



Family from Mexico finds second home at Pittsburg State University



Transitioning to a new country with a different language and culture is no easy feat. It is, however, a little easier to make the transition with your family.

This was true for Isaac Hernandez, his wife, Frida Herrera, and their son Emiliano “Emi”, who moved to Pittsburg from Mexico City, Mexico this semester.

“This was something that all of us wanted, moving as a family, all to the same way it’s easier because we are on the same track,” Hernandez said.

Hernandez chose Pitt State for his Master in Music with an emphasis in Piano Performance after reading about Reena Natenburg, PSU professor of music, while exploring various university options.

“... I was really enchanted about her way to teach and the way that she had played in different places around the world, not just here,” Hernandez said. “I also read about her and watched some videos. That was probably the main reason that I chose Pitt State.”

After hearing about PSU’s music program, the family focused on other aspects of Pittsburg that would be suitable for raising a son.

“We were talking as a family about the city,” Hernandez said. “We are from Mexico City, that is a really huge city. So, we really wanted to be in a more calm and secure place, because in Mexico City it’s a little dangerous to go outside... so that’s why we really like Pittsburg.”

Throughout the process of preparing to move to Pittsburg, Hernandez said the family would print out pictures of and Pitt State and Pittsburg in various seasons and would pin them to a board to look at. This added to the excitement of the move and the opportunities that lay ahead.

“We really wanted to come here, all of us,” Hernandez said. “For Emi, it’s a really good experience to learn another language since he’s a little kid, and for us it’s also a good experience.”

Once the family arrived, they quickly found a sense of community and felt that Pittsburg and Pitt State was the right place for the family as a whole; as Herrera began taking classes in PSU’s Intensive English Program (IEP) and Emi began the third grade at a local school.

“Now I feel part of the university and the city... for us is like feeling really part of the community,” Herrera said. “When we first came, we thought it was mainly for Isaac, but now we feel part of here... Emi and I can come here for all events, it’s awesome to meet people from other countries or from other states in the U.S.A.”



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The feeling that Pitt State would be a welcoming university for a family began before they even left Mexico.

“I think we received that impression since we were in Mexico, we didn’t have to stay here to see that friendly and welcoming and kind people from here...,” Hernandez said. “Then when we came, it was the same- or even bigger. It’s kind of hard to go to another place. Especially another country with another language and maybe different cultures or traditions... being here we really feel like we are not too far from our home. We are having a really great experience with all people.”

Herrera said she feels “grateful” for their entire experience in Pittsburg so far.

“I’m so happy and grateful for this opportunity and for the people,” she said. “I’m really grateful for the IEP program, because I didn’t speak nothing English, and the teachers... are very friendly and compassionate with me and teach very good because I understand all. At Emi’s school, too, they are very kind.”