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At 5 A.M., This Lawyer Is Up and Running

Damaris Hernández, like every parent, spends the day shuttling her children around. With any luck, she'll catch a Zumba class or see a 'nonanimated' movie with her husband.

By MARGUERITE JOUTZ

Damaris Hernández, who became the first Latina partner at the law firm of Cravath, Swaine & Moore in 2016, specializes in civil litigation and corporate and government investigations. But on Sundays, she is all about "faith, family, friends and fun." Born and raised in East New York, Brooklyn, she has tried to replicate the Sundays of her childhood, when family would gather to eat, dance and play dominoes at her grandparents' house. Ms. Hernández, 40, lives with her husband, Joseph Gilbert, 44, a pediatric researcher, their two children, Mariana (Mari), 7, and Joseph Oliver (Ollie), 3, and the family dog, Tina, on the Upper West Side.

CALL OF THE ROOSTER I wake up at the crack of dawn. I was raised by my Puerto Rican, rosary-carrying, sorullo-making grandmother in Brooklyn. She grew up on a farm and she woke with the roosters. So I get up at 5 a.m. I want to catch up on work emails and get stuff out the door before my kids wake up.

CLANG SOME POTS At 6:30, 7 if I'm lucky, I'm making breakfast for them and that consists of my go-to's, which are Nutella pancakes, bacon and tater tots. Mari reads



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Damaris Hernández, in white, with her husband, Joseph Gilbert, and their children, Joseph Oliver, in stripes, and Mariana.

to Ollie and they fight over which cartoon to watch. The whole time, I'm trying to be as loud as possible so my husband wakes up.

MORNING MASS We then rush to get ready for 9 a.m. Mass at the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus-St. Gregory the Great on West 96th Street and Amsterdam, where Joe and I had our religious wedding ceremony three years ago, on New Year's Eve.

MULTITASKING After church, Joe and I divide and conquer: he takes Ollie to Super Soccer Stars and I head with Mari to Broadway Dance Center at 65th Street by Lincoln Center for her ballet and hip-hop classes. It's a solid two hours for me to get work done, send emails, shop online and order FreshDirect. I take a break to go videotape her because I have to go see whatever she's doing in hip-hop circle.



Mass at the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus-St. Gregory the Great, on Manhattan's Upper West Side.



Let the schlepping of the children begin.



Ms. Hernández and Mr. Gilbert keep Ollie busy while his big sister is in dance class.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESIREE RIOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Meals are important in my house. We’re Puerto Rican; we eat a lot.”



Once the children are in bed, Ms. Hernández might sneak out to the movies for something nonanimated.



Basketball season has been over for Nets fans for a while, but family members get their fix in other ways.



Ms. Hernández takes some time for herself with Tina.



CASUAL SOCIAL TIME After dance and soccer, we are more flexible — it is where our Sundays may differ from week to week. Most times, it’s just lunch and a play date at the house. Joe, the host with the most, keeps the wine or French press going in our kitchen, depending on the parents’ guilty pleasure, while we discuss everything from hottest new television show or music album that just dropped, the latest book I won’t have time to read, kids’ school and summer plans, and that week’s political events.

SOME FORM OF EXERCISE If I wasn’t able to go to my sister’s Zumba class in Astoria, our old neighborhood, or run along the West Side Highway because I am still in pain from the tibial stress fracture I gave myself trying to train too quickly for the New York

City Marathon, I try to squeeze 45 minutes on the Peloton when the kids go to bed.

GRANDMOTHERLY INFLUENCE Meals are important in my house. We’re Puerto Rican; we eat a lot. My mom and I usually make dinner — rice, beans, avocado and carne or lasagna (if the kids are craving pasta). Typically, on a Sunday, my mom might be home too. My mom lives in Astoria, but she might as well live with us because of all my travel. I was raised by my grandmother, so it’s the cycle of life. If there’s a lot of people at the house, then there’ll be a mishmash of ordering in.

BALL We have Nets tickets, and if there’s a Sunday night game during basketball season, we’ll go. It’s usually a 6 p.m. game. We’ll either go with the kids or invite some

grown-ups: my sister, friends, associates, or clients.

FAMILY BLANKET We do our 20 minutes of reading where we sit on our couch under the lamp. If I read on the bed, we’ll all fall asleep. If we happened to have somebody over on Sunday, we’ll watch a family movie and all be in our pajamas under a PAW Patrol blanket because that’s what my son will insist on.

GROWN-UP STUFF I’ll throw laundry in the washing machine, sweep a little bit, and get to the work that I was supposed to have done all day. Or if my mom is still at the house, we may sneak out to the AMC movie theater on Broadway at 84th Street to see any non-animated film. I go to bed around midnight or 1 a.m. and then after four hours of sleep, I start all over again.