

# The School that changes lives

San José de Calasanz School (Bogotá, Colombia)

**Claudia Patricia Castro Rodríguez** - principal



St. Joseph of Calasanz School opened its doors to me when I was 15 years old, inviting me to a Eucharist. I was struck by the participation of young people from the Youth Movement who spoke about their realities in the homily. At that time, I joined the group and now it is a community of adults where I find a way to live the Calasanzian Christian experience. In 2005 I joined the school as a physics teacher, during 2010 until 2016 I was in charge of academic coordination and since 2017 in the rectorate. In these years I have perceived that the work of Calasanz has a great impact on the lives of those who come to the institution, forming human beings willing to serve society with their gifts and talents.

## **Our school**

San José de Calasanz School is located in the Rincón de Suba neighborhood in the city of Bogotá and was opened in 1985. At that time there were no secondary schools in the area and it started with three groups of sixth grade. Currently, we serve 1002 students in formal education at different levels of schooling. We also accompany 50 non-formal education students in partnership with a district school in the area.

In our educational community, we have several alumni who chose to become educators, one of them is the coordinator Pedro Alexander Vela Bermúdez, who since his early years has seen how this work grows and shared his experience with us: "I have been in the school since 1989, my brothers were also formed here and now their children, all have a great sense of belonging to Calasanz and I am immensely happy to see the progress of the school. I often stop to think about my life if the Piarists had not come to this neighborhood. Thanks to this school I found my vocation and I feel proud as an alumnus because they have supported me and everything I am I owe to Calasanz, but the work not only changed my life and that of my family, but also transformed the lives of many children".

## **Where we are going**

Growing in the following aspects:

- Integration of the family accompanies the new social realities that children and young people live.
- Strengthening interculturality, as a necessity for the projection of life of our students in a globalized world.
- In collaborative and networked work, educational inclusion attends to the particularities and needs of the population.
- Full-time school, with the strengthening of extracurricular activities, non-formal education, and alliances for the attention of the educational community.

## **In pastoral key**

Each one of the people in our community can give testimony of the pastoral experience, the academic coordinator Diana Patricia Higuera Guerrero expresses it in the following way: "When we ask

ourselves how the child is, what are the situations they are going through and how we can accompany them, our point of view goes beyond academic formation, we have spaces such as sacramental formation, spiritual accompaniment, and Calasanz Movement, among others. It is there where we discover that they are happy and find Jesus alive, that is the greatest message we can share, remembering that they are God's beloved children, in the words of Father Luis Padilla, we are always helping them to discover that inner garden, that place where God acts".

### Transforming experiences

Yazmin Molano Castañeda, teacher, tells us from her experience what makes us a school different from others, indicating that the formation in Calasanz tends to academic excellence, also taking care of the spiritual and human formation, which allows us to constantly be living a school where life, faith, and culture happen.

And this happening is reflected in living spaces, one of them is inclusive education, Flavio Vasquez Camacho, teacher, and Calasanzian alumnus, shared his testimony in this regard: "There is something very important when one follows Christ and that is to see the needs of others. One of the significant experiences was to participate in the formation of a student who did not have all the conditions that a child can have in his daily life due to his special educational needs, however, being able to help him and take him from his first grades to university facilitated the construction of his life project".

This is a work of God and Calasanz, which allows us to continue educating in Piety and Letters.



<b>RINCÓN DE SUBA- BOGOTÁ (COLOMBIA)</b>
<b>SAN JOSÉ DE CALASANZ SCHOOL</b> Year of Foundation <b>1985</b>
Transition, primary, secondary
Students: 1002 Educators: 88
Calle 129 # 88b-35 Rincón de Suba - Bogotá
<a href="http://www.calasanzsuba.edu.co">www.calasanzsuba.edu.co</a> <a href="mailto:csjc@calasanzsuba.edu.co">csjc@calasanzsuba.edu.co</a>
Calasanz Movement. Sacramental preparation: first communion and confirmation. Non-formal education. Complementary activities: academic, sports and artistic workshops.





