



Williamsburg County School District

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Dr. Kelvin Wymbs, Superintendent

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW STUDENT FINDS FRIENDSHIP BEYOND WORDS AT HEMINGWAY MB LEE SCHOOL

At Hemingway MB Lee Middle School, a heartwarming story of friendship and kindness reminds everyone that the language of compassion needs no translation.

In early December, the school welcomed a new student, Briseidy Da La Cruz, who had recently moved from Mexico. Briseidy was a nice sixth grader who had limited to no English-speaking skills. Though excited about her new start, the language barrier initially made her feel isolated and a little despondent because there was no translator available. That changed when two students, Molly Hull and Jashanna Connell, decided to step in and make a difference. Though neither of them speaks Spanish, the girls used creative ways—hand gestures, simple codes, and bright, welcoming smiles—to communicate with Briseidy.

Molly stated, "I helped guide her to class and was the point of contact." Jashanna said, "I felt bad seeing Briseidy struggle in class so I felt the nudge to step in and help her friend Molly with Briseidy."

They use Google Translate as well as their hand gestures and body language to communicate with each other. After being together these past few months, they have inside jokes and gestures that only they know and it works for them. Briseidy is so thankful to her classmates for stepping in to help her and support her, making her days pleasant and memorable.

"We didn't need to speak the same language to be friends," Molly and Jashanna said. "We just smiled, showed her around, and made sure she knew she wasn't alone."

Their efforts didn't go unnoticed. The school counselor and teachers shared with Dr. Young the impact the girls were making. Last Friday, Dr. Young surprised Molly, Jashanna, and Briseidy with a special token of appreciation: a personal pan pizza and drinks in honor of their kindness. Molly and Jashanna reminded us all that small acts of empathy can make a big impact in a world that often feels divided, these students showed what it means to be truly welcoming through the expression of smiles.

As for Briseidy, her English is improving—and so is her confidence with the support of the ESOL Instructor who came weeks later. Mrs. Amy Morales Lawrence shared that Briseidy is making very good progress! This touching moment at Hemingway MB Lee serves as a reminder that sometimes, the brightest conversations don't need words—just a big smile and an open heart!

Story submitted by: Dr. Ernestine Young, Deputy Superintendent of Federal Programs/Extended Learning



Jashanna Connell Molly Hull Briseidy De-La Cruz



Mrs. Amy Moralez Lawrence-ESOL Instructor, Briseidy De-La Cruz, Dr. Ernestine Young