

# Cristo Rey graduate stands for social justice

Thirteen years after Riccy Amador immigrated to the United States from Honduras with her father and oldest brother, she left her mark on Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Baltimore as a leader in social justice awareness.

"I've grown up as an immigrant here in Baltimore and know how it feels not to speak English," said Amador, now fluent in both her native Spanish and her adopted language, and strengthened, she added, by her experiences. "People discriminate (against) you."

After attending the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice, a national conference on social justice issues, as a sophomore, Amador knew she had to return to Cristo Rey Jesuit and involve others.

She started the Social Justice Club, whose nearly 30 members meet weekly on topics ranging from immigration to police brutality to autism. The club educates the larger school community.

Amador, a graduate of Archbishop Borders School in Highlandtown, said if a person can relate to one social justice issue, just as she can as an immigrant, they are naturals to "lead the conversation" on others.

"(Amador) has a warm presence and engages every member of our community," said Jen Ewing, Amador's college counselor. "She works toward creating a better experience for everyone."

Amador leads the fourth-grade religious education class at her parish, Sacred Heart of Jesus-Sagrado Corazón de Jesús in Highlandtown, and serves meals at Viva House in West Baltimore to those who are homeless or unemployed.

"As a Catholic person, we try to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity, that everyone feels welcome," Amador said, adding that the goals of social justice are the same. "That's one of the things that plays a role in the community service that I do."

Cristo Rey Jesuit students supplement their tuition with internships at local companies. Amador spent the past two years working at Brightview Senior Living as a receptionist assistant.

She will next attend Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, where her involvement with social justice will continue.

“That’s one of the things I’m pretty sure I’ll be doing for a long time,” Amador said.