



Andres Lopez with his son Anthony Lopez

Throughout HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH, CTI will feature profiles of local Hispanic leaders to celebrate [#LowellHispanicExcellence](#) by learning about their experiences, perspectives, and the wisdom they share in our local communities.

**Hispanic Heritage Month 9/15-10/15
An Interview with ANDRES LOPEZ**

Nominated by **Jenny Pickett**, Grants and Planning Manager at CTI

What accomplishment are you the most proud of?

Andres Lopez is currently a Health Teacher at the Robinson Middle School here in Lowell. And the coach for cross country. And Wrestling. And Basketball. And all after school programs. And Affinity Groups at Lowell Public School. And Lunch Monitor. He is the embodiment of “other duties as assigned”, and even steps up to those that are unassigned.

His proudest accomplishment however is the gaggle of kids that call him Dad. As a single Dad, he has his kids 50% of the time..50% of the real time. Gathering them for school, packing lunches, checking homework, conversations at the dinner table. As he says... it’s hard. But also so worth it.

What does Hispanic Heritage Month mean to you?

Andres identifies as a Puerto Rican man, from the inner city and a single Dad. He spoke of the divide in his community and how there are celebrations for the Puerto Rican community, for the Dominican, for Latin American. But that it feels like the Hispanic community itself is divided. He works within his school community where 35% of the kids are Hispanic. He’d love to see the community united, to embrace individual identity while also translating it to a larger one.

Most difficult obstacles you've had to overcome?

At one point, someone said to him "Puerto Rico is beautiful! I don't understand why Puerto Ricans come here and just sit on their @sses". It was made as a passing insensitive comment, but it struck him. Andres was going through his divorce, working his 40 hours, taking Master classes as well as doing his Fellowship all at the same time. Clearly, Andres is a man who works hard. He went back to Puerto Rico and found his roots again. In his reading, he recognized the misconceptions of his community, the stereotypes, the lack of education. His response? He was going to look MORE Latino. Showcase his tattoos. Grow the heavy beard. But also, he now has two Masters degrees. He is deeply involved with his kids. He loves flaunting the dissidence. At his school, he is a daily reminder of how to be a strong, educated Hispanic man and that every child can be proud of where they are from and who they are going to be.

In your leadership role, how do you actively promote inclusivity and equity?

As a coach and teacher, Andres' continual message is around Accountability and Consistency. He is holding all kids to the same high standard of their own abilities. He is continually saying "I believe in you". The sport being played, the lesson being taught is a privilege and the participant has an obligation to it.

Legacy he hopes to leave behind?

Andres gave me this quote "See a man for what he is, he'll die. See a man for what he could be, he'll become what he should be." He hopes to be remembered as someone who believed in you.

Looking back on your leadership journey, what would you tell your younger self about embracing your identity and stepping into a leadership role with confidence?

He'd tell himself, "Don't take things to heart.. Don't get mad so quick. Be receptive. Be himself. .Be honest"..And to tomorrow's leaders, he'd encourage us all to listen, with humility, to their younger people.

Andres is a remarkable individual and strong advocate within the Hispanic community. We are grateful for his commitment to our youth and living example of how it can be done!

#LowellHispanicExcellence #CommunityLeader #Leadership #DEIatCTI #HispanicHeritageMonth2023
#Appreciation #Grateful #diversity #equity #inclusion #CTIResponds