

# Inaugural Ceremony Celebrates 32 Miami Scholars



(from left) Mount Holyoke Posse 1 Scholar Scarlett Montenegro, Posse President and Founder Deborah Bial and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

On January 5, 2010, Posse Miami celebrated its first class of Posse Scholars. Over 200 people were in attendance at the site's first Awards Ceremony, made possible through the generous support of the Burger King Corporation. Among the attendees were Posse President and Founder Deborah Bial, National Board of Directors Chair Jeffrey Ubben and Chair Emeritus Michael Ainslie, who was accompanied by his wife Suzanne.

Also sharing in this historic moment were the Scholars' families, mentors, teachers and guidance counselors and several high school principals, along with representatives from Posse Miami's three university partners: Hamilton College,

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## Teen Nonprofit Founder Heads to Mount Holyoke

Gabriela Concha-Fernandez, Mount Holyoke Posse 1, was engaging critical issues in her community far before Mount Holyoke College partnered with Posse Miami in the fall of 2009. As a senior at

### scholar highlight

Gabriela Concha-Fernandez  
 Mount Holyoke Posse 1

Westland Hialeah High School, Gabriela says she looks back on her journey and realizes that what hasn't killed her has made her stronger.

Recollecting the hardships she, her brother and ailing mother faced before immigrating to the United States from Peru—liquidating their worldly possessions to offset a lack of shelter and a shortage of food—Gabriela now takes responsibility for what matters to her and her community. At the age of 14, she founded Si Se Puede (Yes It's Possible), a 501(c)3 that ships clothing and toys from the United States to needy areas in and around Lima.

"What I'm doing is civic engagement



Gabriela Concha-Fernandez.

in Peru," Gabriela says. "I can see my past foreshadowing their futures and I want to inspire them so they avoid going through what I went through." Si Se Puede has gained serious recognition in recent years and through partnerships with

similar charities like Bruce Organization and Peruanitos Foundation, Gabriela's program will now reach children in Bolivia and Chile.

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 ONCE YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO  
 PURSUE THEM, NOTHING CAN STOP YOU**

"All of your dreams can come true," she says. "Once you have the courage to pursue them, nothing can stop you. I'm the first in my family to go to college and you can be, too. That's what both Posse and Mount Holyoke are all about, making a difference."

Gabriela is thankful for finding a place where she feels she belongs. She plans to study business, legal studies and international relations at Mount Holyoke. "I'd like to work in the music industry, like for MTV," she said, thrilled to learn that MTV is a Posse Career Program partner. "I can't sing, but I'd make a great lawyer for someone who can." ✨

# Miami Welcomes New Advisory Board Members

Anne Chwat is executive vice president and general counsel for the Burger King Corporation. She is also the company's chief ethics and compliance officer and the president of the Have It Your Way Foundation, Burger King's charitable arm. Chwat is responsible for managing all legal aspects of the company's global activities. She reports directly to CEO John Chidsey and serves as a key member of the executive leadership team.



Joanna Grover-Watson is a social worker and community activist who works with at-risk youth in Miami, Florida. She has an undergraduate degree in public relations from the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, and a master's degree in social work from New York University.

Joanna's community activism began when she was a teenager in

LEFT: Anne Chwat, Burger King Corporation executive vice president and general counsel. RIGHT: Joanna Grover-Watson.

Long Island, New York, when she founded an environmental organization, SPLASH (Stop Polluting, Littering and Save Harbors). Joanna has worked in fundraising and development for the Manhattan Borough president and at

the South Street Seaport Museum where she created and funded an innovative sailing program for inner-city youth. She and her partner, Olive Watson, and their two children have lived in Miami since 2005.\*

## Alumni Rep Embraces New Role



Brandeis Posse 4 (New York) Alumni Jason Colon (right), Miami PNAAC representative, and wife Reasey Ngoun.

Jason Colon, Brandeis Posse 4 (New York) Alumnus, is enthusiastic about his new role as the first PNAAC representative for Posse Miami.

"Working directly with The Posse Foundation in an effort to reconnect and build bridges among my fellow Posse Alumni is a task that I am looking forward to," he says. "I intend on utilizing PNAAC as a method of, once again, working together with a network of individuals willing to rise above expectations and strive for a unified community."

Jason, who is married to fellow Brandeis Posse 4 Alumna Reasey Ngoun, works as a teacher for Miami-Dade County Public Schools.\*

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Mount Holyoke College and the University of Pennsylvania.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho, who will be honored at Posse's Annual Gala on May 26 in New York City, spoke words of encouragement at the event, challenging Scholars to critically engage in solutions to social issues that threaten our local and national community.

"[Posse] is exactly the kind of initiative that is needed to help ensure that students who show promise and intelligence have access to a first-rate college education," he said.\*

## miami advisory board

Anne Chwat

Joanna Grover-Watson

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Burger King Corporation

Private Sector

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Mount Holyoke College  
University of Pennsylvania

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