



**Illinois Association of  
Latino Administrators and Superintendents**

## Quarterly Newsletter

Dear IALAS Members,

We hope you enjoyed the winter break and holidays! We would like to take this opportunity to thank current members and welcome those who are new to the IALAS familia. We are so grateful for your support and hope that you find your participation in this organization to be a unique and rewarding experience.

As we start a new year, we are happy to share that we will be providing you with more opportunities to learn and grow as well as to connect with others across the state. We are in the midst of planning several exciting events for the coming months. Among them is our second annual *IALAS Educational Conclave*. This event will be held on **Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>** at Northeastern Illinois University's El Centro Campus in Chicago. Last year, this event featured research-based breakout sessions with experienced presenters, roundtable discussions with the IALAS Board, and opportunities to learn about our partners. The keynote speaker was Sonia Nazario, an award-winning journalist and author of *Enrique's Journey*. For those of you who were there, you will remember her incredible and emotional talk about the journey that many unaccompanied immigrant children take to come to the United States and the one that she took herself to gain a deeper insight. This year, we will continue the same event format but shift our focus to leadership. More details will follow.

Once again, we thank you for being part of the IALAS familia and for all that you do to educate, empower and inspire students. We look forward to continuing to support educators and build the leaders of tomorrow.

***Together we can make a difference!***

Respectfully,

Rudy Hernandez  
IALAS President



### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

#### **SPOTLIGHT LEADER**

Page 2

*Administrator*

#### **FEATURED ARTICLE**

Pages 3-4

*How Your Hobbies Can  
Enhance Your Job  
Search and Career  
Development Skills*

#### **IALAS EVENTS**

Page 5

*Network Mixer*

#### **FOUNDING PARTNERS**

Page 6

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Page 6

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Page 6

*Educational Conclave*



## **ADMINISTRATOR SPOTLIGHT LEADER**

**Name: Sarah Said**

**Occupation: EL Director at Chicago Ridge School District 127.5 and Palos School District 118**

Sarah Said is an advocate for all students and works hard towards achieving educational equity. She is committed to helping students and families value a growth mindset. She is also committed to supporting professional development and increasing family engagement. Currently, she is the EL Director at both Chicago Ridge School District 127.5 and Palos School District 118.

In Chicago Ridge, Mrs. Said oversees Arabic, Spanish, and Polish bilingual programming. In collaboration with other stakeholders, she has led the department to focus more on supports for their newcomer student population. To address this new shift, they have strengthened existing supports and created new supports. For example, they created the DRIVE (Developing Rigor Intensive Values for Excellence) program. This program has helped build newcomer students' literacy skills and provided Arabic native language support. It has also helped students develop content vocabulary in social studies and science. In addition, they have promoted the “growth mindset” mentality by introducing all their students to the Mawi Learning Super ELL curriculum as well as integrating social-emotional learning into the curriculum and engaging in other support activities.

In Palos, Mrs. Said oversees Arabic and Polish bilingual programming. To address the growing student population, her team has expanded these programs quickly. At the same time, they have invested a lot of time and effort in their Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee to ensure that parents have a voice in their programming.

Mrs. Said has been a teacher and advocate for English learners for over a decade in different parts of South Cook County and Chicago. Previously, she was the Dean of Instruction at ASPIRA Haugan Middle School. There, she launched the "One Book, One School, One Community" (Un Libro, Una Escuela, Una Comunidad) Family Literacy Program.

Mrs. Said received her Master's degree in Instructional Leadership in Literacy, Language, and Culture as well as her Bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of Illinois. She also received her second Master's degree in Educational Leadership.

# **How Your Hobbies Can Enhance Your Job Search and Career Development Skills**

**Written by IALAS Board Member: Angelica Romano**

When one of my mentors suggested this as a possible career oriented topic, my heart started palpitating with so much excitement! I was totally energized thinking about the best examples I could use in expressing the amazing experiences and skills I have gained throughout my years as a dancer and participating in several well-planned vacations. Could it be possible that your favorite hobby, that one thing or maybe two, that you are passionate about be a way to enhance your career development and professional job search skills?

There are two things I am passionate about – traveling and dancing.....keep reading and we can find out together if the skills I learned can translate to improving your career development strategies and job search techniques.

## **1. Hobby - Choosing the Country to Visit Job Search / Career Development - Research the Organization**

Since I do not have the time or the finances to visit every single country in the world, I do research to decide which country I would like to visit. I look for factors such as its history, population, and political/financial situation. How does this relate to your job search and professional development? You always need to research the company/organization you are applying for. How stable is it financially? What is the company's vision? What are their short and long-term goals? What does their organizational chart look like? What are the services and benefits provided to employees? As an HR professional, I have performed countless interviews and believe it or not, I still ask the question: What do you know about the organization? And yes, a few individuals have responded, "I do not know anything about it." Needless to say--wrong answer. Always be prepared to answer that question. Do not do it for the organization; do it for yourself. You need to make sure it is the right organization for you.

## **2. Hobby – Traveling to 5 Countries – We Plan Each One! Job Search / Career Development - Planning, Team Work, Delegation and Organization**

You always have to set up time to plan and organize a project. Visualize the end result and plan your time and efforts accordingly. Strategize first! Do not go into any project without knowing what your end result should be. Furthermore, understand that there are different types of individuals. Some individuals like to work by themselves and others as part of a team. I prefer to work independently; however, my hobbies have expanded my skills and experiences in working as a productive team member. I used to think --no one can do it better than me. However, due to our extensive planning for vacation trips, I have found that delegation and trust are very important tools and if you give other people a chance, you might be amazed how good they really are! A good example is I am planning on visiting four countries along with a traveling friend of mine. We have delegated the research of the four countries in a way that is more efficient and relies on teamwork and trust. She will research and plan for two of the countries, and I will research and plan for the other two countries. The end result will be a more interesting and fun trip for all involved.

## **3. Hobby - Europe or South America? Job Search / Career Development - Cultural Diversity**

It is amazing learning about the customs and traditions of other cultures. If you embrace the fact that we are all different and unique, many doors will open for you. Find out about the culture of your organization, understand it and embrace it. It will make your job easier. Have you ever encountered

# **How Your Hobbies Can Enhance Your Job Search and Career Development Skills (Continued)**

individuals that on first impression, you just didn't like them because of something they said or did? Perhaps, they didn't shake your hand when you first were introduced? Do not judge. The explanation could be as simple as differences in culture and traditions. Get to know the person at a professional level and always be courteous and aware of differences in culture. Do not take things personal at work.

## **4. Hobby - Road Closed - What to do Next? Job Search / Career Development – Problem Solving**

Has this ever happened to you? You had already planned a whole day of fun but something goes wrong and you have to adapt? A good example is renting a car and printing directions to get to a certain place while on vacation, but then finding out that the road is under construction once you get there.... Yes, it has happened to me in a country where I did not know the language or the streets. You need to get out of this situation, and you do not have anyone close by to help you. Problem solving is a great skill that will open up many doors for you at a management level. I'm often told by my supervisor that problem solving is THE most important skill for a manager of a company or a leader of a project to have. Use your imagination, creativity, confidence and intelligence. You have the knowledge inside of you; trust yourself and strategize. You will find a solution. Remember the first rule of Problem Solving - do not make the situation worse! Do not act impulsively. Acting without thinking can put you in a worse situation.

## **5. Hobby - Not Everything is Black and White Job Search / Career Development - Flexibility and Adaptability**

I will use dancing in this scenario. I was on a team of twenty-eight people. We were all different shapes, sizes, color and skill level. Because of all of our differences, we would find ourselves in conflict regarding what steps to keep for the routine, what costumes to wear and how much time was needed to practice. A lot of changes were made by our dance instructors because they understood we were all unique and different. At the same time, the group understood that if we wanted to be successful, we needed to be flexible and adapt. The success of that routine, which was the result of our flexibility, adaptability and teamwork opened many doors for the instructors and dancers. Critiques and evaluations about that routine were nothing but positive. Do not be resistant to change. Embrace it and you will see the results.

## **6. Hobby – Popularity Job Search / Career Development - Develop Professional Relationships**

Once again, we are all different. We have different personalities, leadership styles, ways of thinking and doing things, cultures and traditions. Embrace the differences among each other. Establishing a good and diversified network will help your career.

In conclusion, look deep into your life. Your everyday actions and behaviors will tell you which skills you are developing and which skills you might need to improve on. Start by analyzing your hobbies, but do not stop there. This article has actually made me stop and reflect on my behaviors and skills. Think about it and find your way to an even more successful career!



## Fall Network Mixer

On Friday, November 10, 2017, IALAS hosted its Fall Network Mixer at Buca di Beppo in Lombard. This was a sold out event that attracted the participation of over 60 members. It was a pleasure seeing everyone share a meal together as well as take the opportunity to see old friends, meet new people, and network with other education leaders across the state.

IALAS would like to thank the event sponsor, Illuminate Education. Below are some photographs from this event. We look forward to seeing you at our next scheduled event, *IALAS Educational Conclave*, on March 22nd at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.



## Founding Partners



## ATTENTION Membership

We are looking forward to you re-newing your membership with our organization! We are also encouraging you to bring a friend, a colleague, or an acquaintance along to join! You can join by clicking [here](#)!

For more information, please email  
[rhernandez@ialas.org](mailto:rhernandez@ialas.org)  
or  
[aromano@ialas.org](mailto:aromano@ialas.org)

## Upcoming IALAS Events

IALAS

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### Educational Conclave

*A unique professional development opportunity*

**Thursday, March 22, 2018**

**8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Northeastern Illinois University,**

**El Centro Campus**

**3390 North Avondale; Chicago, IL**

Price will include continental breakfast and plated lunch. Tickets can be purchased through our website at [www.ialas.org](http://www.ialas.org) in the events page.

***More details will follow soon.***