



A Summer Leadership & Literacy Program



Writings of the
BWA

Summer 2004

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Program Sponsors:



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A River

I am the sigh of a mother that just gave
birth,
to a baby girl.
I'm the
soul soother.
I make you feel crazy,
scared,
and happy
like a little boy riding a bicycle.

I make your
body shiver
and your mind tingle.

My heart is the
icy cold blue spear
of a lost puppy.
I get sad when you fall
into my body, but I'll hold you.

A rock
in the middle of my path represents
obstacles,
that I have overcome
or gone over.
You look at me and you forget
your home.
I look at you and remember
mine.

We have fears
and so do I.
I freeze your body and pump your blood.
I'll move like a butterfly and bite like a
bear.

You might think I'm young
but there's a whole lot of bark and bite
left in this old dog.
Take your time and open my many features
I'll make you forget your memory.
I'll make you forget the past and future.
I'm here and I never change.

Sometimes I feel like a fish in a pond
full of killerz.
No one is by my side
not even my friends.



I wish I could return to
MEXICO.
With my family
where I am appreciated,
and not forgotten.

There are only three people who love me
More than life itself,
my dad,
mom,
and my aunt.
Whose name I can't remember.

It's been 13 years since I've seen her in Mexico.
I was a creek when I flowed in her life.
She is a waterfall.
Taking care of me as if I'm one of her own.
Spending time and money on me.

I miss my lakes, creeks, streams, waterfalls,
and ponds.
They're the people who set me free.

But now, here in the U.S.A
I am a cascade,
trying to be a waterfall.

I'm strong and long and full of life.
Soon I will die,
but I will live,
as a memory.

The Leader of the Pack

I felt like a young wolf taking on his first challenge. My eyes widened and my pupils shrunk. I wanted to say "I'm going home." But at the same time, my heart was pounding and my blood racing and part of me wanted to try it. I was a young man facing his challenge and his fear of heights. To some people the ropes course seems like an easy thing to do. But to me it was a spider web playground, full of challenges that seemed impossible to do. The ropes course was a mind game to test your soul. It seemed to me that I needed to master my mind and I had to trust my body. It is the mind that allows the body to flow altogether. For example, if you leaned back on the thin piece of string and looked 40 feet down, then your legs would start to wobble and wiggle like spaghetti. As I studied the Ropes Course, I noticed a swing element, a swing of death. In my mind, it grew and grew, and it never seemed to end. I stood there looking for a sign that I could overcome my fears. I turned around to see what Gabby was doing; she had been a leader for me in our group when we went rock climbing. Later that day, she would be the first to try all the activities with me, and not show fear. She stepped up when no one else would. If I stretched then she would stretch higher. I was the guy that gave the boys confidence and she was the girl that gave the girls courage to overcome a fear of heights. With Gabby next to me smiling, I knew I could do it. It took me a while to put all my fear in a place inside so that nobody could find it. I replaced it with courage on my face, but inside the fear was still growing.

This summer, I was the wolf that led the pack through everything that we did. When we rock climbed and sea kayaked, I was the first to try all of the activities. It didn't seem like I was afraid, but on the inside I was. Throughout this course, I have been the wolf that's strong, physically and mentally. I set the example and took care of everyone. There were times when I was weak, like when we got our first letters from our parents. I had to try not to cry, and I knew that I had to pull the group together. Any challenge that came my way, I took it on head first if I had to, no matter how difficult or how high. I gave everyone confidence and rock climbed first so that they could see and have the courage that I have, so that when they went they wouldn't be as afraid. Now here at the ropes course, I didn't want to disappoint anyone or myself.

I was determined to try the swing of death, the one that frightened me the most. I sat and waited on the platform up high in the tree, and right before I jumped off, I remembered my mom

telling me that if I was ever scared then I should think of my grandpa. His heart and soul would help me escape any problem I was facing. Before I jumped off the platform, I saw all the good things that I had done in life and all the bad things that I had done to other people and myself. I asked God to forgive me and if I was to be punished, then I would accept my punishment. All of a sudden I heard Katie say, "Whenever you're ready go ahead," I made my grip tight and clenched the rope with all my power. As I looked down, my feet stretched to feel the ground and my arms were heavy. It felt as if though there was vomit on my shirt. I took a little hop and before I knew it, I was swinging like I did when I was at the park with my family. Then and there I knew that it was ok to be afraid, because I had overcome it. I felt so good that I just had to yell something "YEAH," "WHAT".

As Katie congratulated the people who had tried the swing, she told us there was one more challenge: The trapeze. It was like a leap for your fate and for your goals. You had to stand on a platform high above the ground and jump to get to the life saver or at least try to. I thought this would be a piece of cake. But as people tried it, they started to say "I can't do it", or "Bring it closer; it's too far!" I knew that I had to show courage. This time I was the last one to go. I began to think to myself what if I don't grip it? Would the group be disappointed? As I stood there ready to jump, my mind weak and legs heavy, I said to myself, "Damn, I'm going to jump pretty far to show my group that I am a true leader." I stood and thought and before I could say any thing else I was off in mid-air. I felt time stop and the bar seemed to get farther away. Within seconds, I heard everyone say, "Good job". I looked up to see that my hand was holding hard but slipping at the same time, and I heard a voice say below, "Do a pull-up", and I did it to show everyone that I could be their leader all the way to the end of the Adventure Risk Challenge Program for 2004.

This is going to be the turning point in my life because every minute that passes I feel all my senses working like never before. I find my sight improving; my eyes feel like a bald eagle. With every step that I take, I can feel my blood and muscles working as one to keep me going. I put my hands on my quadriceps to feel my leg working; it feels like a giant machine being operated. When I close my eyes, I hear the small chirps of the little birds. They seem to be happy because they are at home but once they leave they'll be alone. My smell, I can smell the wind

coming from the North, and I can smell the breeze from the South, and the candy smell of Jolly Ranchers in my friend's garbage disposal mouth. I can taste the bitter sweet taste of bor-ing, and the taste of an adrenaline rush running through every blood vessel and every molecular cell in my soul. It burns like a marshmallow burns over a barbecue. I am the wolf trying to get from one place to another in a single day, but I've noticed it will take me longer to get to my goal.

During this course, I learned what the expression "Appreciate everything because nothing lasts forever," means. I learned to appreciate the ARC program and the people, friends, and teachers who guided me. They have taught me things that no other teachers could have. I also have learned to appreciate nature. In my neighborhood, there ain't no bright sunlight to reveal the stark naked truth of clean swept streets. Hate is the drabness and hurt, people yelling at each other, covered by a friendly night. The town dirties the clean faced kids with its thousands of lights, hundreds of millions of colors, mingling noises, and swinging street sounds of cars and cursers. But, out here in Sagehen, the breeze smells good and fresh, and kind of like a sunrise, you never know what good things will come from it.

I never knew you could do so many wonderful things in six weeks. Before this course, I was way too lazy, but the more that I got into this program the more my laziness started to die, and now my courage has begun to grow. I feel like I can do anything and conquer it. I hope that I got as much as I could have out of this program. I want to teach it to others, so they can teach themselves that they are stronger and are able to accomplish their dreams and goals. The Adventure Risk Challenge Program made me the wolf, one who will always lead my pack to the end. I will take care of my friends and my group, because they are the ones that made me into the grey wolf. I am now someone who is not scared, and someone who is strong and always willing to help out no matter what. As I grow old, I will always remember Angie, Paco, Carlos, Carolina, Cristina, Juan, Heri, and last but not least Gabby. Also my main mentors, Katie who taught me a lot about English and Victor a man who I can play around with and have some good kicks. Everyone in my group and everyone who helped out during this program has made a difference, especially Derik and Mrs. Flores. These are people who have changed my life and the path that I am going to take with me in life and in spirit. So if you're feeling down and you need your frown to be turned up side down, look up at the moon and your mind will hear my laughter, my giggles or even my howl.



Angie Espinoza

My Rocky Spirit

I'm like a switchback
I keep going,
I never stop.
I succeed to the top.

At home
I am a rock
that get thrust
aside,
that is forlorn,
by myself,
who just wants
to cry.

One who helps
a lot
and keeps continuing on,
no matter
what.

I am a trail,
useful to all,
eager to guide
you anywhere,
endless, because I
never stop.
I'll take you
to the spot.
A zig-zag
that connects you
to soft earth and
Granite rock.

I am Dick's Pass
providing you
with adventure,
like going on
a fast
rollercoaster.

Your stomach
heaving
up and down.
Sledding on snow,
while jumping
over rocks
and falling
down.

At home
I am that rock
that gets thrust
aside,
who is forlorn
in the inside
that all I want is
to cry,

but now
I'm loved
by many,
Except those many,
aren't just
any.

They are my
friends
to the
end.

Learning about Cynthia Ann Flores

"Cynthia," I said "why did you take this risk," then she responded, "To grow as person you have to take a risk, you must experience new things."

I asked her who encouraged and supported her throughout her life. She told me it was her husband, mom, and her dad. They influenced her alot, helping take risks in life. By this time we were talking and like the saying time flies when you are have fun, because time did fly by when i was talking to her. Leaving her home was a big risk it also change her life because she met new friends, change her environment and she wanted to take a new risk in her life.





My Summer of 2004

My legs were shaking as you shake a salt shaker. My hands were pouring out water as if it was a waterfall. My heart was pounding louder and louder like the bass you hear from a car. When I got to the top of the trapeze on the 13th day of our six week literacy ARC program, I was scared because I had to jump off a blank of wood that was only a foot wide and about one and a half feet long. It kept on getting narrower at the end like a triangle. Before I had the courage to jump off, I was hooked to the tree as if I were a fish had gotten caught by a hook. When I got to the top of the trapeze, everybody at the bottom was encouraging me to grab the triangle that was hanging by a rope. I was afraid; I said "The triangle is too far! I can't jump to it."

Katie, my teacher for literacy ARC program, said I could do it, and if I didn't jump, she was going to put it farther away. So I started to think I could do this if I put my mind into it. I started to repeat "I can do this," in my head many times. I bellowed, "what if I fall?" and my belayer, Aldo, told me that I couldn't fall because he had me on the belay line. Katie asked us to say a goal for the summer before we jumped. I don't remember what it was but I think I said, "I hope everybody stays on this course for the whole six weeks and we always keep in touch with one another." Suddenly I looked down to the ground and everything was spinning in a circle. Some how, I got the courage to jump to that triangle. I dropped towards a tall tree; I thought I was going to hit the tree, crashing into its branches. So I closed my eyes: it was pitch black. When I opened my eyes again, the triangle had stopped and my hands were wrapped around it. I did it! Aldo told me to let go of the triangle so he could let me down slowly. As I watched the ground come closer, I felt better

that I made it, and I felt happy that I did it. The best part was that I wanted to do it again and again. In hindsight, thinking back to that moment, a quote by an Outward Bound Student came to my mind, "Once you have looked fear in the face and over come it, you could do it again and again and again" Now I understand the meaning of this quote because I want to go back and do the trapeze again, and now I know that some day I will be ready to go sky diving.

Jumping for that trapeze was like jumping for this course. It was a risk that I took coming here for six weeks, leaving my family and my friends. It was tough because I never left my family for so long. The hardest part of being away was every time we passed through Truckee. I didn't think I was going to miss home this much. First I was happy to come to this course to get away from problems that I have with some family members, also all the problems I caused my parents to go through that they don't deserve. In the first two weeks of the literacy ARC program I told everyone that was going to make it, even though we always pass through Truckee. I wanted to cry especially when we go on highway 89 because one of my friends lives by the highway. It was sad when we passed Adriana's house because I always remember all the fun Carolina and I had with Adriana and our other friend Mayra. I always had little flash backs with them when we go to the park and the parties we go to together. That was a challenge for me to leave Adriana and Mayra because they are always there for me when I need them.

But coming here was a good idea because I'm learning and having fun at the same time. I learned to be confident when I read out loud even though sometimes it seems like I take for

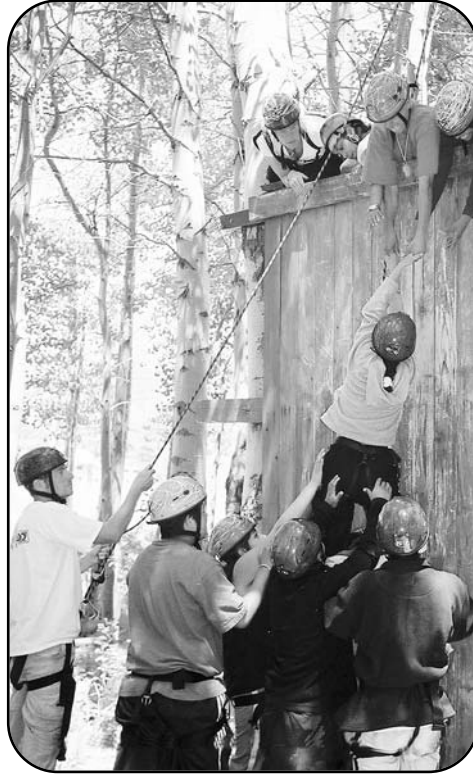
ever. Now I have improved in reading because I'm starting to read a little faster than I did before and I have learned new words. I have also finished two essays, my best work ever I have also gotten better at physical fitness. In my running, I think I am getting used to it. My body and my mind are becoming stronger as I jog every day in the morning. This literacy ARC program has prepared me to run and to push myself physically. This summer when I ran in the mornings, my friends told me to keep on going, and they helped me make it to the pink flag and later on, all the way to the stop sign. Even though it is only 2 miles there and back, it seemed forever to go that far.

Now it is the end and what I learned from this course is to never give up, to say, "I can" and not "I can't," and to be confident about my reading and myself. I also learned that I could do anything if I put my mind and heart into it. That's what I'm going to do when I go home to my family and my friends. I will take any risk or challenge in my life.

Starting now, I will change my life by helping out people more often because when I was at home I never helped out my family or friends and now that I came to this literacy ARC program I started to help out everyone that needed help. It makes me feel good. I will start changing my temper management and counting to ten before I get frustrated. I have faced my fears in solo time when I was all alone and had no one to talk to but the little ants crawling on the ground. At the ropes course, I made a goal that everyone will stay in touch and stay on this six week literacy ARC program and I'm going to keep that goal. I am proud of all of us for sticking together until the end.

I would like to appreciate my parents for always being there for me and taking care of me when I needed them. Especially my mom for talking to me whenever I needed her in the good times and in the bad times no matter what I did or whatever happened. I hope that she will always be there for me in the future when I need her and hopefully she will always have a home for me. I would also like to appreciate Carolina, Adriana and Mayra A.K.A Ratoncito, Pinky and Baby Blue because they have always been there for me and they are like my sisters that I have never had except for my kid (lil sis). I would also want to appreciate myself because I had the determination to stay in the program. I am stronger, tougher and smarter and ready to face new challenges that came my way.

Carolina Lopez



The Wind's Games

I am the wind,
calm and cool,
yet ready to strike
and be as fierce as I can be.

With my family,
the water is still.
It only rumbles along with the laughter.

Yet, at Fontenellis Lake,
in the heart of Desolation Wilderness,
the water is crystalline,
like the pale noon sky.

It is calm, like me,
right before a spring storm.
The lake is a sparkling granite bathtub.

I sigh at the sight
and breathe down on it
and suddenly the lake
looks less angelic,
while it rumbles rhythmically
along with me,
undulating ripples.

My family and friends
feed my strength
building up a surplus
of cheerfulness,
but my breath whistles frantically
when I see injustice.

When I sleep,
I breath soothingly,
rocking myself calmly
and whispering sweet nothings
into your ear.

I am the wind,
calm and cool,
yet ready to strike
and be as fierce as I can be.

Reaching the Top

There I was, helmet strapped, harness buckled, shoes tight, ready to climb. I had been waiting for this moment my whole life- a chance to rock climb. As I reached above my head, I gripped a small ledge, and my mouth went dry like the desert. Why is it? Moments before I had been the most excited one of the bunch, but suddenly, everything had changed. My feet started to rattle and the shaky feeling spread itself up. It moved to my almost dead knees and I knew I wasn't going to reach the top. Sweat ran down my body, transferring fear to the very last inch of my self. My now sweaty hands were slipping off the small ledges and my feet were useless. Instinctively, I bellowed, "Falling!" I knew my belayers had my life in their hands yet I couldn't bring myself to trust them. I had no choice, I let myself drop.

Below me, I could hear two of the instructors encouraging me; however, my stubbornness didn't let me listen to them. I just kept mumbling, "I can't, I can't." To my left, I saw Cristina struggling to reach the top herself. Salty tears welled up in her eyes. I knew that at that moment, she and I were thinking of the same thing. I wanted to yell out, "You can do it Cristina," but if I said that, I would have had to follow my own advice. Oh my God. It was barely day seven; it made me wonder what the rest of the five weeks were going to be like. I gripped once again to the wall and searched frantically around to find a spot for all my appendages. I felt like a baby spider, barely learning how to master what later in life it would do superbly.

"Keep going! You're almost to the top, come on!" I could hear my pushy instructors say. But how? How was I going to do it when my hands were sweaty, my rubbery legs were shaky, and my mind was determined not to go on? A swift breeze came up and in the far distance, there were the most amazing colors in the sky. The blue sky was being substituted with grey clouds and the moist air filled the atmosphere. I gazed over to the almost heavenly-looking colors and knew that they were from Heaven. Faith plays an important role in my life and from the bottom of my heart, I saw that as a sign. I knew everything would be ok and that I would sooner or later reach the top. I peeked over to my side and saw that Cristina was still struggling and realized that if I just hung there and didn't do anything, she would do the same, so I had to be

a model for her. "Come on Cristina, we can do it!" I yelled breathlessly.

As I peered above me once again and saw that if I reached up a little more, then another ledge would be waiting for me. I lunged toward the ledge. Yes! I had taken another step that would take me to the top. After I had pulled my whole body to the ledge, I saw there were more and more ledges. Mechanically, I moved my trembling hands and wobbly legs up, going higher and higher each time. Finally, I reached the top. It was amazing to see the view and I felt like I had accomplished something that I had never accomplished before. I started to proceed down like James Bond in one of his many action movies: butt out, legs straight. As I placed my dead legs back on Earth, I heard the cheers of my belayers and my instructors.

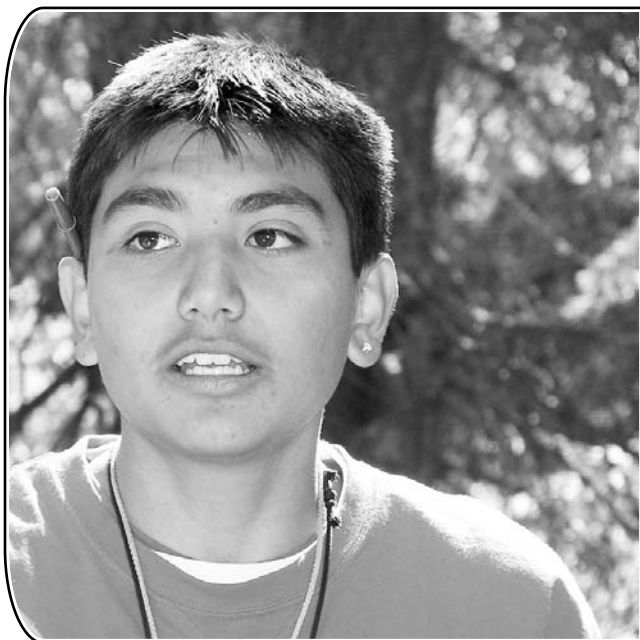
That day, I learned a lot about myself. I learned I can be strong yet weak at the same time. I have many weaknesses and strengths. I found out that one of my strengths is over confidence in myself. This can be good and bad. I shouldn't think things look easy because nothing is easy in life, but then again, confidence (and pride) is what gives me the determination that I have to achieve good grades, along with many other things. Another one of my strengths is compassion; I enjoy doing things for others, whether it's in the kitchen, or translating, or helping one of my classmates with a word. Some people say I see "the big picture" and know how to control and organize myself and my things well. Throughout my life, I've always heard people say I am too mature for my age. I don't know whether that's good or bad, but I find that being very true, especially since I never had a normal childhood. Ever since I was little, I have spent time with my cousins and sisters, all which have been adults since I could remember.

A weakness I have is facing my fears in the eye. Every time we are going to do something, I get excited, but then, fear strikes me almost instantly. It is a feeling that freezes my whole body, but I've learned that I have to take on the challenge. I have to do it to prove to myself that I can do it. Afterwards, you have an indescribable feeling of accomplishment and the experience makes you stronger. I realize that this program is just another test, a test that I am passing. Yet, my main weakness is controlling my anger. "Bad attitude" is part of my image and it's in my genes. Everyone knows that about me; however, I feel that, slowly, my anger level has decreased during this summer. I've been able to look on the bright side of things and be more optimistic.

Rock climbing is something that definitely changed my life. This program gave me a feeling of accomplishment and pride, not only while I rock climbed, but when we were sea kayaking, mountain climbing, and doing the rope's course. The longest time I've spent away from home has been four weeks and even then, I was with family. I never imagined I would be doing the things I did in this six week course like cooking in the backcountry, hiking for five miles nonstop, and running every morning. I learned once again that life is a rollercoaster; it will always have its ups and downs. When I go home, I will be stronger, even if I don't feel that way right now, I am a lot stronger. I will more often say, "I can" instead of "I can't". I will never give up on the good things in life or on my goals. Day seven of the ARC program marked an important day for me- the day one of my many dreams came true. I realized that I have more courage and physical fitness than I thought I had. But most importantly, I now know not to let fear take over my body, physically or mentally. No matter what, someone will always be "belaying" my every move. What I need to learn next is to trust my "belayers", but most importantly, trust myself.

When I go home, I will appreciate everything I have. I've had many challenges in my life, but this has been the hardest one; I will no longer complain about the small and simple things. I will also take better care of myself and eat healthier. I will no longer think only about superficial things, but dig in deeper about the world that surrounds me. I will no longer think only about myself because whether you're part of your family or part of a group, you're still a part of something, something that depends on you and needs your help.

My true test will be bringing all of these lessons home with me. I now need to combine the two worlds that I've lived in: nature and city. I want to take everything I learned back home, and be once again a part of my family. My family are very important people in my life; they are the rock that hold me on the ground, the ones who push me to be a better person each and every day, and to whom I dedicate all my accomplishments to. I thought I was going to be wonderful to spend time away from my siblings and my mother, but I was wrong. In these six weeks I've learned to appreciate them and how important they are to me. So now, here I am, standing strong like any kid's heroine, both physically and mentally. I have the ARC program and my new friends to thank for that.



Carlos Castaneda

Learning about Guillermo Bernardo Valdez I

When I asked him what the greatest accomplishments or challenges in his life or in his job life were? He said "My greatest challenges were to heal the parts of me that have been hurt and to continue to learn about myself." This statement touched me because it seemed that he had been hurt a long time ago.

I think Guillermo and I have many things in common because he is a very good athlete and I want to be just like that with a lot of courage and a lot of potential. I have been through a lot in my life too, like family problems and other stuff like that.

I am Aloha Lake

I am Aloha Lake
Warm and blue
Clear in everything I see
I leave dishonorable feelings behind
Receive fresh new things in time

With my family, I am happy
And wild
Fish make me smile
Waves show my crazy side
They don't let me be lazy

I am Aloha Lake
A beautiful site
One touched by an angel
Shining like we're in heaven

I am Aloha Lake
Fish swimming all around me
Delighted, feeling like a child

All in a group
Just like a family

The Rock
On the bottom
Holding me in place
Always there for me.

The river
Constantly traveling by my side
Will be with me in time
Always there for me.

The Lodge Pole Pine
Drinking from me
Whenever she has thirst
Always there for me.

The Water Snake
Swimming all around my belly
Relaxed in the path
Always there for me.

The wind
For ever blowing, creating breeze
Sharing air with others
Always there for me.

The Ocean
Waiting for me
And Caring for me
Always there for me.

The Mosquito
Chilling, waiting to attack
Thinking to himself and talking to his friends
Always there for me.

The Granite
Relaxing right by my side
Missing home but never alone
Always there for me.

I AM ALOHA LAKE

I wouldn't be anything without friends and family
Once I noticed that Nature
Is my home

Always remember
Life can be short or long and Love can be right or wrong
Love is:
What we've loved in the wild.
Life is:

What we haven't done before and we need to try and experience

I am Aloha Lake
Always there for you.

From One Change to Another

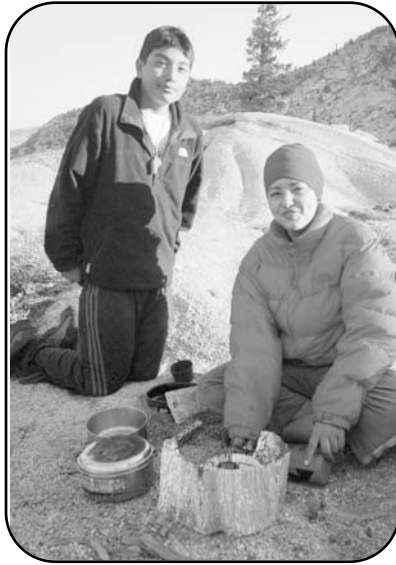
“Solo time, wow what a hard thing to do”, I thought to myself. After all it's just one night alone without anyone to talk to, no faces to watch, and no laughter to hear. It won't be that hard”. Of course that's what everyone said or tried to believe including me, when Katie, our teacher, told us it was time for solo.

It was day 25 of our 6 week summer literacy program and the 9 of us had been together for the past 3 1/2 weeks. When Katie told us that solo was 24 hours alone, not minutes but hours, I started to get worried. I didn't know if I could do it. Katie gave us a challenge and asked us to decide whether or not we wanted to spend the night alone. I said, “Wait a minute, I thought we were going to stay all together and chill and relax.” I knew I needed sleep and time to be alone, but I didn't want to get separated like this. But the more I thought about it, I couldn't just give up.

I took the challenge and walked with my backpack to my site. During solo this was me: A little boy without my bottle and my mom, sitting alone with out anyone to sing to me or to feed me, just listening to the creek and watching the stars at night. It was just me and my belongings. The stars were the eyes of my sweet momma and the creek was singing to me a gentle melody. It felt like my mom was on my side, all along in spirit. All I had was my backpack, warm layers and my food, but it felt like I had my whole family around me. The big rock above where I slept protected me. The trees swayed quietly like a lion ready to attack a zebra. The creek dribbled down the meadow, and the mosquito's buzzed around my face like I was a piece of fresh meat. I gazed at the sunlight on a rocky mountain. As it got dark, I watched the stars and began thinking about my life and, in particular, the past few years of my school life.

It was like watching a video. My mind was playing a clip of my school life. I saw myself in middle school acting in violence, getting in

fight, not respecting teachers or even helpers, and ignoring my homework. My grades were very bad, all F's instead of A's on each report card!! I could see myself struggling in class, not paying attention and not caring at all.



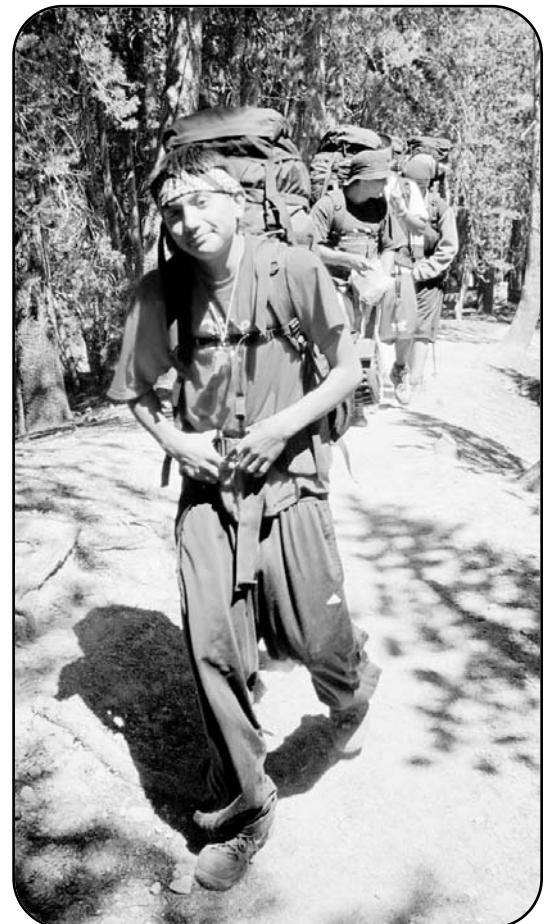
School was just like a game for me. I watched myself fooling around with my homeboys, even though they weren't in my class. The video rewound to the second year of the 7th grade, the year that I stopped trying my hardest. I started hating teachers, fooling around, and not giving a damn. I was angry because I didn't think it was fair that I had been held back and had to do 7th grade all over. Suddenly the video clip stopped. I felt a tear drop running down my cheek as if it was being chased. I started thinking

about my parents, what they went through when they heard that I had to do 7th grade all over again. I remembered that it was hard for them when my brother got held back in 4th grade, and they hoped I could do well in school. I remember when my dad and I had a talk: He told me “Nunca te des de vencer, do siempre trata lo mejor que puedas no te dejes vencer. (Never give up and try your hardest, keep your head up and never back down from the challenge). I realized that my parents have encouraged me throughout my whole life, and I knew I needed to thank them for always being there for me in the good times and in the bad times.

Now after this 6 week literacy program, there will be a new Carlos Castaneda in the world. A person that will help out and will care about his high school years. I will bring home good grades to make my parents proud and graduate. This is important for me since my mom could only go to school until 2nd grade, and my dad never had the chance to go to school. They have worked hard to give me the chance to get a good education here in the U.S. In the future I hope I will be proud to show my parents that I

have tried my hardest. I want to show love and respect for them, and hopefully my wish will come true to become a lawyer or a car designer. Someday, my goal is to buy my parents what they have always wanted: a house of their own.

The person who has inspired me the most was my dad, Alfredo Castaneda. The dad who loved me when I was born, the dad who gave me his last name, and the dad who shows me that he cares and love's me for who I am. My mom also inspires me. She is the mom who brought me to this world and fed me when I cried and never got angry for anything I did. She is the mom who took me places, and let me have fun and to enjoy myself. Both of them have always been there for me. Coming to this ARC program was the best thing that has happened in my life because I have learned how to appreciate my parents, how not to be afraid, how to change my life, and grades in school. My personality has changed by taking care of others and myself. I have learned how to be determined, motivated and help out people.



Cristina Medina

The Water Snake

I am a water snake
I slither there with a purpose
where I want to go

I am strong and move quickly.
I'm thin and long
And small

But with my family, I am the one
who helps
cleaning rooms, kitchen, floor, and the toilet

I am also the one who helps
my mom with the food
sopes, enchiladas. and posole

My family and I are like the water snake
we move fast together

bu,t here, I am alone
for the summer.

Coming down Dick's pass,
in Desolation Wilderness
sliding on steep snow.

I felt again like the water snake,

my legs scraping the snow
glissading fast, and flying
never stopping.

Nothing hurt me
I was having fun,
I wanted more,
like the snake who slides in water.

A swimmer snake
and I in the snow.

Our water group
sticks together to the end
like a family



I am a water snake,
thin, tall, and small
all day moving around,
in water

like a puppet
always moving
I will never
stop

I have two colors,
deep brown on the outside
and on the inside shiny black

I'm strong, with feelings
determination,
never stopping

making the water
dance,
waves and waves.

Dream High like Cristina Medina

If you're gonna dream, dream high. Never let the fear of the unknown, be a reason not to try. While I live let me learn to give what's mine. And at the journey's end know the reason why.

~ Doug Stone

It all started June 22, 2004 on the 6 week literacy ARC program. There were nine of us. We all had dreams, but we didn't know what we could do yet. We often said we can do this or we can't do that. We didn't know how strong we were. We had never faced our fears without our families nearby. As well, we all thought that we had given 100% participation in the past. We thought that we knew what it was to try our hardest. When the course started, we did not know what to expect from each other and as a team, but we would soon learn.

My most powerful moment on this trip was climbing Mt Tallac. The night before, I tried to look up at it, to see how hard it would be, but there were too many trees to see where it was. I wondered how high is it, how steep? Those thoughts were running through my mind all night. I was a little excited because I knew I was going to see a view of where I'm from, but at the same time I was afraid. I acted like I didn't want to climb the mountain, and I told myself, I'm wouldn't have any energy for the next morning. I let my mind say, "I can't". The next morning, we woke up earlier than any other morning, 5am, our first early morning of our ARC program. As I crawled out of my warm sleeping bag, I told myself, "The day is here, the morning has come, start climbing, Cristina". We packed some snacks for the climb, and we all got ready. It was cold as we started hiking and I felt like I was starting a new adventure. It was my first peak ever. When we stopped for a water brake, we could see it! Mount Tallac. It was in sight. "We can't do this! It's too hard", I said. "They must be nuts thinking we are climbing that", Gabi replied. "It will take us hours to get there. No way, it is too steep. I'm afraid of heights and it looks too high. It's too rocky, too pointy to climb." But something inside of me said, "Keep going." We all had to hike and hike if we wanted to get to the top. Even though it was getting way too sunny and hot to be climbing a peak

called Tallac. We had been climbing for over an hour and I was all sweaty. My hands were all slippery and my body felt sticky. I, Cristina looked back from where we started and said, "we are getting there". I told myself maybe this will be a good chance to see how beautiful Lake Tahoe is. We left the trail, and Suddenly, I was in the front of the pack. Everyone was following me. I thought, "Oh God, I have to go the right way, the safe way all the way to the top of the peak". As everyone was following me I focused on checking for loose rocks, so that my team mates could step on those rocks with no problems.

I was so busy looking down at my shoes to see which rocks to step on, but suddenly Katie told me look up. I felt a big breeze, and I felt so proud of myself. When I looked up, everything changed, the way I smiled, the way I was breathing, the way my body felt. It was amazing, I felt strong. I, Cristina, was on top of one of the biggest peaks in Tahoe. From the top of the peak I could see the water sparkling in my eyes. I felt the water shining with the sun, entering my whole body. Big unshaped mountains were everywhere I looked. I could also see wavy rocks, lakes, trees, boats, grass, bees, and a big fat marmot looking for food. The snow was an attraction to my eyes. For several days, we had to live with horrible mosquitoes, but on the peak there were finally no mosquitoes. The most beautiful view was seeing Lake Tahoe. It was a dream with the hot sun shining directly at me. Everything was calm and I could hear the wind blowing. I felt that I was on the top of all the mountains that surrounded me. I, Cristina, could finally rest for a couple of minutes on a big pointy rock with nothing to worry about. Nothing hurt. I felt like screaming "We made it" because I was on a peak. It took my breath away. Climbing Tallac was a dream come true in my life. I had accomplished a dream.

I, Cristina, used to always say, "I can't." I can was too hard for me. My mind would say "NO" but my body would react differently. If it wasn't for my body, I would have just given up and said I can't climb MT Tallac. Thanks to my strong body I got to see the view of Lake Tahoe. I will never forget it no matter how old I get. I realized that my mind can make me weak and I need to make it stronger. In the future, I need to remember climbing



Tallac, and I need to remember to say, "I can".

Another lesson I learned is that if 9 students of our

ARC program had not stuck together, nothing would have worked out. 9 students saying "We can do this" is better than 9 students saying, "It is too hard". As a team, we all got there faster and with a purpose, helping each other along the way. Everyone in our group has their own different weaknesses and strengths but since we stuck like a group everything came out well. My group helped me out many times and I also helped them out because if we work together we become a stronger group.

I also learned about some of my own weaknesses. One of them is giving negative attitude to the group. I used to doubt every challenge we were given. I used to always say, "Aye! NO!" and make a bad face. This attitude almost kept me from climbing I also learned that another weakness in me is laziness. I realize that I say, "I don't want to" when I'm nervous about a challenge or feeling lazy. I, Cristina, let myself be lazy when I'm not in the mood or when I'm not having a good day or when I wake up on the wrong side of the bed. My strengths are my body and my determination after this course. Now I have learned how to have a strong mind and to always say "I can," and always make it a challenge.

This awesome course changed my life and my perspective on the world around me. From now on, I will appreciate the world, my family, friends, teachers, wilderness, and the showers. From this moment on, I will act differently towards my family. I will act differently by putting my entire mind in to it every thing I do. I will Focus 100% in school and with my English. In the future I will work my hardest for what I want, to be a doctor or a nurse I will dream high. And I will try to make it real. In the future, I will try to help other people that need help like I did when I came to the ARC program. I will help them like the ARC program helped me. This Literacy and Leadership program changed my life for ever. THANK YOU!

Gabby Villalobos

Learning about Suzie Cordero

When I asked her, what has been the biggest challenge she has taken in her life she said, "Moving away from home. It allows you to figure out who you are."

I'm thankful to Suzie for allowing me to talk to her for more than an hour. In those minutes that went by, I learned a lot from her. I learned never to give up. Don't let anybody step on you, or crush your goals. I hope that in the future I will still remember what she told me. I wish that one day I will have the chance to follow her foot steps.



A Young Lodgepole Pine

I'm a young Lodge Pole Pine.
Today, I didn't feel strong.
I almost let the wind.
Blow me over.
But I didn't let that stop me
From growing

I'm young.
I don't want to fall down.
I want to survive.
Each time I set my mind to a challenge.
I spread my roots out.
Digging deeper down into the dirt.
Coming down Dick's Pass.
I tried to spread my roots out.
But I was too afraid.
I knew I had to do it.
And I didn't let fear stop me
From growing.

Coming down Dick's Pass.
Sliding so fast on the cold, shivering snow.
I felt my roots spreading more and more.
Watching Carolina feeling intimidated,
crying.
I felt my roots, weaker and weaker.
Each time.
But I didn't let the panic stop me.
From growing.

Next to a climbing wall,
I felt my knees shaking.
I've always wanted to reach the top.
But standing below,
I said, "I can't."
But I didn't let those thoughts stop me
From growing.

I stretched my roots
High above.
Leaping up the rock,
I reached the top
Again and again.

Sometimes
I miss my home.
And I always think about my little "BRO".
I'm a branch.
He's a cone.
As long as I live,
I will never let him go.
But I'm not going to let those memories,
Stop me from staying here.



Don't Stop Until You Get To The Top

When I, Gabriela Villalobos, first decided to come to this camp, I didn't know if I was sure I wanted to come. When I got here I wasn't sure, what we were going to do. A few days later I still wasn't sure if I was doing to stay, or if I was going to go home. I mean, back at home had a path all cricked and demented. I didn't have trust and confidece in others. Why? I dont know. But now, I feel like I have more trust and confidece in each one of my friends. I feel like I know them a little bit more. I know that if something ever hapens to me, they're going to be by my side. It feels great to have friends like that. I, Gabi have been here for three weeks now and in those three weeks I learnd how to be independent, how to trust the people, how not to be scared, and how not to be afraid of heights.

I remember the first week we went hiking. Victor and Katie gave us the news. They told us that we were doing to have a chance to experience rock climbing. All of the girls and boys got excited, and I did to.

It all started June 28,2004. It was the second to last day of our first expedition. Near Emerald Bay, next to the water fall, there was a big climbing wall. The rock was 90 feet tall. The rock was tall and straight, and it was also gray. It was granite rock, speckled with colors shining with the help of the sun. The rock had cracks, knobs and bulges to hold on to, but it looked hard and steep. There were ropes, each one had it's own color, hanging from the top. There I was Gabriela Villalobos standing by the rock, a girl that didn't have that much trust or confidence in any one. A girl that was also afraid of heights, and of everything else. When we first got near the climbing wall, Derek showed us which rocks we were going to climb. Just looking at that big rock while I was standing by it's side, my nees started to hurt and to shake. But thanks to Aldo, a friend that encouraged me to say, "I can." I said "I'm going to do it, I'm going to kiss the top." There I was standing by the rock belaying Corlos, having his life in my

hands, belaying him so he could go to the top. I saw Carlos struggling to reach the top. He slowly leaned back saying, "I'm afraid, I'm afraid to go down." There I was stending by the rock, belaying Carlos as he came down, I was saying to my self, "Can I do it? Can I really climb up?" When Carlos finally made it down, I gave him same slack so he could take his harness of. There I was nervous and shaking, while I was getting ready to put the harness on. It was time for me to go up. I said out loud, "I'm afraid, I don't want to go up." Thats when I heard Aldo telling me, "Climb up, it's not really that hard to go up." I told him, "Yeah right you must be crazy." But I knew that I had to do it, so I did. I first streched my arm high above to reach the rock. Then I also steached my leg, and finally I got to fully grab the rock. I slowly stared to go up. Holding the rock as tight as I could, just as I used to hold my little brother. I was finding my way up, when my hands started to sweat, my hand slipped and I fell back. I screamed so loud, that I told Carlos, "Don't let me go." I was really scared because I had never put my life in another person's hands. But I thought to myself, "Gabi give it a chance, let him know that you trust him." Then I quickly got hold of the rock again. As I did, I slowly found my way up. I was really scared i didn't want to look down. As I looked up I said in my mind, " I'm getting there, I'm almost at the top." Everyone at the bottom was cheering me on, by saying, "Go Gabi your almost at the top, you're doing great." Everyone motivated me to reach the top. Moments after that, I looked up, and I saw that I was already at the top. I just need it lift up my arm. When I got there I wanted to kiss the anchor, and I did. I said, "Hohhhh my god, I can't believe I reached the top." Aaron yelled from the bottom, "Hey Gabi try to slowly come down." So I leaned back, and tried to step on the rock, as I carefully found my way down. As Carlos gave me some slack, I stepped on the bottom of the rock. Then Aldo asked me, "Hey Gabi was it hard?" I answed back, "NO" I told him, "It wasn't really that

hard to climb up.

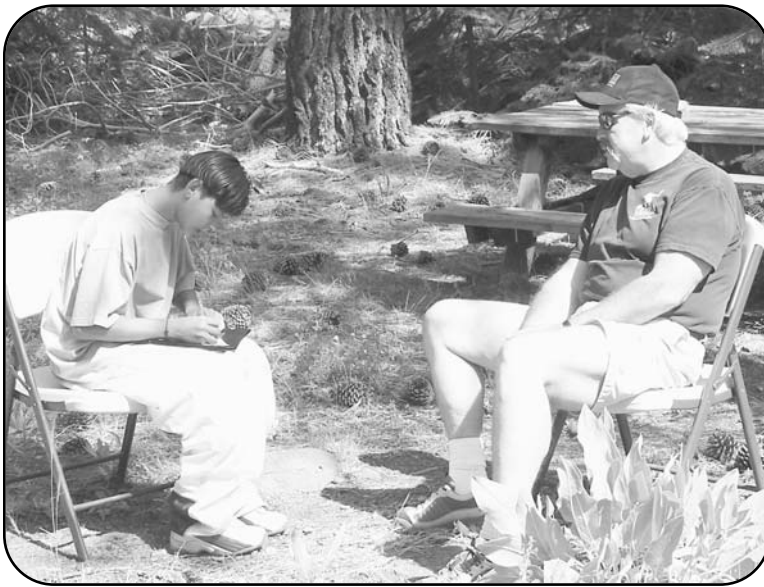
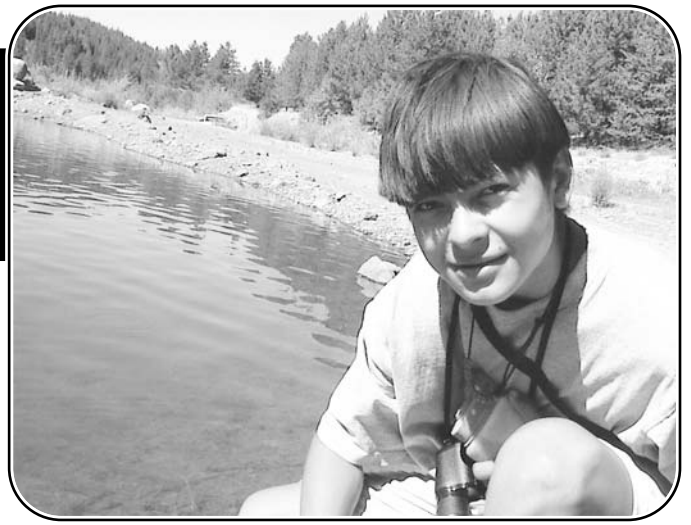
As I thought, I told to myself, "Gabi give it a chance, and climb up the other rocks." Then I asked Aldo, "Hey Aldo do you want to climb all the rocks with me?" He said, "yes." After that we climbed up the rock, that he climbed up first. After I climbed the first rock the second and third ones where a peice of cake. When I finished climbing all of the rocks, I wanted to do them all over again. But if Aldo wasn't there with me I wouldn't have made it by myself. It was really cool to be able to reach the top of every one of the rocks, and have the feeling that I could do anything that I set your mind to do. What I leanred about myself was that I was stonger then I had ever imagined. I leanred that if I wanted something in this life I would have to work really hard for it. I also leanred to say, "I can" instead of saying, "I can't." I also leanred to trust myself, and other people. I leanred to have confidence in me and other people. This ARC program has taught me new, and important things. One of them has been, helping me to be more idependent, to trust my friend, to have confidence, and also to be able to reach my goals. Not only future goals, but also present goals as well.

It all started on June 28,2004, the day that I leanred how to rock climb. That day really changed me, and helped me to be able to reach my goals. But I know I had to do them step by step. I knew that to get to my goal I would have to find my way through those cracks, and knobs. So at the end I would finally have reached the top.

I'm going to remember this course through the rest of my life, as it taught me to believe in myself. I'm going to take these memories home as a big part of my life, and also as a big adventure. This course is going to help me with the decisions I make for the future. Through out these six weeks I've been here it tought me how to be independent, have trust in people, to have confidence, to be strong, to not be lazy and to help out more, to act as a leader, and help out the community. I think this was a great opportunity for me, I really learned a lot. Thanks to Katie, Victor and Mr. LeFevers who helped me to make the right decision. I thank LeFevers a lot for encouraging me to come to this ARC program.



Heriberto Moreno



Learning about Dan Flores

Then I asked him what he was most proud of accomplishing in his life and he said, "Being married for 32 years and choosing the right person to marry." He pointed at his wife Mrs. Flores with pride and I told him that I already knew his wife and thought she was great too.

I wish I could be like Dan Flores some day in the future because he is a really great man who helps everyone that needs help. I hope I will choose the right person to marry for the rest of my life too. The interview was great I wish we had more time so he could give me more advice to help me in my future. I wish I could see him in my little town so we keep talking about our lives and how we are doing.

My Blood

I am the ocean
Sometimes calm and sometimes rough
No oceanographer can study me.
When I am relaxed,
I am shiny and crystalline
From the top you see
my surface
But if you go deeper
My pressure might kill you.
When I am rough, I have a thunderstorm within me
My reach is powerful
I can go anywhere I want.
I am all around the world.
I think I am big,
But I am alone.
I am filled with creatures inside
They're my blood.
Everything inside me is my blood.
If you are in me,
You're a part of me
But if you leave,
I bleed,
Bleeding from every exit
Please return.

When I was Afraid

When I first came to this course, I was Heriberto Muñoz Moreno. A boy who was afraid of heights, getting into the water, and always shy to do things that others did. I was afraid of heights because I've never been so high in my life. I was afraid of getting into the water because I didn't know how to swim. And I was shy to do things because I never had the chance to do them. When I first came to this course, I knew I needed to challenge myself and I needed to get out of the house for a while. I needed the challenge to be out here with my friends and teachers and without my parents for 6 weeks, I needed to throw my fears into Aloha Lake, to climb Mount Tallac, to learn how to backpack, to read books, to speak English, to try a ropes course, to experience the lake from a sea kayak, and to spend 24 hours alone in the wilderness. I think that each of these challenges have made me change and grow because now I know that when I put my mind to it, I can do everything and anything I want.

At Aloha Lake, we performed a special ceremony. We all threw a rock into the lake, symbolizing throwing away all our fears, even the smallest fears we had. I threw away my fears of swimming, getting into cold water, climbing peaks, and trying everything. After the ceremony, my friends encouraged me to swim in Aloha Lake. It looked like paradise but I was still afraid. I didn't know how to swim and I thought the water would be cold. I saw Katie, my teacher, waving me into the water,

smiling and having fun. I decided to try to do the same thing as Katie and I slowly walked into the water. It worked I was so happy that for once in my life time I had the courage to get in the water. I was able to do it also because of my commitment made by throwing the rock into the lake. The water was nice and warm like the as if liked us for throwing our fears into him. My friends encouraged me too, and they told me they would show me how to swim, and Victor and Katie were teaching me too. I was so afraid of sinking but I didn't sink. Before coming to this course I thought I was never going to swim but now every time I go to the beach with my brothers and my friends, I will swim and enjoy it.

Another fear this course has helped me conquer was my fear of heights by going to the Mount Rose ropes course. First we went into the enchanted forest to do some activities as a group. Just looking at the high rope I thought it was going to be easy, but once I was up there it seemed different than how it looked. After that we went to the real stuff. I had to get more courage for the first time to try this. The first thing we did was to grab a rope and swing from one log to another. It wasn't far apart and we all had fun. The next thing we did was called the flying squirrel. One of us was attached to the rope on one end and the others were attached to the other end at the count of 2 "the flying squirrel" and the others ran at 3. Carolina went first. The game was called the flying squirrel because we

pulled her up 40 feet off the ground and she swang back and forth. After Carolina it was Carlos's turn, he was going to choose Juan, but Juan wasn't ready so he chose me. I didn't want to go, but, I thought it was better to get it over with so I took the challenge. I attached the rope on my belt and when Katie counted to two, I ran as fast as I could. I was still running when they lifted me up. When I was at the top flying I wanted to pay the water bill in my pants but I didn't. I was covered in goose bumps, but I was happy. Then we climbed two trees. It made my stomach feel like there were butterflies inside. We just needed to do the Trapeze it was our last challenge. I was so tired from everything I had done that I didn't wanted to try this last challenge. This time we had to say a goal before we jumped. Katie and Victor told me I should do this last thing even though I didn't feel like it, but, I still jumped and my goal was to be more independent and stronger physically and mentally.

This course changed me completely by showing me how to be more independent and by helping me conquer all my fears. Now I am not afraid of being alone for a whole day and longer. I am going to keep doing the things I did on this course. And I am not going to forget anyone on this course either. I will always remember this program as one of the most important experiences of my life. Before I came I didn't like to read out loud but now I can do it. I have a book that I like and that I have finished, called Hatchet by Gary Paulsen, it's interesting for me because I like adventure books, I didn't like to read but now that I finished this book I like I would like to read many more books. DX I have started to read better and better every day. I learned new vocabulary, new words that I didn't and now I do, and I also learned their meanings too. That's not all. Everyday on this program I ran farther and farther until most mornings I ran 2 miles.

This Saturday we are going to run 7 miles. Thanks to this I'm no longer Heriberto Muñoz Moreno that boy who was shy, afraid of heights, and getting into the water any more. That boy is gone now there is a new Heriberto.





Learning about Linda Sheppard

I asked her if she had spent any time away from her family when she was young like me. She told me she had taken some trips away from her family, like her travels to Africa, and she said, "I wish that my parents could have seen what I saw." I said that my parents would have loved to see Lake Tahoe from Mt. Tallac.

When I asked her what her most important decision she had made in her life, she told me it was going to college, and if she hadn't gone to college she wouldn't have been able to do the job she loves. This made me want to go to college too because I would like to do a job that I love. She said her job brings her happiness "because it is all about the people."

I am granite

I am granite
pale red, slate blue, and shiny white quartz
like the crystals in the rock
I am hard on the outside
and peaceful on the inside
I shine whenever the moon comes out
the pale red, slate blue, and shiny white quartz
shine even more, when I'm
with my family.
Whenever people I don't like
make me mad, the hardness
that's in me smashes like
a flash of lightning.
Sometimes I must get it out.
People think I'm only hard
but I'm soft too.
I shine when I
help people or I laugh at jokes
and only if I do something
good
People have a hard time cracking me
I am granite.
I am quiet so that I will interest
you more
and I'll make you
want to climb
me
even more

Things Aren't Always Easy

I gazed up at the high wires on the trees. At that moment, I knew this day was going to be a challenge for me. I felt butterflies in my stomach and my legs wobbly. I couldn't picture myself on top of the wires. Maybe it was because I was so afraid of falling. I've never been afraid of heights before, but I had never really tried anything like this. I think this was the first time I had the chance and the courage to do it. Last time I had visited a Ropes Course I never did anything up high. Last time I had the chance to climb it; I was young and afraid to try. This time the first elements we did were in the Enchanted Forest. We faced the Ring of Fire and the wall as a team. After that we went to our first high element. It was called the flying squirrel, I didn't think it would be scary but I was wrong. It would be one of the most important and terrifying activities I accomplished this summer.

The ride was about 40 feet high and the only place to go was up. I hooked into the rope and heard the directions. I had to run one way and about 9 other people had to run the opposite way. I had to run at the count of 2 and the rest of the group had to run at the count of 3. When I saw the first person go my stomach started to feel queasy and my skin turned pale. I was terrified. Then the second person went I felt the same way except worse because I had a feeling that I was going to be next. When Gabby unhooked, she was suppose to pick a person to go next. I tried not to look

scared so Gabby wouldn't choose me, but I was so frightened that I almost started to sweat. The bad thing was that she knew I was scared, so she chose me, to challenge me, and I said, "Oh, hell no, I'm not going", and I told her to choose another person. But Katie told me that I had to do it at some point and what really made me want to go was the group's encouragement. So I strapped in and I ran on 2, like when horses hear the gun go off. I ran until I couldn't run any more then suddenly I felt something pull me back, right at that moment I said, "oh no" and I closed my eyes. I didn't open my eyes until I felt that I stopped swinging, then they lowered me and I started cheering because at first I couldn't yell. Once I was down I unstrapped myself and I told everybody how cool it was.

I felt so proud of myself and I thought that if my parents had seen me, they would have said how proud they were and so would my uncle and all my family. At first I thought they wouldn't have been able to lift me up, but I was wrong again, way wrong. After all that, I was glad that I tried it, so that way I could encourage other people to try it and could tell them how awesome it was and they would want to try it even more. But if I would have gone last or not gone at all, I wouldn't have been able to tell my group how fun it was and that they should do it, they would have said, "what does he know? He didn't try it". That would have brought me down, not only in my mind but my heart and soul also.

This experience helped to transform me into a person who would like to encourage other people to try things and not be afraid to do them. Not only did it help me to encourage other people but to do the things myself and not be scared. I got stronger not only physically but mentally too. After all that excitement and fun I learned many things about myself that that I never knew before. I found new strengths and weaknesses. Some of my strengths are, that I'm actually not afraid of heights and that I could do anything that I put my mind to. I also learned that if I do things first. I can help people. To push themselves and not be afraid of what they're doing and have fun.

My weaknesses were that I never trusted the rope or the person who was holding me. I would always say that I couldn't do it, although I always ended up doing it. When I was doing something I wouldn't try my hardest because I would say, "I can't do it". Every time we would do something, I would never give 100%. I think that I should have at least tried my hardest and it would have been okay to be afraid. All I needed was to give it my best. How I knew what were my weaknesses and strengths, was when I didn't want to do it and I would always want to climb back down, that was a sign of being weak. Then when I knew what my strengths were, was when I would have fun and try my hardest. Now I know that when I say I can't or I don't want to, it means that I'm afraid but I should still try things no matter how scary they look.

Having fun and trying new things has changed me a lot. I will know appreciate my mom and dad even more because they have helped me stay in this and they supported me all the way. Now when I get home I'm going to listen to them and not fight with them, or yell at them. I will also appreciate my family and my friends even more and will not fight with them. Now at home doing something will seem different. I will take it as a challenge and stick to it. Doing my chores will be easy because I now know that I've done much harder things, and stuck to them. I will not be lazy anymore because I will look back at all the climbing, hiking and the ropes course and it will remind me that I wasn't lazy to do all those things.





Paco Delgado

Blood and Family

I AM A MOSQUITO

Small and buzzing
flying around your head.

Only the females bite
leaving bumps.

But I kiss when I want.

You can't forget me
because I am always there
I don't like the cold and hot days
but I love my family and
blood

In the wilderness, we fly in a group
together like family.

When you get mad at me,
I stay and talk to you.

When I'm lonely,
I feel hungry and weak
I don't want to talk

But when I'm with blood
and family

I could fly five miles

When I flew to the top of Mount tallac

I saw Lake Tahoe
and I felt at home.

My heart flew to Kings Beach

But I came back

To learn
English and have fun
With my new family.



The New Paco Delgado

Picture me: Paco Delgado, A boy too lazy to walk to the store a boy too lazy to wake up in the morning. I was a boy who didn't appreciate my family, who didn't appreciate what they did for me. My dad's hard work, and my mom taking care of us. I was a boy who played soccer, and didn't help at home. I was always playing soccer and I never thought how hard it is for my parents.

But now picture me: Paco Delgado, now I'm not lazy to walk, sea kayak, cook dinner and wash dishes. Imagine the lazy boy, now climbing mountains and being able to accomplish one of his dreams, seeing Lake Tahoe and seeing the sunrise on Deadwood Peak. Imagine the lazy boy speaking English all day, helping his friends, paying attention in class ready with the answer.

I think this summer will be a turning point in my life because I know now how to live in the back country, how to keep water clean, how to clean up my trash, how to set up tarps and how to survive in the forest on my own. Thanks to this course, I am not afraid of anything. I will never say I cannot do it; I will always say I can do it. I appreciate my parents because thanks to them I am a good boy with a good heart, thanks to them I am here. All my life I will appreciate my parents more, my dad working to bring us a good life putting our dreams before his own, and my mom taking care of me always thinking about me and my brothers and sisters. She is the one who told me what is good and what is bad. This course has changed my life.

Day 5 on a back packing trip in the desolation wilderness, we were hiking at 7am to climb Mount Tallac. I didn't understand how important that day would be. I noticed the name of the mountain on the map, but I forgot. When I asked my friends, they told me Mount Tallac. I will never forget that name. I thought it would be difficult to climb Mount Tallac, but all I needed was my mind to tell me, "keep going" on that peak, I also needed my team. We are nine students who came from Kings Beach and Truckee to study English and leadership for the summer. We were like a family, helping each other and sometimes we fought like brothers and sisters. When we reached the top of Mount Tallac, I felt proud of my self and the group because



we made it and tried our hardest and I thought I deserved to see beautiful Lake Tahoe. From the summit, I could see all the parts of the lake. I could even see Kings Beach, my home. I felt like I was sleeping, having a wonderful dream and I never wanted to wake up.

During this program, we climbed four peaks. I loved all of them, especially Mount Tallac and Deadwood Peak in the Mokelumne wilderness. Deadwood was when we watched the sunrise. That day we woke up at 4am and we started climbing at 5am. That sunrise was the first time that I had ever seen a sunrise in my life. It looked like a volcano erupting. The sun was like a baby newly born. It came out slowly but beautiful. I looked around to see what new adventure waited for the new sun and for myself. What other adventures were coming for me and for him.

My biggest challenge in this summer program was to speak English all day. It was hard for me because some times I didn't know how to say a word. But thanks to my friends, Carlos, Hery, Gabby, Angie, Juan, Carolina, Cristina and my teachers Victor and Katie I learned more English this summer than I thought I could. They were always helping me, telling me words in English. They were helping me like brothers and sisters. I want to appreciate all of them, because we had fun days and sad days, but we were strong and we made it to the end of the six week program. In the end climbing Mount Tallac and Deadwood peak

was easy, just like speaking English, because all I needed was my mind to tell me to do it and my team to help me.

I learned in this course more things than I thought I ever would do. I learned, to put up tarps, to speak more English, no to be afraid of anything, that the family is important to all of us, not to be lazy and to help my friends and other people.

Picture me: Paco Delgado, you think a lazy boy did all these things? Yes I. I did these things for my family because when I get back I won't be the same boy that I was before I came to this program. Now I know if I have a dream I have to try my hardest and never give up. This program made me stronger and taught me a lot of things. Now I am 15 years old and I know what my dreams are and I have to try my hardest to make it. I want to go to college and make my mom's dream come true. She didn't want me and my brothers and sisters to have the same life like her. She told me she worked a lot when she was young. When my brother was born she and my dad didn't have anywhere to liv»%ûy parents gave me this life. Six weeks ago I used to be another person but now I speak more English and I try my hardest to help other people. When I go home my dream will come true.



Los Padres

Cuando ustedes nacieron
cada uno de nosotros
nos estaban esperando dos personas
nuestras madres y nuestros padres
la cara de nuestras mamas
cuando nosotros nacimos
fue una experiencia que nunca vamos a olvidar.
Yo amo a mis padres
como ustedes.

Estar un buen tiempo sin ellos
es como que te sacaron el corazon
y te dejaron con una parte de tu cuerpo
rompido y matado.
Nuestros padres han estado alli
por nuestro lado
desde que empezamos a usar la bicicleta,
nos dieron de comer y beber,
nos hacen reir y nos enseñan como portarnos.

Yo me siento
como todos ustedes
me siento como un juguete sin batteries.
Necesito mis batteries para reir,
para hablar, llorar y extrañar.
Nuestros padres son nuestros regales
mas preciosos
son do estrellas en un mundo bien grande
A cada uno de nosotros
nos llaman differientes nombres como:
pelan, quesos, papito, pumkin, caro
Why the hell aren't you practicing the violin
mijo, giuronmina, charlie boy, la marcuita
and last but not least Bejin.
We love them like a boy misses his girl.
They're our blood and we're the heart.
Los amo padres mios.
This goes to everyone
who has parents
near, far passed away
or for those who don't have any.

Gracias,
Thank you

~ Presented by Aldo Xochihua,
ARC Graduation Ceremony, July 2004

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You have all helped to build a brighter future for English Language Learner students in the Truckee Tahoe Community.