

Hola, soy Suarez

An insight look at la vida de Señora Suarez.

Looking for help with Spanish, a friend, or someone to chismear and talk with? Look no further, Karina Suarez-Luna is here!

Over the six years she has been working at Hoover, she grew strong relationships with her students that made her become a student favorite teacher. She isn't just a Spanish teacher that can help you learn the language. She's also a friend that can help you out with school and life problems.

"The relationships I get to build with my students and being able to build curriculum—just being able to plan about things they would like to do especially the cultural days," Suarez said.

Suarez was born in Des Moines, Iowa with parents who originated from Mexico. She went to Johnston High School and went to Central College and obtained a degree in Spanish secondary education with a minor in linguistics and ELL. She's been a teacher since 2016 and was inspired to be a Spanish teacher because she has a love for language and has a big interest on working with kids.

"I love language for one and I've always liked working with children and kids. Also, being able to work with students and helping them grow. Overall, helping them learn Spanish and helping them grow with a new language", Suarez said.

As she grew up in a big family, they had a strong belief of education.

"I have a big family, oldest of five children total. My parents are from Mexico. My parents are still together and care about education. They push us to do as much as we could since education is very important and they're very hard-working people," Suarez said.

As teaching can be stressful at times, Suarez does many activities, so she doesn't burnout.

"I try to stay on top of my stuff, so I don't get as stressed. I work out that helps with my stress and I cook, bake, go on social media,

and do many other activities that help me out, so I don't get super stressed. I listen to music a lot too because music is the solution to everything," Suarez said.

Suarez is a big friend and family-oriented person and helps them whenever its

needed.

"I help my friends and family members with whatever needs like babysitting and dog sitting for them. I spend a lot of time with them due to not having much of that. I like making food for people like for my family and giving it to my mom," Suarez said.

She is a teacher that pushes her students to do their best and wants them to think outside the box learning Spanish.

"Something special about Ms. Suarez is that she wants students to experience how learning Spanish connects with life outside of the classroom. She has helped to coordinate numerous studies abroad trips for students that are undoubtedly unforgettable experiences," ELL teacher Ann Mincks said.

From not being close with Suarez to taking classes with her, students have built strong relationships with her as they walk in the classroom.

"I think for us it's kinda like, it was like best friends and it's getting to like a big sister relationship. She's been there for me with not only schoolwork but with my life problems too. At first, we weren't super close, it ended up being that I would be in her class and take

classes with her so then it ended up being that way," senior Logan Kleese said.

There have been some OG's in Suarez's teaching career. She saw them grow up ever since they first came through the doors of Hoover. Since their freshmen year, their relationship has grown stronger.

"I would say she's like a friend and a mother figure at the same time. It started out freshmen year cause my older brother was cool with her and would be with her all the time as well, so I started to hang out with her too," senior Josue Acosta said.

Her students say she's a fun and chill teacher to hang out with. She's more than a teacher to them, she's like a real friend to them as well.

"She's really understanding and if you respect her, she will respect you and by doing that you can really build a stronger bond with her other than a teacher and student bond. Doing this, it can be really fun and chill hanging out her and that's why they like her," senior Alec Martinez said.

Her old mentor says Suarez's fun personality is what makes students enjoy being with her and keep on learning from her.

"Ms. Suarez is the type of person that can light up a room—I think the students really enjoy her personality and her passion for making teaching interesting," Mincks said.



Photo courtesy of Cirila Torres.

"I would say she's like a friend and a mother figure at the same time," Acosta said.



Seniors Josue Acosta, Alec Martinez, and Logan Kleese posing with Karina Suarez. Photo courtesy of Cirila Torres.

During their high school experience, students made many memories with Suarez. Each student had a favorite memory with her. Those days were filled with joy and laughter as they put their schoolwork aside and focused on hanging out with each other and having a good time.

“I would say like the year we were virtual, and we came to visit her. One time we cooked atun with a whole bunch of food and a whole bunch of homies too. It felt like a little family, and she was really chill and cool at the same time to be with,” Martinez said.

Acosta also agreed that hanging out with Suarez was like hanging out as a little family with all their friends. Their memories are always a time to remember.

“I would say the time we made atun was a good and fun day. Also, the last day of school last year, we went out to eat which was fun too because we spent time with her like a little family which was fun,” Acosta said.

Memories weren’t only made outside the classroom, but they were also made in the classroom as well.

“Making pinatas my sophomore year because it was something I’ve never done with her and got to see her artistic side of her which

was fun,” Kleese said.

As these seniors soon leave the doors of Hoover, they have some advice for Suarez. They say to take risks and do what makes her happy. Do what’s best for herself and remember to reevaluate certain situations as it can get overwhelming sometimes. Try to stay calm and do what’s best for you and not for the money aspect as her mental health is important. They want to remind her to take the time needed as she continues her teaching career.

Suarez also has some words to say to those seniors who will be graduating soon. She wants them to not forget about her as she will never forget about them because they are like her babies. Get the full experiences and takes risks as life is too short. Remember to enjoy it and always try new things as fear can come in the way of doing it.

“To them for never to forget me and I’ll never forget them. If they want to travel to do it. If they want to go volunteer and aren’t sure of it to just do it. Get all the experiences you can since your young and life is too short. Always take risks. The world is in your hands. Never be afraid and put that fear away to try new things. And to never forget me because I will never forget you since you seniors are like my babies,” Suarez said.



Suarez posing with teacher Ann Mincks. Photo courtesy of Fabian Ruiz.



Seniors posing with Karina Suarez. Photo courtesy of Karina Suarez.



Suarez’s Family. Photo courtesy of Karina Suarez.

Fun Facts

- Was in a pilot program in college to student teach in Mexico
- Received the teacher of promise award her second year
- Working on her Masters and should obtain it in 2023