



## Andres Gomez

*ANNUAL GIVING / HISPANIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST*

### CRS Headquarters

Born in Bogotá, Colombia, Andres remembers seeing poverty on a personal level when he was a child: “I thought that was the way things had to be”, he says. Later, Andres realized that poverty can be overcome when people of faith take action.

With a Degree in International Political Economy and Development, and a Master’s in Humanities and Sciences from Fordham University, Andres worked advocating for social justice issues relating to water, social development, indigenous rights, and financial development of vulnerable groups in Peru. He is also experienced creating marketing and fundraising pieces to harness national and international support and increase awareness of social needs. “My passion is to bring opportunity to those that don’t get access to enough food or good education”, he says. And that passion brought him, almost two years ago, to work for Catholic Relief Services (CRS), “a constant and very familiar name throughout my life”, he adds.

As the Annual Giving/Hispanic Development Specialist at CRS, Andres focuses on raising awareness amongst Catholics about CRS programs in Latin America and the rest of the world. He researches and develops outreach strategies to Hispanics, and based on results, he creates content to retain engagement, motivate participation and cultivate relationships in the community. In his most recent visit to CRS projects in Honduras, Andres met

Maria Ana and many other children that benefit from CRS programing that provides school lunches to students who many times arrive with empty stomachs. “As I saw Maria Ana and her classmates eat their lunch, I couldn’t stop thinking about my own children,” he says.

As a father of two boys ages 5 and 8, Andres makes sure they eat breakfast before school and don’t leave their lunch boxes on the kitchen counter. For Maria Ana and her classmates in Honduras, however, food is scarce, so getting a daily lunch at school is essential. Volunteers cook the school lunch with ingredients provided by CRS and the local community. Every day, children save some of their lunch to share with their younger siblings and parents who otherwise might not have a meal.

Maria Ana will be graduating soon and dreams of becoming a nurse. If it weren’t for the meals CRS provides through Food for Education—funded by the U.S. government-- Maria Ana wouldn’t have the energy to focus in her studies and succeed in school.

“The community in the U.S. is very generous by default,” states Andres. “And when that generosity is propelled by faith, it becomes not only an act of kindness, but a work of mercy, caring for our neighbor, as God asks us to do.”

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