

From La Escuelita to Trilingual Teacher: Meet Gabrielle!

Gabrielle attended La Escuelita from 2006–2008. While her memories of those early years are understandably a little hazy, she remembers Pedro fondly. Fast-forward nearly two decades, and this La Escuelita alumna has become quite the language learner and educator! Gabrielle is now trilingual, speaking English, Spanish, and Japanese, and is completing her Master's Degree in Childhood Education. If your child attended PS 163 last year, they may even have had the pleasure of learning from this talented LE alumna when she stepped in as a substitute teacher!

So, how did Gabrielle come to learn Japanese?

"During the lockdown, I was 17 and thought it was a great time to pick up a third language. It led to an amazing opportunity later, when I stayed with host families in Japan during the summer of 2024 as part of a cultural exchange program. It also made me realize how much I enjoy teaching."

Her love of languages is also deeply connected to her family. Gabrielle credits her family, especially her grandmother, for helping her recognize the many doors that speaking both Spanish and English has opened for her. Her grandmother speaks only Spanish, and Gabrielle makes sure to call her at least once a week. She also spent a semester abroad in Madrid during college, further strengthening her connection to the Spanish language and culture.

Why elementary education?

"I have always enjoyed working with children, and Elementary Education allows me to not only do so, but also take deeper dives with children into academic disciplines like math and critical thinking skills."

From a La Escuelita classroom to classrooms of her own, Gabrielle is continuing to build an impressive path in education. We are so proud to see where her journey has taken her—and excited to see where she goes next!



Alumnus Profile

Multilinguals constantly switch between languages and suppress the one they aren't using. This gives them superior focus, working memory, and abstract thinking skills.

Kwon, YH. et al, 2021

From Kelley's Desk

If there are two areas of our annual Family Survey that shine every year in the comments, it's how much families value our teachers and the community we have here. One family summed up what they value most: "The child development expertise, the authentic cultural celebration that accompanies language acquisition, the amazing staff who have the child's best interest at heart and the collaboration and partnership that the staff offer families."

As a staff, we especially felt the love in 2025-2026 with all of the family involvement! From a block party, to Fiesta, to Teacher Appreciation to feeling as though every week there were families in our classrooms helping to extend learning by sharing stories, holidays and projects that were meaningful to their families. We are grateful for our special community here at La Escuelita.



Record Performance for 25-26 Annual Fund!

- Total dollars: \$106.7K
- Participation: 83% of current families and 100% of board members
- These contributions support tuition reduction and special programs like yoga and music

You can contribute to the 26-27 Annual Fund here or via our website.



Fiesta 2026 goers asked Jen F and Jen W to tell the story of how they met and they kindly obliged



The last group to leave the dance floor at Fiesta 2026.



An Interview with Erica Olivo, La Escuelita's longest serving teacher

What inspired you to go into Early Childhood Education?

I always knew I wanted to work with children. I babysat frequently growing up and one of my first jobs was working at Bank Street's Spanish Immersion Summer Program, which Bank Street actually started at the request of Jen F and Jen W so that LE graduates would have a place to extend their Spanish over the summer. I then became a substitute teacher at Bank Street Family Center and in 2005, joined La Escuelita. Bilingual Education is especially important to me, having grown up as an English Language Learner in NYC. It is wonderful and inspiring to see how very young children acquire multiple languages; why wouldn't you want to provide that opportunity to them if you could?

What do you most enjoy about it?

The children, of course! While I started out working with 4s and 5s, I fell in love with working with 2 year olds - they are the best little humans! I am continually amazed watching their development; they way they demonstrate their curiosity, their sense of humor, their developing personalities - I love it all. I'm always learning from them.

What would you change about Early Childhood Education?

I want to ensure that more children have access to Special Education services. I am working on my Master's in Special Education with a bilingual extension. New York is a leader in publicly funded Special Education services in the US, but there is still so much needed, especially in the bilingual space. We need even more outreach to socio-economically disadvantaged families; often atypical behavior in children is misunderstood. I want to help build awareness and education to parents about early childhood development and the life changing benefits of early intervention.

Knowing another language encourages open-mindedness and empathy toward different cultures.

Wang, H. 2023

New Board Members

We are excited to welcome four new board members - all current La Escuelita parents!



Jessie Marroquin

Growing up in her moms dual language school in Mexico, Jessie is excited to partner her expertise with her passion for languages, organizing events and connecting people to the board



Anden Chow

Anden is the proud dad of an LE student in the Azul classroom and an accomplished trial lawyer. He is excited to lend his legal expertise to our board and finance committee.



Nimesh Amin

As a business owner and realtor, Nimesh looks forward to supporting La Escuelita with operational and facility logistics. He's the proud dad of a current LE student in the Anaranjado class and a future student.



Renzo Donizetti

Renzo grew up in Peru and is the proud dad of an LE student in the Anaranjado classroom and of a student ready to join us in 27-28! A fan of languages, he speaks four and has several years experience as a consultant for educational nonprofits.

We can't wait to see what the 2026-2027 school year brings!
We are grateful for your support in making it possible.