development Director**  
Phone: 269-615-7291  
Email: [development@c4wf.org](mailto:development@c4wf.org)

**Jim Parks, C4WF Board President**  
Email: [boardpres@c4wf.org](mailto:boardpres@c4wf.org)



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**Almost 400 families in our care**



**22 teachers helping our students flourish**



**14+ workshops hosted with more than 475 hours of skills training**