Family Spotlight: Proud & Grateful Newcomers

Hello, Children’s School friends! We are the Mendez Family; Camilo, who just started a Masters in Information Systems Management at CMU; Claudia, currently a full-time mother; Jerónimo, who is 5 years old and recently joined the kindergarten class; Jacobo, who will turn 4 in January and is a class member of the Blue Room; and Antonia, who will join our family in early February 2014.

Where We Come From
We come from Colombia…not Columbia😊 If you have misspelled it, don’t be ashamed; it is a common mistake!! Colombia is a beautiful tropical country located in the north part of South America. We feel very proud of our diverse natural resources and the warmth of our people. Following are some interesting facts about Colombia:

- 1st country in bird diversity in the world – 19% of all bird species reside in our territory
- 1st in fruit diversity in the world
- 1st in number of amphibian species
- 4th in number of mammal species
- 3rd in largest reserves of fresh water per capita – 7th of total reserves
- 1st emerald producer in the world
- Largest flower supplier for the US

We lived in Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia. Bogotá is a metropolis of more than 8 million people, that enjoys great weather (average = 66°F)... when it is not raining (average = 180 rainy days per year)! We don’t have seasons, but you can get all of them on the same day; sunny morning, windy noon, rainy afternoon and hail storm in the night. Bogotá has developed vastly in the past 20 years and now offers a very attractive nightlife with multiple cultural and gastronomic alternatives.

What We Have Liked About Pittsburgh and What We Have Found Different
So far, we have had a great experience in Pittsburgh. We have found very nice, warm and welcoming people and a very family-friendly city, full of parks and museums both for children and adults. One thing that we have found notable is the pride and devotion of the city to its sports teams; there is no day when you won’t find someone with a jersey of one of the city teams. Autumn is also a different and beautiful experience for us; many times we are awed by the beauty of the fall leaves. The other difference for us is the weather…the cold weather! The children are anxiously awaiting the snow; the adults are less excited and more frightened.

Our Children’s School Experience
Our experience at the Children’s School couldn’t be better. We had great expectations and they have been exceeded. We have felt a warm welcome both from the staff and from the Children’s School families. We feel in our kids’ attitude towards the school, the close attention, the care, and the love that the school’s staff puts into their teaching. Another important thing is that the school understands the role they play in society in helping parents to raise not only smart children but more importantly happy and environmentally-conscious persons. The school has been fundamental not only for our children’s smooth transition to a new country but also for the whole family’s settlement process. We are very grateful!