

# Supervisor Spotlight



The **Alameda County District Attorney's Office** has been a partner of Cristo Rey for the past year now. Being that Cristo Rey is still in its formative years, we continue to have several new additions join the Cristo Rey family. The goal for our shared CWSP journey will be to effectively **equip your Cristo Rey students with the necessary tools for success** they will need in the "real world" as emerging young adults in the workforce. You, as supervisors, and they, as students, will learn through **trial and error**.

For ACDA supervisor Maria, at the onset of being informed that she would be supervising two high school students, her main concern was how she would ensure that there would be sufficient and substantive work available for the young ladies assigned to her care. This became her immediate goal to achieve for her students.

You may be wondering the same thing: "**What work can I give, and what work can my student even do?!**" Do not worry. **This is normal**. As a few words of advice from Maria: "**Be 'open' and do not over expect their performance** to be at the level of a more experienced individual, especially if they have never had any past job experience." Some supervisors may expect a team of super students while others may expect a team of lost baby ducks... But all it takes is first **getting to know your students**. As we say here at Cristo Rey, "In order to teach their minds, we must first **touch their hearts**."

Being that Maria is presently the mother of 3 teens, she has developed an acute awareness to the fact that there are diverse approaches to learning - which has been modeled by her own children. Therefore, Maria found it worthwhile to familiarize herself with each individual student in order to better visual their potential for success at the ACDA offices. With this mindset, she came to realize that despite **each individual's capacity of learning being at different levels**, they are still young and developing. As Maria would put it, any opportunity where they can get constructive feedback - when expressed appropriately - will serve to build their **confidence** and self-determination to improve. Likewise, if we view corrections as room for growth rather than reason for removal, our hope is that the students will view their skillsets as ever-expanding as opposed to being limited by whatever cards life has already dealt them.

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**Getting to know your student**, their skillset, their learning style, and areas of growth are only one piece of the puzzle... at times finding jobs for them to do can seem like a job in of itself. But do not fret! This is a critical learning opportunity for our students! If you do not have an assignment for your student in the moment, our **students should take initiative** in asking their colleagues if they can assist with any tasks or projects. Students, regardless of the circumstances, should be **checking in regularly with their supervisors**. If you have no tasks for them at your first check-in, whose to say that there won't be a task ready for them in 40, 30 or even 15 minutes?!

Aside from delivering quality work to further the mission of each of your distinct organizations, the ultimate goal in giving the students substantive entry level work is to enable all of our students to enhance not only their quality as students but as **better candidates in the work force** who will be seeking employment in the all too near future.

One of Maria's most memorable experiences, giving her reassurance as a supervisor, was with her freshman student, Valeri. Every year, Maria has the challenging task of preparing official 1099 income tax statements. Valeri was assigned a portion of the project that required an emphasis on data accuracy - to extract field information from over 165 documents used to populate the 1099 forms that would be submitted to both the IRS and the Franchise Tax Board. With only minimal instruction time and errors to correct, Maria was so proud of the quality of Valeri's work that met the expectations set in place for their office as a whole. Maria knew that she could entrust this project with her Cristo Rey student again in the future.

Of course, Rome was not built in a day; one must work hard in order to achieve success. Despite the uncertainty, the light at the end of the tunnel will be reminding oneself of just how much of an impact you as supervisors have on the students. To quote Maria: "In most cases for high school students, **the value in learning comes from making mistakes.**" With that being said, please remember that as mentors, as students, or as colleagues - no one is ever perfect, but working towards achieving it is what really counts.