

Brandon and Rosario Alexander Villarreal, RPCVs Dominican Republic, 2023 - 2025 🇩🇴



Brandon and Rosario served as a couple in Los Quemados de Bonao, Dominican Republic.

Brandon worked with principals and guidance counselors as a Youth Development Specialist, presenting workshops, camps, and clubs for youth and their caregivers to support healthy lifestyles.

Brandon's secondary projects included collaborating with community and government partners to lead English lessons for ecotourism guides and develop two school gardens.

Rosario worked as a Primary Literacy Specialist, working with the school's principal and instructional coordinators to teach elementary school students how to read in Spanish by leading small group literacy tutoring and starting a reading buddies program. Rosario also provided professional development opportunities to teachers on social-emotional learning and strategies to support students in becoming fluent readers. Outside of the school, Rosario also offered virtual English classes to community members.

Together, Brandon and Rosario co-founded and facilitated the environmental youth group *Guardianes del Planeta* (Guardians of the Planet). The group of 20 students conducted community clean-ups, took field trips to learn about the environment from local leaders in ecotourism, and connected with environmental organizations to help sustain their leadership efforts in the community. Rosario and Brandon also painted educational sensory pathways on the elementary school courtyards to offer additional recreational learning opportunities for students.



The Dominican Republic is a beautiful island in the Caribbean with some of the friendliest and most generous people you'll ever meet. It is the birthplace of bachata and merengue—danced like nowhere else in the world—which helped Brandon and Rosario improve their footwork. The [perico ripiao](#) is an especially fun and traditional merengue style associated with the countryside.



Los Quemados is an agricultural community in the center of the country, along the Yuna river. Locally, it is recognized as the *galleria de la loma* (porch of the mountains). Alongside the river, Brandon and Rosario literally walked under the shade of the bamboo trees planted by RPCV Joe Acaba 30 years prior. Those trees now form a beautiful, shady path for hikes to the local natural pool.

Rosario and Brandon are glad to be back in Houston after nearly a decade away. They continue working together for the grassroots environmental justice organization [Fenceline Watch](#) where Brandon leads communications and public relations and Rosario supports policy research and community outreach.