



Clearer Skies Ahead: How the KCC COVID-19 Relief Fund Helped Pedro Rebound Against All Odds



Pedro Carvajal, Tourism & Hospitality Major

Pedro Carvajal's dream is to travel the world – for a *living*. He enrolled at Kingsborough for Spring 2020 as a Tourism & Hospitality Major, taking night classes while working fulltime as an Occupational Therapist by day. "I was working at the Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care, which was only a ten minute walk to KCC!" With this convenient set-up, Pedro was perfectly positioned to acquire the knowledge, skills and credentials needed to eventually launch a new career in the airline industry.

Yet by the end of March, only a few weeks into his KCC education, COVID-19 threw Pedro's longtime dreams, short-term goals and even daily needs into jeopardy.

Like many KCC students, Pedro saw his life upend virtually overnight in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the citywide lockdown, he was furloughed from his job and unable to find employment alternatives. On top of newfound worries about rent, bills and groceries, Pedro was also thrust into the brave (and often difficult) new world of distance learning. Lastly, he could not help but

wonder if the industry he longed to join would even survive in a post-COVID world: “Right away, airlines suffered massive financial losses. They were all downsizing and trimming their destinations.”

Thankfully, the KCC Foundation was able to provide Pedro critical and timely assistance through the KCC COVID-19 Relief Fund.

Created specifically to address students impacted by the pandemic, the **KCC COVID-19 Relief Fund** afforded Pedro the financial lifeline he needed to better pay his rent and monthly bills. “It was also a load off, mentally,” he says, reflecting with deep gratitude. “The financial stress and uncertainty of the pandemic was taking a toll on my focus and drive. The help I received gave me much-needed room to breathe, regroup and focus my energy.”

Thanks to both the relief grant he received and his remarkable perseverance, Pedro has thrived academically despite the challenging circumstances. He is currently enrolled for the Fall Semester at KCC, has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA, is on the Dean’s List and just recently received an invitation to join the Xi Kappa Honor Society. Furthermore, he has renewed faith in the future, both for his own prospects and the world at large:

“Hopefully, a vaccine for COVID-19 will be developed soon, which would allow the tourism industry to bounce back strong. In the meantime, I am studying hard and learning as much as I can to prepare myself for the field. I am immensely thankful for everything KCC and KCC donors have done to keep my dream alive.”



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