

Setter Spotlight: Jennifer Crespo – Where Smarts and Selflessness Meet

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Some individuals go off to college, graduate, and leave until it's time for a reunion. Well, this wasn't the case for one resident director who has been a part of Pace since 2002 "Momma Jen", more commonly known as Jen Crespo, serves as the maternal figure of North Hall, although her main role is RD. RDs come in an array of personalities, some a little rough around the edges while others are disguised as nurturing, parental figures for the students from both near and far. Nevertheless, Momma Jen takes on the latter.

"A lot of my residents last year called me [Momma Jen] because they felt I provided them with a sense of love and care that a mother would," masters in mental health counseling student Crespo said.

But like any other adult, she made sure that each resident was also treated like an adult and not a child. Doing this provided a boundary and sense of respect, fostering rapport with residents, and teaching them life skills and discipline when needed. Fortunately, discipline and respect isn't the only thing Crespo provides her residents; she also does a little work in the kitchen.

"I learned how to cook eight years ago, the summer of my junior year of college," Crespo said. "I love to cook everything now, and once you perfect certain staple items, following any recipe comes so easy. Now I add my own twist to old recipes."

Chicken Parmesan was the first thing Crespo learned how to make and she says it's something she loves to cook. She also dabbles with other recipes.

"I feel like everyone loves when she cooks," junior information systems major Patrick Prescott said. "I remember coming back from class and the lobby and stairway would smell like food. The smell alone can put a smile on your face."

Not only does Crespo cook for her staff and residents, but she has also participated in culinary competitions. At this year's home-coming celebration, Jen won the Chili Cook-off with a dish that guests kept coming back for. She also won Nu Zeta Phi Sorority's Cake-Walk competition with a homemade chocolate cake with Oreos (in the batter, not on top) and homemade Oreo buttercream icing.

Aside from being a mother-figure to the North Hall community, she is also the type of person who does what she loves, professionally. During her time at Pace, Crespo took on the world of applied psychology, and graduated from Pace in 2006. Crespo has been a Pace student for nine years, four of which were as an undergraduate and five were as a graduate student. To some, this may appear as a lengthy amount of time, but working full time and getting an education was something Crespo knew she had to do.

“I’ve been a Resident Director for two years, and before that I was a full time Pace employee in Westchester and New York for five years in Special Events,” Crespo said.

Now, Crespo has a few other things up her sleeve. Aside from her academics, Crespo has an amour for France and its culture. After seeing the Eiffel Tower on TV at the mere age of five, she says she “fell in love” and told her mom that’s where she wanted to go. During high school and college, she studied French (a total of eight years) and went to visit France in high school. After falling in love with the country, she had the opportunity of studying abroad in Paris, France.

“I studied abroad in 2005 and I lived there all summer,” Crespo said. “It was the best experience of my life. I even dreamt in French before I left.”

That is only one element of Crespo’s past. The others, she chooses not to bring into the present.

“If you know me, then you know a lot about me, but there are two things not everyone knows,” Crespo said. “I was a Tomboy from ages 11-15. I would only wear men’s clothing and sneakers from Structure (which is now male Express). Another thing would be that I have never played a sport in my life, however I do love watching football.”

Crespo is an avid Jets fan.

Putting all things aside, this is really about is her impact on the Pace community. Since Crespo is the RD of North Hall, it’s only right to recognize her for her accomplishments.

“I think she [Jen] is an invaluable resource to her residence,” Prescott said. “She especially makes the freshman feel welcome and included in day-to-day activities.”

Prescott says he’s one of many students who probably feels the same way about ‘Momma Jen’. He went on to say that Crespo is a great role model and she has truly not done herself justice.