



# BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

## Archbishop Borders School Making a Difference in the Lives of Immigrant Students Thanks to BOOST Scholarships

Searching for the American Dream, Maria Arce arrived in Baltimore three years ago from Mexico as a documented immigrant with her two children. Leaving behind an abusive domestic environment, she is now able to fulfill the dream of giving her children access to a successful future through their attendance at the Archbishop Borders School thanks to Maryland's Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Scholarship Program.

In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly expanded educational options for low-income students by providing scholarship assistance toward attending a nonpublic school. During the 2017 session, the legislature responded to high program demand by reauthorizing the program with an increase from \$5 million to \$6 million for scholarships in 2017-18. A total of 2,646 scholarships were awarded this school year with more than 1,650 students waitlisted, demonstrating the high unmet demand for the program.

After searching for a nurturing educational environment for her children for more than two years, Arce said they are now thriving as middle school students at Archbishop Borders. The school, which serves grades Pre-K 3 through 8, is the only dual-language, community school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore that offers classes in both English and Spanish.

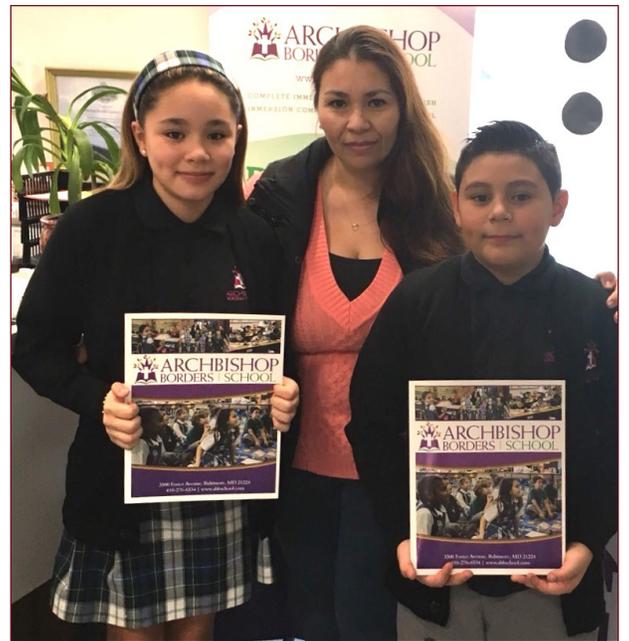
The 2017-18 BOOST program has increasingly enabled nonpublic schools to further their mission of opening their doors to students from the immigrant and first-generation American communities, as 744 student-recipient were reported as English Language Learners (ELLs).

"Working moms aren't always able to be with their children right after school, and their after school influences were changing their attitudes

in a negative way," Arce said through an interpreter. "So I began to research other education options, and heard about scholarship opportunities with BOOST when a mom spoke about the program at the end of Mass one day at Our Lady of Pompeii."

Arce, who works as an event face painter, submitted her paperwork and qualified. Under the program, students transferring from public school received a maximum of \$4,400 in scholarship assistance while students already attending a nonpublic school received a maximum of \$1,400 in assistance. Fifty-eight percent of new scholarship recipients attended a public school last year, a sizable increase from the first year of the program. Public school students also received the majority of scholarship dollars awarded by BOOST this school year. In total, public school students received more than \$3.7 million, representing 61 percent of total program expenditures, which is an increase of \$2.25 million from last school year. To receive a BOOST scholarship, a student must qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Meals program. The average family income of participating students this school year was \$25,123.

"I am very happy, and so are my children," Arce said. "It is a huge difference. There really is no comparison. They are behaving better and learning much faster. I notice that they are



Maria Arce (center), with her children who are middle school students at Archbishop Borders School, is one of many parents benefiting from the BOOST Scholarship Program.

completely different."

Fifty-six of the 215 students at Archbishop Borders School are receiving BOOST scholarships totaling \$133,400 this year. The school has a student teacher ratio of 12:1 with an average class size of 18.

"Archbishop Borders is a good school, has good teachers and they are guiding the students on the right path," Arce explained. "Thanks to this help, I can have my children in quality education that is the best fit for them."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.