



University of California, Berkeley

**ADVENTURE, RISK, CHALLENGE**  
A Summer Leadership and Literacy Program  
**2007**

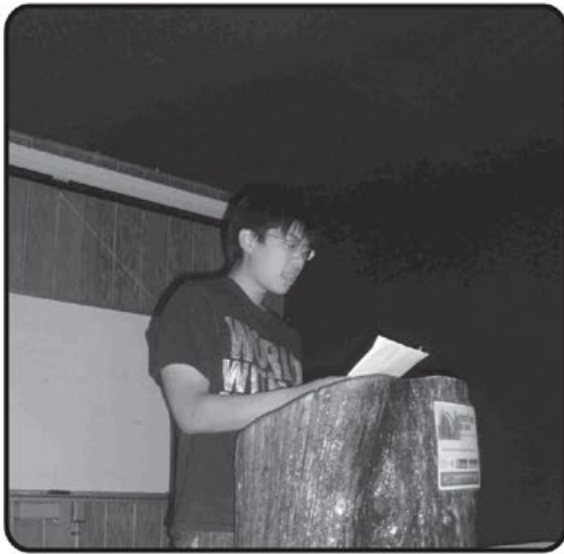


Writings of  
**The ARC Agents**

Teachers:  
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Deb Colley  
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Eric Chen  
Angel Gonzalez  
Luis Gonzalez  
Mara López  
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# Transformation



I am water  
I change depending on my surroundings  
I have different personalities in different places.  
Quiet among strangers,  
Serious, eager to succeed,  
Funny, comfortable among people.  
Silent like a pond,  
Determined like waves striking on cliffs,  
Comical like sprinklers.

Traveling all over the world,  
I never stop,  
never give up.  
My flexibility perseveres when I encounter obstacles

Different temperatures,  
Different forms,  
raging steam, vapor  
anger released,  
becoming calm fluid,  
peaceful as a mountain lake,  
sad cold ice,  
reticent, emotionless.  
Waiting for spring;  
Sadness be gone.

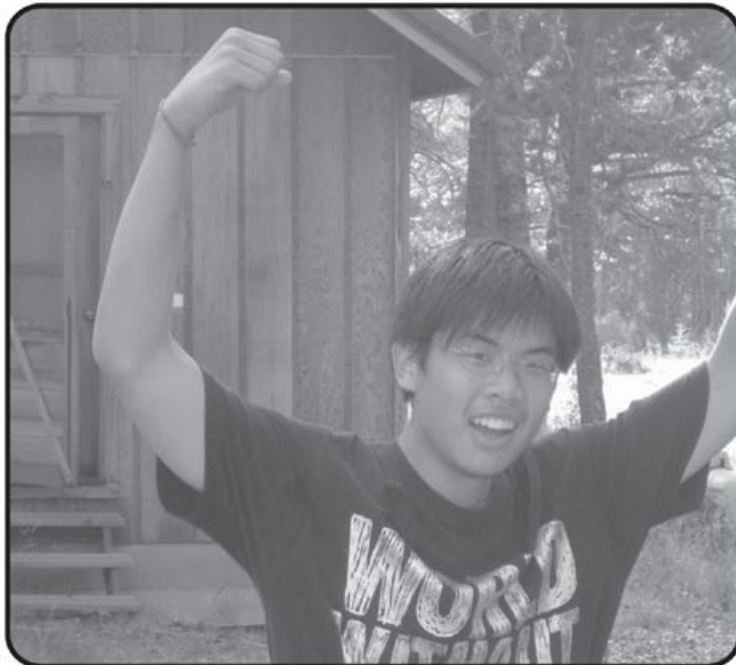
Watershed  
My lineage  
Never ends  
the origin of mountains, valleys, and sky  
creeks, streams, and rivers  
intermingled.  
I am the lake, the ocean.  
Relentless.

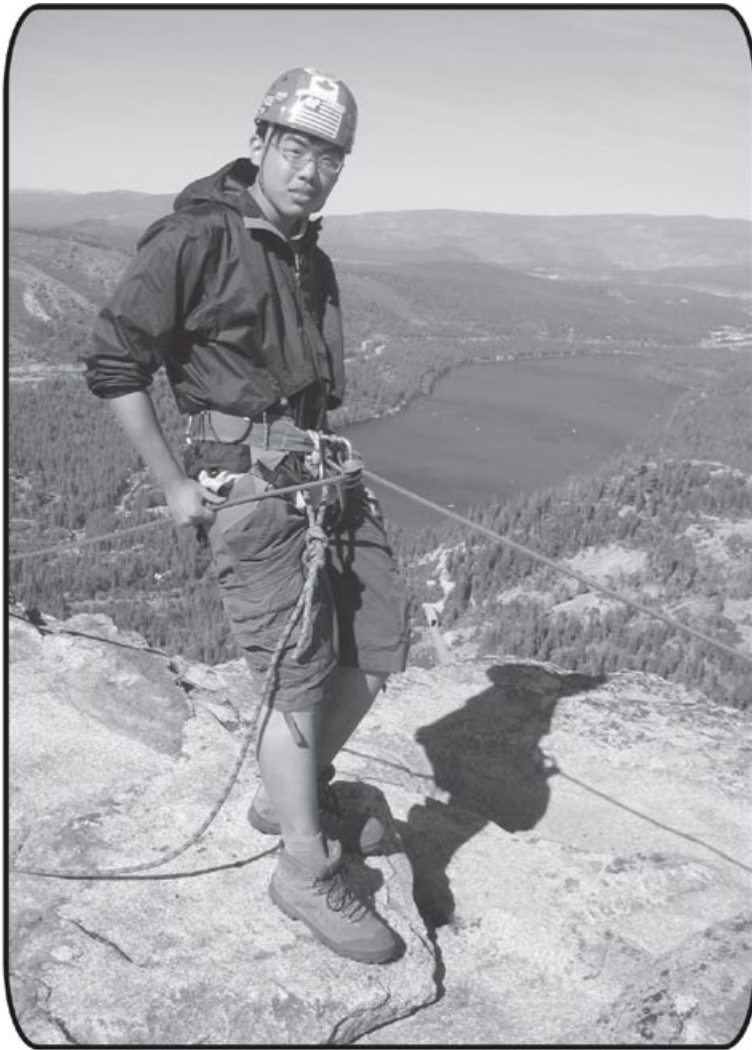
I reflect,  
Revealing your true heart,  
Showing me who you are.  
I listen, I observe  
Till I saturate.

Nourishing the Earth  
Benefiting the whole world,  
A bridge that connects you and me;  
A surface that carries enormous opportunities,

I fall, pour, rise, and erode.  
I keep on going.  
Facing challenges,  
Overcoming difficulties,  
I never stop,  
Never give up.  
I keep transforming,  
but  
I am still who I am.

## Eric Chen





## A Stepping Stone

I extended my arms and legs. I reached out to the rocks and started climbing without fear. In the middle of the process, I wondered if I could do it. When I was at the top of the rock, I yelled, "I did it; climbing rocks!"

Forty days ago, I was a person who didn't help out at home with anything. I cared about my family, but I never took action. I was the type of person who always laid on the couch eating, calling my mom for drinks. I was selfish. I didn't care about others. I wanted others to take care of me, just because I am the youngest I thought that was okay. I was a person who was too lazy to try new things and I only had a few interests. However, this summer is the time when transformation occurred.

I am involved in a program called Summer Search. They wanted me to attend an Outward Bound Wilderness course for this summer. I wanted to go to Montana, but my mentors told me about the ARC program. The ARC program combined academics and the wilderness into one program, and they suggested I participate. I was eager to learn more English and find out who I truly was. I believed ARC would make a huge difference because it included adventure, risk, and challenge. I wanted to change myself, so I attended the ARC program. I've done a lot of challenges and I felt more confident.

I was especially excited about the rock climbing, but I felt different after the nerves in my fingers contacted with the rocks. I had flashbacks. Six

years ago, my mom brought me to a gym for rock climbing with my sister and cousins. I was extremely fat at that time and didn't want to try it. However, my mom made me do it because she already had paid. I climbed onto the rock. I was fat and young. My sister and cousins kept discouraging me and teasing me about how funny I looked in the harness. This just aggravated me. When I wanted to motivate myself, their laughter just pulled me down more. It felt like lifting an elephant that weighed tons. As a result, I couldn't even move up one step. My mom complained that I wasted her money. I was frustrated and humiliated. I had a horrible memory rock climbing and haven't felt confident ever since. I fell into a dark hole and thought I would be trapped there forever.

Now years later, clinging to the rock, I was afraid that the same thing would happen to me again. I feared that people would laugh at me again. However, I am not the same person I was 6 years ago anymore. I am more mature, stronger, thinner, and have friends who support me and encourage me rather than make fun of me. I wanted to try it. I wanted to transform. I wanted to prove to myself that I am not a coward. I wanted to see what I could do. I wanted to find out who I really was.

I straightened my arms and legs and reached out for the rocks. My mind and body wanted to go to the top desperately. I kept on climbing with a strong faith. People's encouragements made me even stronger. The brutal sun mercilessly beat down on me, the furious wind blew and the rocks were as sharp as blades. I ignored them. There were difficulties on the way, but I never gave up. When I reached the top, I yelled, "I did it!" I was the happiest person in the world. I had defeated my enemy: myself.

Rock climbing has impacted me deeply. Rock climbing was my enemy, but also my teacher. I see it as an obstacle that benefits me physically and mentally. It proved that I was strong enough to lift my own body up, and it showed that I've improved a lot during the past 6 years. I discovered my eagerness to conquer obstacles. Rock climbing stimulated my potential; it also proved my ability to face challenges and my capability of overcoming difficulties. In addition, it reminded me of the importance of encouragement. Encouragement was necessary for me. If they didn't encourage me and put me down like my sister and cousins did, I wouldn't make it despite how strong I was. It taught me that if I am determined to do something, then I'll make it. Rock climbing also taught me that my biggest enemy was me, not other people, not the rock, not the height. It was me. A strong faith conquers everything. If I thought I couldn't make it, then I was already a loser before I tried it. A quote by Pogo stands out to me immediately, "We have met the enemy...and he is us."

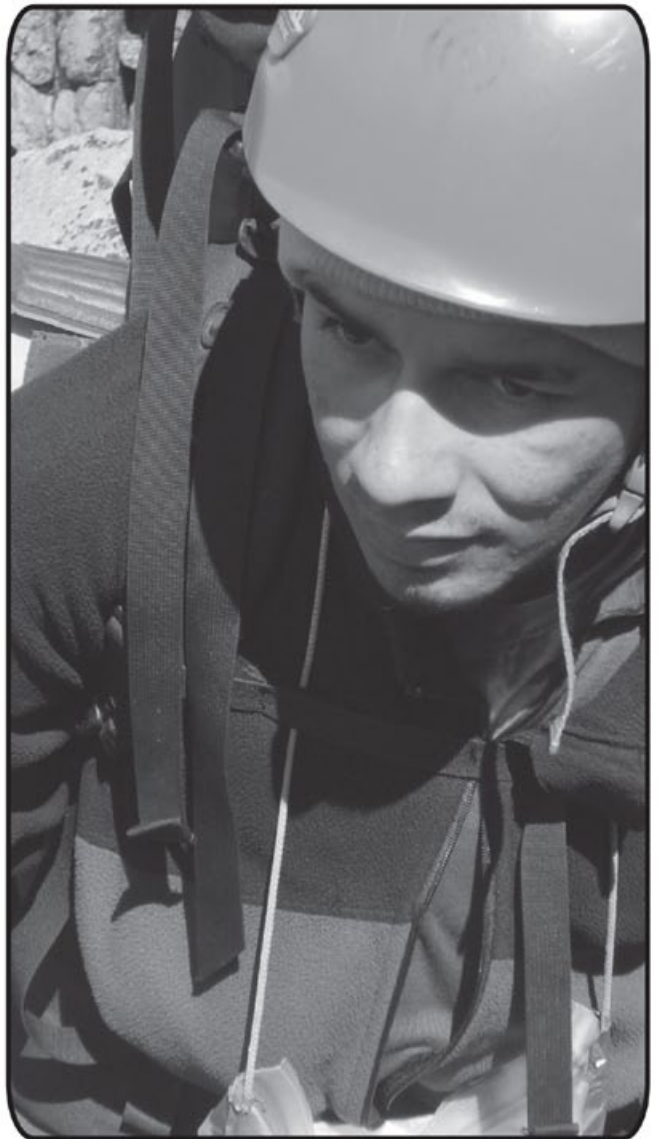
Rock climbing was a nightmare for me at first, but now it highlighted my success. It has influenced my life so much. Every step I've climbed proves how strong I've grown during the past 6 years. My physical and mental accomplishments have inspired an enormous change. The wall of rocks was a turning point that transformed me from failure to success.

I am not the person I was before. I found my essential values. I found out the inside of me. I am a person who needs encouragement. I am a person who is not afraid of challenges. I am a person who is willing to try everything. I am a person who has the ability to overcome obstacles. I am a person who cares about others and wants to help others. I am a person who is going to start a whole new life, my life. I am Eric Chen.

# Luis Gonzalez

## Strong Like a Fir

I am a white fir, sturdy and strong,  
But I also might fall.  
I am rough on the outside  
But my inside is sweet  
With small green needles  
And chalky white bark  
I never say No  
To those who need me.  
I offer my strengths  
And shade those who need it,  
I flow with the wind  
Flexible and peaceful.  
I am a white fir, sturdy and strong,  
But I also might fall.  
I am rough on the outside  
But my inside is sweet.  
I'm grounded  
I stand up for my beliefs.  
I have rough times  
But I over come them.  
When I get cut down its ok,  
Because my seeds  
Will grow once again  
And I will become  
The strong fir that I once was.  
I will not fall  
For I will endure  
My soul Full of beauty  
And heart full of joy.



# REBIRTH

I used to be lazy. If you asked me to do something, I would never get it done. I used to sit on the couch and watch TV while my family cleaned around the house. Every summer the whole family would get chores done around the house like paint the walls or clean up the yard. I would never do any of that; I would just sit and see people do it for me. When my family would go somewhere I would try to stay as far as possible from them and go my separate way. I never cared about anyone except myself. When my brothers and sisters needed help, I was never there for them.

However, when I heard about the ARC program from some of my teachers, I thought it would be a good opportunity to grow and become a better person. I thought about it for a while, but I wasn't completely confident as to whether or not I wanted to go. Sometimes my lazy side would tell me not to do it, but deep down, I knew it would be the best experience for me. I decided to go.

My rebirth started at the ropes course. We all arrived not knowing what to expect. I saw ropes hanging and waving in the air. I was excited to get up there and hang from the ropes. It looked like one of those "Fear Factor" challenges. We began by playing a game of trust, which I thought was a good way to start everything. After that, we all headed to a long log that hung a few inches from the ground. We had two chances to walk across it while it wobbled. It didn't look hard, but when my turn came, it wasn't what I expected. On my first attempt to walk across, everyone was putting me down and booing. I couldn't concentrate with all of the negative remarks and I didn't make it across. On my second try, people were encouraging me and I succeeded. I reflected on the difference that it made between being put down and encouraged. I prefer being encouraged and I felt better encouraging others.

That morning we also had to climb over a tall wooden wall. This required a lot of teamwork because we could only use each other to get up; there was no ladder or rope. It seemed impossible, but we made a plan and got it done. Getting me up was challenging because I was the last one to go and I had no one to boost me up. However, on my first try I hoped and hopped and achieved. As a group we got it done. It was evident that we were becoming a stronger team.

After completing several physical challenges, we headed to the thing that impacted me the most. We sat down on tree trunks and Katie opened up a discussion about personal



challenges that we've faced. After John told us about his life story, I stepped up and volunteered to go next. I opened up and told about the difficulties that I faced with my family, wanting to cry, but holding it in. I was glad to let go of what I've been holding in for years. As people told their stories I started relating to all of my new family. I started trusting them more; I felt more comfortable and connected to them.

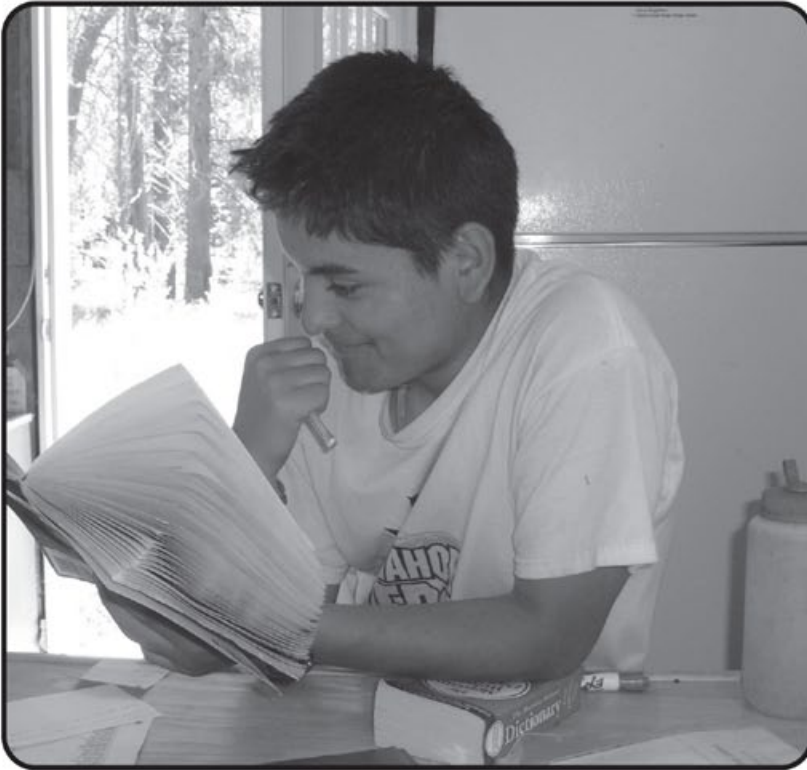
The next activity was a swing up on a tree. When I got up to the tree, there was only one way down and I had to get on the biggest swing, then swing down to the bottom. I was scared; I didn't want to do it but there was no other choice. I was thinking for awhile about this and then all of a sudden I conquered my fears. I closed my eyes and let go. When I grabbed on to the ropes, I felt good. I swung as if I was falling, then I felt as if I was flying. I was happy to be able to do it and to put my fears behind me.

Our last activity at the ropes course, we went to the trapeze. It didn't look hard because all we had to do was climb up the tree. Then I saw a piece of wood that wasn't very big and a rope in front of it. Katie told us that we had to bring a goal to the group. People told their goals as they jumped for the trapeze. When it was my turn, I harnessed up and headed to the tree. I climbed up with my heart pounding. I was successful to make it to the top. I grabbed on to the wood and pulled myself up. I stepped close to the edge and looked down. It seemed far. I don't know why I was nervous but I was. I turned around and grabbed the stick and said my goal. I committed to the adventures, the risks and the challenges that life has to offer. I pounded the bell and I walked back as far as I could, then sprinted to the edge of the board.

I froze. I couldn't do it. I tried it again. I ran and tried to jump to the object that symbolized my goal. For a second I doubted whether or not I would be able to reach it, but it was too late to go back, I was already in the air. I didn't grab the trapeze but I realized that reaching for my goal was the important thing. I realized that trying was more important than not doing it at all. Taking the risk of committing myself to a goal is a new thing for me.

A few days later, during our kayaking trip, I had another important lesson in life. I saw the group falling apart, separating each other and talking about others. I didn't like it. Before our evening circle, I came up to people and asked what was going on. I wanted to know why they were not getting along like they used to and demonstrating compassion, one of our core values. I especially saw two of the teammates not treating each other well, and I checked in with them to see if they would like to talk about it as a group. They agreed to talk about it. At this moment, I realized my ability to be a strong leader—an ability that ARC has brought to the surface. After we talked as a group, we recommitted to stay united and to show compassion to one another. I felt proud. That same night after our Vomp, I was "jelly-rolled"—appreciated—for helping out the group. At that moment, bats, the animal that symbolizes rebirth, flew over us, squeaking. This is when I began to notice my own rebirth as a compassionate leader.

I want to thank the ARCies and the instructors for pushing me and making me into a great leader. I am going to take this home and use my learning in my community. I am going to change my attitude at school by helping others, paying attention and doing my work. I will be a different person.



# Angel Gonzalez

## The Dolphin Within

I am a dolphin  
Young and free, full of energy at sea;  
Playing at the playground, swinging,  
Jumping around with my friends.

I am free to explore the turquoise,  
Singing loudly while I navigate the warm blue salty water,  
Reaching for the sky and tasting the fresh air,  
Observing my companions floating and splashing water  
with me.

My friends and family watch me while I dive  
I am happy they are here; I smile  
Only my ARC friends dare to dive with me  
I entertain them with my squeakiness.

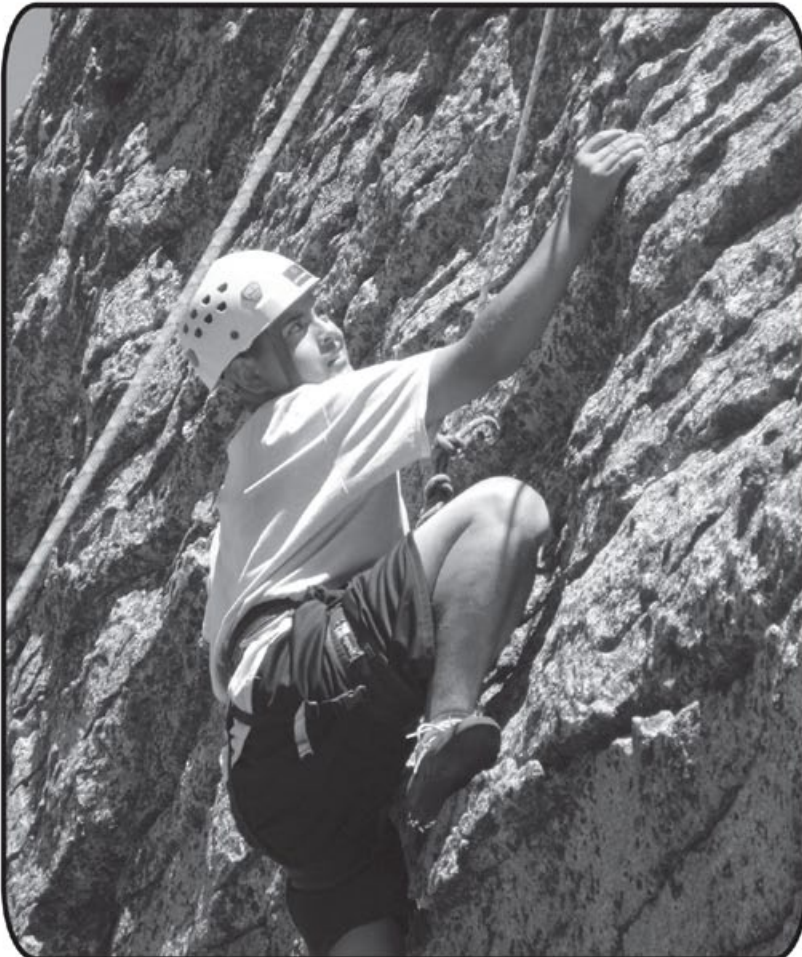
When I am with family  
We care for each other  
We hunt, and prevent attacking enemies.  
We are like a big gray cumulonimbus cloud in the water  
We protect ourselves  
By staying together and being fast,  
Amazing swimmers  
We avoid and attack our enemies  
When its time for food, I encourage everyone to wait  
We snack as we linger for opportunities

Night time comes - I rest half of my brain  
The enemies are out  
But I am still aware of my surroundings

You see me bringing joy to the group, caring by being  
helpful,  
Taking care of you when you are sick, protecting you from  
falling behind,  
I protect my peers; my peers protect me.

If I feel bad,  
Give me a pat on the back

A companion forever  
I will find new adventures  
Swaying with the current  
Always and forever,  
Singing loving melodies for all.



# The Inner Person

"Hey John," I said with excitement. "Look over there," I pointed out towards the field. My instructor turned around and looked, while everyone laughed at the prank I had just pulled for the third time on a member of my group. As I laughed, I thought, "Wow, I have never been like this around people". I realized I am becoming the dream person I have always wanted to be. I noticed that day by day in the ARC program I was transforming. After the ropes course half way through the program, I felt more comfortable around these strangers than anyone else in my life.

Today, I am not the person I was at home. At home I would wake up go to school, trying to keep those straight A's up, after school go right to work trying to get money for college, then go home eat and sleep. In these forty days, I have learned a lot about myself. I found out who I am. This person is now more responsible in his job, goofy with his surroundings and people. I am also willing to find new adventures, risks and challenges. As a leader, and most importantly, I have developed my own sense of style.

The group's trust circle we had at the ropes course is one example of a transformation. In the group circle, we did not know what was going to happen. Here everyone had to share a challenge or problem that they were facing at home or their community. As I heard everyone emotionally share, I connected to their problems. When it was my turn to talk, I got emotional. I described when someone forced me to do drugs. I felt like I let myself down. Everyone supported me and here I grew confidence and trust in others. In this circle, I learned to support people with their problems. The inner person had showed himself for the first

time.

The trapeze is another example of a transformation. In the trapeze, we had to climb a tree, get onto a platform and yell out our goals, and reach for the trapeze. I saw all my teammates go; I recorded their goals in my brain. I recorded them so I could help them out in a way to accomplish them. Some of their goals were to go to college, communicate more with their family, be new people, and be successful in life. My turn came and as they put the harness on, I got nervous. I climbed up the tree, my hands all sweaty and my legs shaking. As I got up to the platform and they adjusted the trapeze, I heard all my group encouraging me. I loved it. Finally I yelled my goal at the top of my lungs so everyone could hear "be successful in life and get a great education at UC Davis." I jumped toward the trapeze. I felt the cold air on my cheeks and reached for it. I grabbed it but it slipped out of my hands. These goals were not ready to be accomplished, I knew that these goals can be accomplished, but the time will come. It took courage to jump. I felt proud that I tried. They lowered me and everyone supported me. I felt more comfortable around them now.

My inner person came little by little. I started to notice that I am not as serious. I bring a smile to the group and to every day. I tell funny jokes and sings lovely melodies. I love this person I wish I could always keep this person but I am afraid of the change when I go back to my life. I am afraid of what people might think. I might not even have the same friends I had. Who knows what will happen after these forty days. I might be dragged down by another sibling and be forced to do drugs. I will face them and say no. I want to



accomplish my goals and stay away from bad influences. Thinking of how the ropes course transformed me, I know I have the determination to be this new person. I know I can do this by the support of my ARC family. I have developed a new sense of style. I know I can do this and I will.

Since I am this new person I know I will change at school and home. In these places, I will be the person I discovered underneath: A leader, a goofy person, an encourager, a compassionate person, a listener, a person willing to take adventures risks and challenges. I will keep this person for as long as I can. Forever.



# Mara Lopez

## If I Come To You

I'm a black raven,  
with big dark eye lashes and round chocolate brown eyes  
I soar through the bright, blue sky  
I see the enormous world  
Below me.

I call out with a loud "brronk"  
Expressing my thoughts,  
Thoughts of happiness, suffering, pain and love.

If I come to you,  
Please don't judge me for my appearance,  
I might look dark and scary,  
But inside I have suffered a lot,  
At school they whisper Mexicans steal and are stupid.  
In the world, people treat girls like things  
Not like individuals  
And men pressure us to be beautiful.

I have lots of pain,  
At nine years old I started my journey through many difficult trials  
Because of how people treated me.  
Feelings of sadness, disappointment  
Building strength and pride  
Making me show my inner beauty  
And compassion for the ones that I love.

If I come to you my friend,  
Love me  
Smiling with your bright eyes  
Showing me you care.

Let's forget about the unimportant things  
Let's play  
Let's fly through the mountains and forests.

If I come to you  
Expect happiness,  
Feel compassion and wellness,  
Don't be afraid of me,  
I'll make your life Joyful.

I'm a raven  
I seek a friend  
I'll offer my insight when you are searching for answers  
I'll be with you through ups and downs.

I'm a raven  
I'll fly by your side.





# Mission Accomplished

I was sitting in the meeting room with other schoolmates waiting for the meeting to start. Katie came in with Tania Cabrera and Angie Espinoza. She started talking about the "ARC" program. I was really interested in the program, but I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to go. After school I went home and told my mom about this amazing program that was 40 days and that I could do things I had never done in my life. My mom told me that it was up to me; she was going to support me in anything. Next day at school I was so excited, but then I changed my mind. I wasn't sure what it was, but I didn't want to go to ARC anymore. A week passed and my mom asked me what was going on with the program, I told her that I didn't want to go anymore. She asked me, "Why?" I invented the stupidest reason why. Next day after school, my mom picked me up, and on our way home, she started telling me many reasons why I should join ARC. The only thing that I told her was I had to think about it. If it wasn't for her encouragement, I wouldn't be here writing this essay.

Before the ARC program I was a lazy girl who didn't like to do anything; a girl who depended on her mom; a girl who thought she was not smart enough to do things by herself; a girl working hard to fit in the group, always trying to be like others to be just a "normal" person.

NOW... I have become the girl who can be without her family for 40 days; the girl who can hike 8 miles with a backpack on; the girl who never gives up; the girl who can encourage people to do better and to be proud; the guardian of 7 people; the girl that can express her feelings; the girl who loves nature like she loves her family; the girl who gives her 110%; the girl who wants to see "a change in the world"... Imagine me, Mara López, a unique person.

I have faced many challenges since ARC began. One of my biggest challenges was leaving my family for 40 days. I couldn't call them, e-mail them. Nothing, but letters. This is a big challenge for me because I have never been away from my family that long. Another challenge for me was to step out of the box and let other people know who I am. This was really hard for me because when I tried to be myself at school people made fun of me. They think that is funny that I care for others. People didn't accept me because they thought I'm not cool enough to hang out with them, and because I'm the good girl who would rather hang out with my family than with selfish friends.

This summer I wanted to do my best, become a better person, learn more English, and discover all the great experiences ARC had for me. The experience that impacted my life the most was

rappelling. I was so excited because I was going to do something new, but I didn't know exactly what it was going to be like. Victor went first, then Ruby, Eric, Jasmine, Ramirez. Before Angel and Gonzalez, it was me. A feeling of excitement and fear rushed through my veins causing me to regret going over the 45 ft. cliff. My mind went white and my body went cold. Katie held my hand and told me it was going to be OK, but I didn't want to let go. The first thing that came to my mind was death. I was trying to think about my family, but nothing came to mind, just death. I was shocked; I didn't know what I was doing. My whole body was shaking like Jello and my eyes were facing directly to the wall of rock. When I finally got down, I started to cry. I wasn't sure why but I did. I sat down. Ruby and Jasmine hugged me. I felt safe. Then I heard some one say, "tears of joy, tears of joy." I looked at Victor; he smiled as if he was proud of me. I looked at the cliff once more, but now from the bottom. I told myself, "Right. That is joy." Finally I could think about my family. If they were here, I know they would be proud of me. I felt proud of myself. My first mission was accomplished.

When I came to ARC, I knew it would be full of adventures, risks and challenges. One of my greatest adventures was being with this amazing group of people. They all have taught me something different. Ruby and Jasmine taught me compassion and friendship. Angel, sincerity. Victor, style. Gonzalez, determination. Ramirez, maturity. Eric, willingness. Deb trust. John,

wisdom. Jeff, leadership. I give love to everyone in this family because I felt loved no matter what happened.

One risk I faced was opening my heart to my ARC family. I didn't know how they were going to react to what I had to say at the ropes course. I was one of the first ones to share. My story was horrible. Or so I thought. I had never thought that my dad, my hero, was going to disappoint me. He told me things that I never thought he would. When I started to listen to others stories and problems I realized that we had a lot in common. Three daddies disappointed us, in three different ways, but our pain is the same. Now I know I'm not alone in my emotions. Through it all, we still love them. I feel more connected to my friends, because we all had faced our own emotional challenges and supported each other.

Since the beginning, I challenged myself to be determined, give love, and confidence to those who needed me. I challenged myself to not be scared and sometimes to give without receiving. I challenged myself in many physical, mental and emotional ways. I knew it was going to be hard to give my 110% because there were many obstacles. Finally I said GOOD BYE to being selfish, my "I can't", and all of my bad qualities.

Now, Mara Lopez has accomplished her ARC mission. I am ready for all the journeys that are waiting. I have more goals and dreams to accomplish. I will influence my family and the people in my community. I now know I can "be the change I want to see in the world!"



## I am Life

Step into the history of my world  
Into a moment seven years ago,  
As we set under the moonlit trees across from our home  
In the beautiful city of Guadalajara where the stars  
Still shine and wishes could be made  
Where a simple gift can become a lifelong  
Memory tattooed around my neck.

Unknowingly, staring for the last time  
Into your deep blue eyes  
Almost drowning with joy,  
My grandfather, Juan Gonzalez Gonzalez,  
with years of love and wisdom  
Hard to believe; it seems to have been yesterday  
Your generosity of the silver cross once placed around my neck  
By you

I have taken off and placed inside my soul  
You took with you a piece of my puzzled heart.

In evidential pictures, you're so close to the ground  
Your pain is spilled on the tile  
Your blood has become one with the earth,  
one with yourself and one within us  
On the wall you have left a memory  
Stained forever  
A bullet drowned deep in your head, saturated with thoughts.  
It is emotionally transferred into my heart.

In this unfair world, you have faced what many fear.  
It's a shame to lose  
A person over a TV, a stereo, our personal possessions  
By the hands of a person you thought  
Held you in their arms.

As only an eight year old child,  
My limited wisdom allowed me not to understand  
But as young as I was  
I carried you from within  
A pain so hard  
Too hard to relieve with tears  
And now I wonder why, it seems to start  
Over after I cry.

My dreams become clearer as you speak  
As you share your pain, mine starts to pour from within  
Your words: flowing creeks  
Your story grows longer  
Your heart knows not what it seeks  
Your sad sunken eyes explain your life as it grows inside me  
As I've grown, I've matured  
15 years of age, I learned to glow  
I've been taught well to express myself, to not hold in my tears



Or to be afraid.  
I, Jasmine Marquez Gonzalez, accept challenges,  
as I accepted you..

I AM LIFE  
I am Jasmine, Juan Gonzalez, I am all my family  
I reflect my friends  
I am your dreams, your expectations  
I link the generations  
We've conquered adversity and achieved prosperity  
I am tall: my long brown hair curves around my cheeks, framing  
My wide eyes  
Windows, reaching into my heart.

My Friends, I am life  
Here to teach you, to show you  
Around, not to push you or drag you to the ground.  
Abuelito, you were given the privilege to live and someone has taken it  
away  
Now, I will take the opportunity to dig you up  
And we will never forget this day

# Compassion, Style, Determination & Physical Fitness

Throughout my life, I have gone through many challenges, opportunities, and barriers. I have come to realize that all of these experiences mold me as I grow up. They either influence us or change us, temporarily, permanently, physically, and/or mentally. Through this summer of 2007 at ARC I've gone through many challenges, but the main lesson I have learned is to do everything with inspiration and encouragement. Compassion, style, determination and physical fitness are the values of the ARC program and are now the way I hope to live for the rest of my life.

## \*Compassion\*

The ARCs and I became family since the moment we agreed to come on this forty day journey. When I looked around the circle, it felt strange that one of them was my cousin, Luis G. As a child I used to look up to him just for being older. However with time we started to grow apart. When I found out he was going to be in my new family, I wanted to find out what he was really made of. To my surprise he wasn't steel. He did have feelings and what touched me the most was that he actually cared about me too. Throughout this course, Luis G. showed me compassion every day by asking me if I was alright, by letting me know he was there for me. He has taught me how to express compassion in a deeper way, by showing it to me. I have discovered many things about myself, but the one major discovery that stands out the most is that I can open up to people, and not be ashamed of the way I express myself. For example when we were camped at Eagle Point and Victor hurt himself because of his anger, I let him know that I cared for him. I told him that just as much as I would hate to see my cousin get hurt, I wouldn't like to see him hurting himself. I also let him know that hurting himself doesn't only affect him but the rest of the family. He understood and I could tell he had taken not only my advice but the advice from others also.

## \*Style\*

Journeys are complicated opportunities which teach and allow us to reflect. As I left my home, my journey to learn about myself had begun. Imagine a girl who was always self conscious about what people might think about her, a girl who instead of showing her face, covered it up with a mask of eyeliner and mascara. Imagine a



person who is so afraid of what people might think and might say about her that she preferred to stay quiet and not share her ideas, rather than expressing herself. This 'girl' was me. I found out I am important; I matter. I have style which means I never leave anything half way through, I am true to my word and I take on challenges. I am no longer afraid to step up or speak my mind.

Out in the wilderness, we carried the heavy packs on our backs. They pushed us towards the ground, but our eagerness for satisfaction was so great, we never gave up. Only the sweet sound of the whispering wind sounded in my ear. The soft dirt with rocks under my feet the sweat on my hands from holding the pole and jabbing it into the ground so hard, the sweet smell of the mountain mint and the sage surrounding me, the beautiful sights around that kept reminding me of how much I wanted to be here. Every single one of my senses was as active as never before especially my sixth one my intuition. Everything seemed to talk to me from the dry mountains to the sweet Jeffrey Pines. Everything seemed to listen to me and somehow understand me. The back country was definitely no luxurious place but it is where I want to be. I found my way of being out here, free.

## \*Determination\*

I have learned about determination here at ARC and I have shown it by focusing on my goals. I've never wanted to be a barrier. I wanted to be a fountain of support to my team. When I first stepped into the presence of these amazing and unique people, I felt overwhelmed not knowing what they might think of me. I was afraid that they would judge and criticize me because of the way I talked, dressed or even walked. I was afraid of not being accepted, but to my surprise, they all accepted me. My defects were hidden they didn't seem to care and neither did I. As the days passed, I seemed to learn more and more about each and everyone; some seemed to need more support but didn't ask for it. Instead they denied it. However, I was determined to show every person in my new family how much I loved them.

Ruby and Mara are both delicate butterflies, expressive with a million colors. They shared their problems in their family and I found out they were somewhat like mine. Their fathers, their super heroes, had let them down just like mine. Each of our fathers' arms no longer carried us with strength and had let us down so hard that our image of a superhero had changed. Mara and Ruby are the heroes I had been waiting for. They have come to my rescue by letting me know that I'm not alone; I am loved. Angel, another member in my new family, seemed to be the smart, go to school, go to work and come home kid. I had known him for a few years, but we hardly talked in school. Turned out he had more problems in his life than I could have ever imagined! I found out that he had strong influences in his family that were dragging him down. You would expect an older sibling to encourage you away from drugs not to them. I was completely clueless about his life. I thought I knew him but I knew nothing. After a deep talk at the ropes course and opening up to each other, I let him know that as his new

younger sister, I promised him to always be there for him. I told him I would be the person who would help him up to his feet and wipe the tears away after he fell. He has been a great influence to me and has taught me that no matter how hard the outer shell is you can crack it and become a new person or just yourself.

Victor is the one person I'd never expected to get close to. But I would share with him a secret I had held inside my whole life for fear of rejection. I realized he was going through the same things I was. My whole life I felt worthless. I never thought that anyone could understand me. But Victor Martinez, a normal kid with a complicated life, does. He has introduced to me a strength, the knowledge that I am not alone, that will help me go through the struggles of life.

## \*Physical Fitness\*

On this program during the summer, I've experienced many things but the one that has impacted me the most is rappelling on Donner Summit. When I was on top of the cliff 'ready' to 'tear it down' anxiously waiting my turn, I realized I was scared. As the rope started to slide through my hand, I could feel under my feet every crease and crack of the cliff I was about to descend. I looked down and my mind went crazy with a million heart stopping thoughts. What if I die? What if the rope tears? What if my instructors let go of the rope? When I started to have second thoughts, I realized it was too late. I was on the edge of the cliff and my two feet could feel every single rock crackle. The wind blew in my face reminding me about my past and everything I had seen in my life. It seemed as if I was having an instant two second flashback regretting all the bad things I'd done as if I was about to face the end of my life. However, even with all those thoughts rushing through my head, a tear streamed down my cheek clearing my mind. I couldn't hear anything but the calming, softness of Katie's voice telling me to look at Donner Lake and the beauty of the sight. So I did. Slowly trembling, I clutched the rope with all my strength, not letting it slip through my hands more than one single inch at a time. Footstep by footstep I realized I was flowing down the cliff I had feared. I imagined that the wall was a hand there to help me down by allowing me to place my feet vertically flat on its face. It smiled at me. Finally when I hit the ground and looked up the cliff, it wasn't that tall at all. Placing my life in strangers' hands has helped me to understand what trust is and the true meaning and value of that word.

Throughout these forty days, ten great people have taught me to not care what other people think about me, not to care if people judge me, and to appreciate the qualities of each and every single person. I am no longer afraid to take risks. I am supported and I am loved. I am no longer afraid of walking out my front door without make up. I am no longer afraid to be me! When I look out into my future, I see how much I will have to work to become a doctor. However, I know that in the end, it will all be worth it. Just like climbing Mt. Judah, Granite Chief or Castle Peak, I will set aside all my pain and will continue steadfastly toward my goal.

# Victor Martinez

## My Spirit Lives On

I'm a solid rock, no ordinary stone  
White crystal, shiny at Needle Lake  
I'm bold and strong,  
I can survive the worst  
--Snow storms with relentless frozen flakes,  
--Forest fires that rage in flames and then disintegrates,  
--Earthquakes that tear and rumble the ground

I'm a solid rock, no ordinary stone

My quartz appears sharp  
My arched eyebrows  
My dark brown eyes intimidate them  
I am mistakenly judged as a trophy;  
It's pathetic  
I've carried the weight of this judgment,  
Causing me enormous pain  
Over and  
Over and  
Over again

Although I am strong on the outside  
At times I feel shattered inside  
At times I feel like I'm being broken down  
Piece  
By  
Piece

I'm a solid rock, no ordinary stone

His taunting voice  
Spelled out my race  
And  
Offended my family  
It broke my control  
Like a rock falling at Granite Chief Peak  
Uncontrollable anger broke out  
Covering my thoughts and movements  
The long lasting whiteness went pitch black

But I'm a solid rock, no ordinary stone  
My unbreakable quartz,  
Hopes keep me burning inside,  
Burning with passion for what I believe in,  
Love for the people around me,  
And determination in my heart that keeps me going,



# The Bravest Man Faces the Risk of Being Called a Coward

*"The bravest man is the one who weighs up all the risks and when they have become greater than the object is worth, has the courage to turn back and to face the other risk of being called a coward." ~Kurt Hahn*

I came to the ARC program to have fun and enjoy myself for the summer. However, soon I realized I came seeking help. I realized this at our second campsite, Eagle Point. We were on our kayaking expedition and out for three days. This whole expedition changed me. It made me realize I was hurting myself physically and emotionally.

We had just arrived to our first campsite. I was Head Honcho, the leader of the day and everything was not going as planned. I was given directions from my instructor that we should start setting up camp. Like always I passed on the information and everyone heard me say it, but some didn't listen. There were some that weren't doing anything and I noticed it. I saw a student sitting down and I asked him, "Why aren't you helping them set up tarps?" He replied in a way that really frustrated me. He told me, "I don't have to help out because I already did my job and that's the house mice job. I don't have to help out because I did my job already." I glared at him threateningly. I left him there and didn't say anything. I had already had enough problems with him throughout the day and didn't want to deal with him any longer. I went up to another student and asked her, "Why aren't you helping out? Everyone should be helping out with tarps." She replied to me by saying, "I'm doing something and that something is reading." Starting to get angry, I went off on her saying, "Then you can go read somewhere else instead of helping out, we don't even need you anyways." I left that scene really upset and went to one of the instructors for help. He told me that if we had a problem, we needed get into a group and talk about what's going on. I thought about this and I shoved it to the side. I didn't want to go there!

Later, we had our evening circle and we went through it fast. I was relieved that the day was almost over. I could go to sleep and forget about what happened. As I was getting up one of the students mentioned that I should VOMP which stands for Voice, Own, Moccasin, Plan, and use the problem-solving model we had learned with the students whom I'd been having problems. Everyone agreed with him. I started to get frustrated because I didn't want to deal with my emotions. Before we started evening circle one of the instructors told me that if I felt to the point of being unsafe I could get up, explain this, and leave the circle. I looked at him and nodded yes. We began to VOMP; I was the first one to start. The V stands for Voice. I looked at my peer in the eyes and said to him, "The thing that bothers me is that you say things but aren't sincere. All you talk about is helping out the group and teamwork. You aren't

able to do this. You're not trying at all, even when asked. There are so many opportunities but you're not willing to take them. Today when I asked you why you weren't helping out setting up tarps you said you were done with your job and that you didn't have to do it because it was the house mice's job. That showed me that you aren't about teamwork or helping out the team. You are telling me you don't care.

The other thing that bothers me is that you put down our group members. This has been bugging me the whole course and it frustrates me. For example as we were sea kayaking over here you noticed that my partner and I were the fastest ones and you tried to catch up, but couldn't. That's when you put down your partner saying that she was holding you back. Your excuse was that she sucked at paddling and that my partner was better than her. That angered me because you ruined her day and you brought down the group in this way. Something else that bugs me is when you're by the instructors you change your whole personality around them and suck up to them. When they are gone you become someone different. You're hiding who you are in front of the instructors. I'm tired of it." He gave me feed back on what was bothering him. He said, "You should watch what you say before you say it. It can hurt people." Just listening to those words come out of his mouth frustrated me.

We moved on to the second letter of VOMP, Ownership. We accept what's ours. I explained, "I know I went off on her and I'm sorry about this. There's times I can't control my anger. This is when I lost control of my emotions. I'm sorry for what I said. I'll try to control it or even try to get help so it won't happen again." He looked at me and said, "I know I wasn't doing what I said I would. I will work on it more and help out. It's true that I have been changing my attitude around instructors. I'll try to be myself around them and not change whom I am when I'm with them. I'm sorry for putting down our own team and for making them feel bad." I was looking at him while he looked at one of our instructors instead of looking at me. This made me mad because it felt insincere. He looked like he wanted to brush it off. I felt like he was blowing me off and just pretending to listen. He wasn't interested in what I said.

I interrupted him and looked at one of the instructors and I asked them if I could get up and calm myself. Deep inside I felt a burning rage. I had felt this before and my hands started to tremble in fury. I was to the point where I could have done something I would regret. I got up and left the circle. I tightened my fists, the bones piercing through my skin until the point where they could bleed. I clenched my jaw furiously, my teeth I could feel no more. I thundered into the bathroom frantically, everything went black. All

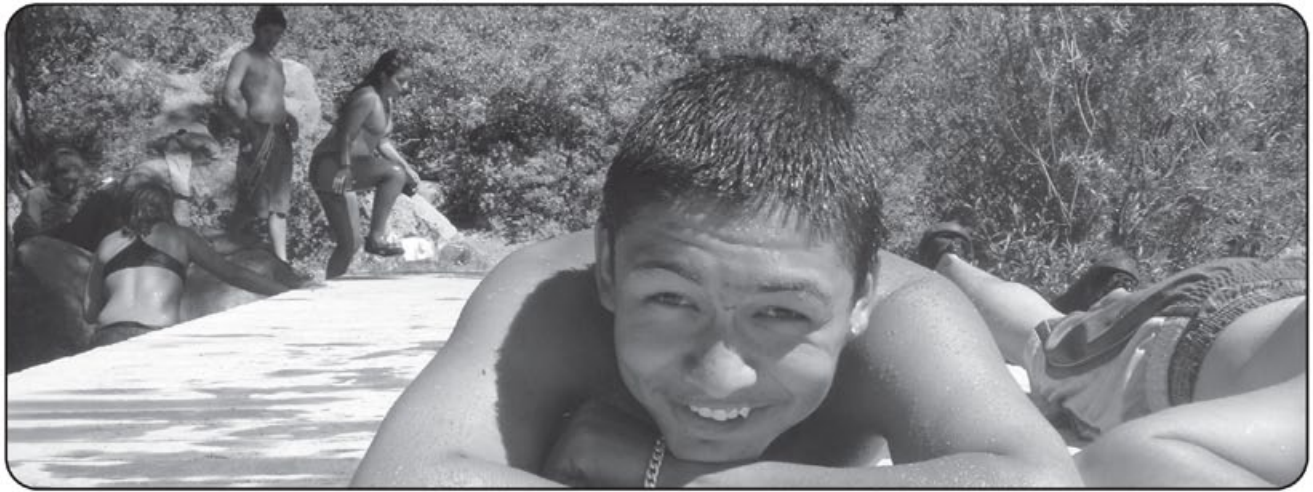
my thoughts cleared my mind, but I was in the dark. I couldn't control myself. I felt a big impact between my fist and a solid object. Suddenly I snapped out of it. I noticed myself trembling in frustration. I started to feel a sting in my right fist. I look down and noticed my tightened fist covered in blood. I washed it off and looked at the mirror. My blood shot eyes stung.

I saw my own reflection, a person I didn't want to be anymore. Seeing the person I feared and was frustrated with my whole life. Painful memories coursed through my mind. I wanted to forget. I didn't want to continue this anymore. I wanted to stop hurting others and myself around me without even noticing it was happening again and again. This realization became my transformation. Determined to change, this won't happen to me again. The process I went through wasn't easy, but I am always willing to do the best I can. Checking in with two instructors became my tool. John, an instructor, was one I went to. He shared is that his friend is Scottish and always told him, "Lighten up Johnny." Accepting that some people aren't going to change is my way of lightening up.

Another instructor, Jeff, always sets aside what he was doing and listens to what I had to say. He's made me realize that I truly need help. He's helped me open up more and feel comfortable letting others know what is going on within me. He's encouraged me and brought hope for change and success. He's helped me realize what's causing my frustration and what I can do when it occurs. He said, "The best thing to do is to stop for a minute and look deep inside yourself and figure out what's underneath the frustration. Acceptance starts with awareness." I've learned not from him but I've learned more from looking within. I look up to this strong and wise person that is always willing to help out someone in need. He's changed me and made me more confident in myself. I developed techniques that can help control my frustration and anger. Reflection and my need for exercise are two of these techniques. I reflect more often now. I leave the group and go within. I can deal with life without getting frustrated. The other is my need for being physical. I usually run or work on my physical fitness. Being active helps me to get in a good mood. I've learned to accept rather than be dragged down to the ground is another technique.

I came to the ARC program to have fun and enjoy myself for the summer, but due to physical problems with my stomach and anger this was a true challenge. I have learned to accept people for who they are, taking time to reflect and understand my emotions, being able to talk about the problems that are bothering me, to seek advice from others, and to have fun not letting your frustrations drag you down. Being able to experience this program has given me value that I can take with me on my next adventure.

# Luis Ramirez



## Building Great Castles in the Sand

I am a small ant  
black and fast  
Never staying in the same place,  
Moving strongly, socially, intelligently,  
as a team player.

My colony is always active.  
We give each other privacy and respect,  
We learn to become leaders.

I use my antennas to circle the group  
Together, we communicate about our  
Plan for the day.  
Our days are long,  
But fun,  
because we cooperate.

At home I never help my mom,  
Being lazy taking everything for granted,  
But now I help.  
I work with others as a team

I am a small ant,  
funny and helpful.  
When I crawl on your arms, I tickle.  
I try to make you laugh so that you  
Won't feel bad.  
do you need a break?  
I will take your load.  
Encouraging you, Listening,  
Building great castles in the sand.

Together we will accomplish our greatest dreams.



# My Lazy Life

Before I came to ARC I was the type of person who was lazy and never did anything. I would just lie down on the couch depending on my mom. I did not know how to cook for myself. I was just playing Playstation 2 with my friends and my brother, making a mess in my house and not helping my mom pick up. Instead of helping my mom, my friends and I would just go outside.

Now I cook for eleven people. I'm always active and helping others. I have learned that I feel better when I help out. Now I do more than I thought I could do in a day. I have proved to myself that I can do anything if I'm willing. For example when I do the dishes I set up the three sinks because they need to be set up a special way. In one of them, I put soap and hot water, the other one is just hot water to rinse and the third is a cold water bleach rinse. After I set the sinks I go outside to get the dishes from the table and then I start washing and rinsing the dishes. After this I have to put the dishes away. I sweep and if there isn't a group in the kitchen I mop the floor. We also need to be really careful about time management. We are on a tight schedule. Respect is part of the way we all act here. I have learned that what I do affects others. If I don't help out, we all wait and someone else has to do it. Some things have to get done. If I don't do my part, people could get upset with me.

The thing that has inspired me to change was my ARC friends. They have encouraged me to do more. For example at the Ropes Course I didn't want to do the swing. I was scared because I had never done anything like it before. I had to go to the bathroom so I decided to just sit down. I didn't want to do it. However, the swing was the only way down. I did it. I went down. All of the 007 ARC agents were laughing because of the face I made when I was sitting down on the swing. When I decided to go I felt so good. I felt good because I conquered my fear of heights. It was actually fun. I had more fun because I made a funny face and made people laugh. When we went to the other ropes elements I was still scared but not as much. At the trapeze jump, I got Katie to bring the trapeze closer so I would be able to catch it and hold on to it. When she got the trapeze closer to me, I had to say one goal or hope before I jumped. After I jumped and grabbed the trapeze I felt good because I had accomplished it. I wasn't scared of heights any more.

I want to thank the 007 ARC agents because

they encouraged me to do all of the obstacles from the rope course that we had to accomplish. Now I help out and I have confidence in myself and also have confidence in my friends from ARC. I'm not afraid to tackle new challenges or

to express myself any more and I communicate with all of the people that are around me. Now I can even cook a good healthy meal. I can't wait to help at home and make my mom a good healthy dinner.



# Ruby Xochihua

## Iridescent Spirit

Energy constantly flows,  
Vibrating through my wings  
As I flitter through life.

My wings allow me to take refuge from my problems.  
Discouragement rolls off my wings.  
My wings allow me to rise above ordinary limitations.  
When I struggle with fear, my wings lift me up.

I fly.  
Happily darting by,  
Positive exclamations made.  
I fly  
Strong-willed and determined.  
Catching what I go after.  
I fly  
Barely hovering for seconds  
always fluttering above yellow wild flowers.

My unmistakable markings,  
The smile that permanently adorns my face  
My deep cinnamon skin.

My energy never stops.  
A colorful hummingbird flies, perceiving who I am.  
An iridescent spirit.  
Vivacious & Lively.

I am rooted in my family.  
I thought of them as perfect.  
But home sweet home disappeared last year  
When bruises appeared  
And he was never there.  
The one I loved and cared for so much  
The one who tucked me in at night  
The one I called "Daddy"  
My hero.  
I've learned that even a father can disappoint.  
You looked me in the eyes and lied.  
Told mommy you loved her and only her.  
When the truth came out,  
It destroyed everything we had.

My wings fluttered sadly,  
Almost hitting the ground.  
My iridescent spirit stalled.  
Countless tears & so much pain.  
You taught my brother your twisted example,  
Caging him in handcuffs.



Mom still loves you,  
& you knew that,  
Even when you looked at her  
Caged her behind bars

I fly,  
& now higher than before.  
Closer to God,  
He forgives me in everything I do.  
& I should forgive too.

It takes time.  
& I respect him now.  
He brought me into this world.  
But the pain I hold in my heart  
Has turned into a scar.  
A memory that will never go away.

My wings allow me to take refuge from my problems.  
Discouragement rolls off my wings.  
My wings allow me to rise above ordinary limitations.  
When I struggle with fear, my wings lift me up.

An iridescent spirit.  
I fly.



## A New Chapter

A melody without a name whistled in the wild, branches broke upon a footstep, a family slumbered underneath unnoticed stars and aroused with the break of a new day. I awoke inside a tepee among many sleepless faces. The day of the ropes course had begun with only the expectation that "TODAY WILL REQUIRE TEAMWORK!" Even though we described ourselves as a family, there were a few people in the circle I didn't consider brothers or sisters. But then again, Katie Zanto was there, and she thinks of me as a strong friendly leader. So of course I was going to pretend to get along with everyone and to encourage every single person in the team, including those I didn't trust at all.

The heat of the day made it difficult to even sit, energy within me made it hard to concentrate and still Katie told us to circle up. Katie seemed happy and had an enormous smile on her face, but the look in her eyes was solemn. She began to explain the obstacles in the course were similar to problems at home, in school or with friends. She wished for our group to become a family and stay a united one, too. In order for that to happen, we first needed to get to know each other a little better. We all needed to reveal something very deep and personal about ourselves. After moments of silence from Katie's final words, a brave soul revealed her disheartening past.

I knew this was going to be a time-consuming story. She began by telling us how her family wasn't really united. Her father only cared about the business and how she worked with him everyday. She woke up with the memories she shared with her dad in the back of her head, missing every second of it. When her 15th birthday was coming up, her father didn't support her party with money that was needed for her special day. Soon tears started to roll down her cheeks as she moved on with her story. At every Hispanic girl's 15th birthday, one of the most important parts is dancing with her dad. She was told her dad was not going to dance this special dance a father and daughter share on her 15th birthday. Many tears continued to roll but she still went on with her story. She moved on to a diverse story when trust could have rescued her from getting flung into a wall. She toddled into work one day and her dad burned in rage. Her dad thought she was out with a few friends and had believed someone else's story. He didn't believe what his own daughter had told him. He craved evidence. She closed her unfortunate story by declaring to us that the pain she felt wasn't



physical, but in her heart. Her brave soul couldn't accept the reality that her own father did not believe her story. She burst out in tears and so did I. When she finished, I scampered towards her offering a massive hug and letting her know I was there for her. At the same time, I told her I was sorry. Sorry for all the times I thought of her stories as untrue. Every time I had a problem with her, I told the whole world except her about my problem. We wouldn't have ever solved the problem. It would just get worse. I was sorry for not understanding.

Today I still think of that story and all the tears she cried. The pain she felt. Today I've learned she is who she is. I'm nobody to be telling her otherwise. Today, I understand why the girl I was jealous of and treated like a thing is a brave soul. I used to look at people and get annoyed within the first few hours. I was jealous about everything and everyone. I used to be so into myself, and I knew I was the best. If I wasn't, it would convert into a competition with that person. Except now. Now I sit by myself and reflect; I'm more

compassionate. I know what it feels like to be stubborn and close-minded. I feel sorry for myself because I did things to impress people, not because it's the right thing. It's easier to judge than to get to know someone. However, now I try to get to know that someone. It's easier to tell other people about my problems than to go up to the person and tell them what I'm truly feeling inside. I've learned so much throughout this summer about being direct with people. Reflecting on my life and past decisions, I feel so stupid and sorry.

I am no longer a hypercritical person. I reflect and verbalize things I mean. I value people and acknowledge them for who they are, not by what I assume. I hope I never go back to the person I was before I attended this program. Now that God has blessed me with a sense of empathy, I'm thankful. I appreciate one brave soul for being an extremely intellectual, astounding and shining star. I have learned and have the heart and compassion to care for people. Because of my new sense of empathy, I have a new best friend.

## Espíritu Tornasolado

Ruby Xochihua

La energía corre constantemente,  
Vibrando a través de mis alas  
Al revolotear por la vida.

Mis alas me permiten refugiarme de mis problemas.  
La desilusión resbala de mis alas.  
Mis alas me permiten llegar más allá de mis límites  
Cuando lucho contra el miedo, mis alas me levantan.

Vuelo.

Presipitándome con gusto,  
Haciendo exclamaciones positivas.

Vuelo

Con mucha voluntad y muy determinada.  
Alcanzando lo que persigo.

Vuelo

Rondando por solo segundos  
Siempre volando arriba de las salvajes flores amarillas.

Mis marcas inconfundibles,  
La sonrisa que adorna mi cara permanentemente  
Mi piel color canela.

Nunca me falta energía.

Un chupamirtos de colores vuela, percibiendo quien soy.  
Un espíritu tornasolado.  
Vivaz y alegre.

Tengo raíces en mi familia.

Pensé que eran perfectas.

Pero hogar dulce hogar desapareció el año pasado  
Con algunos moretones  
El nunca estaba presente.

Al que yo quería y me importaba tanto  
El que me ponía a dormir en las noches  
Al que yo llamaba "Papi"

Mi héroe.

Aprendí que hasta un padre puede desilusionarte.  
Me miraste a los ojos y mentiste,  
Le dijiste a mamá que solo a ella amabas.  
Cuando salió la verdad,  
Destruyó todo lo que teníamos.



Mis alas volaron tristemente,  
Casi tocando el suelo.  
Ya no era espíritu tornasolado  
Incontables lágrimas y mucho dolor.  
Pusiste tu mal ejemplo a mi hermano.  
Atrapándolo con esposas.  
Mamá aún te ama,  
Y tú lo sabías,  
Aún cuando la mirabas  
Encerrada atrás de las rejas

Vuelo

Y ahora más alto que antes.  
Más cerca de Dios.  
El perdona todo lo que hago.  
Y yo también debo perdonar.

Toma tiempo.  
Y ahora lo respeto.  
El me trajo al mundo.  
Pero el dolor que llevo en mi corazón  
Se ha vuelto cicatriz.  
Un recuerdo que nunca olvidaré.

Mis alas me permiten refugiarme de mis problemas.  
La desilusión resbala de mis alas.  
Mis alas me permiten llegar más allá de mis límites.  
Cuando tengo miedo, mis alas me levantan.

Un espíritu tornasolado.  
Yo vuelo.

# Si Te Vengo a Ver

Mara Lopez

Soy un cuervo negro,  
Con grandes y oscuras pestañas y redondos ojos  
como chocolate  
Vuelo a través del claro, cielo azul  
Veo el mundo enorme  
Debajo de mí.

Grito con un sonoro "brronk"  
Expresando mis sentimientos  
Sentimientos de alegría, sufrimiento, dolor y amor.

Si te vengo a ver,  
Por favor no me juzgues por mi apariencia  
Quizás parezca negro y te asuste  
Pero muy por dentro, he sufrido mucho.  
En la escuela, susurran que los Mexicanos roban y  
son estúpidos.  
En el mundo, la gente trata a las chicas como cosas  
No como individuos  
Y el hombre nos presiona para que seamos bellas.

Tengo mucho dolor,  
A los nueve años comencé mi jornada a través de  
muchos caminos difíciles  
Por la forma en que la gente me trataba  
Sentimientos de tristeza, desilusión  
Construyendo fuerza y orgullo  
Haciendo que mostrara mi belleza interior  
Y compasión por aquellos a los que amo.

Si te vengo a ver, mi amigo,  
Quiéreme  
Sonríe con tus ojos brillosos  
Mostrándome cuidado

Olvidemos lo que no importa  
Juguemos  
Volemos a través de las montañas y bosques.

Si te vengo a ver  
Espera felicidad  
Siente compasión y bienestar.  
No me tengas miedo.  
Yo te haré feliz.

Soy un cuervo  
Busco un amigo  
Te daré mi perspicacia cuando busques respuestas  
Estaré contigo en las bajas y en las altas.

Soy un cuervo  
Volaré a tu lado.

# El Delfín Interior

Angel Gonzalez

Soy un delfín  
Jóven y libre, lleno de energía en el mar;  
Jugando en el parque, columpiandome,  
Saltando con mis amigos.

Soy libre para explorar la turquesa,  
Cantando fuertemente mientras navego en la tibia,  
azul agua salada,  
Tratando de alcanzar el cielo y saboreando el aire  
fresco,  
Observando a mis compañeros flotar y salpicar agua  
conmigo.

Mis amigos y familia ven que me zambullo  
Me da gusto que estén aquí; sonrío  
Solo mis amigos de ARC se atreven a ir conmigo  
Los entretengo con mi chillido.

Cuando estoy con la familia  
Nos cuidamos mutuamente  
Cazamos, y prevenimos ataques de los enemigos.  
Somos como una gran nube gris en el agua  
Nos protegemos  
Quedándonos juntos y siendo rápidos,  
Incríbles nadadores  
Evitamos y atacamos a nuestros enemigos.  
Cuando es hora de comer, animo a todos a que  
esperen  
Tomamos un bocadillo mientras esperamos  
oportunidades

Al llegar la noche – descanso la mitad de mi cerebro  
Los enemigos andan fuera  
Pero aún estoy al pendiente de mis alrededores

Me ves trayendo alegría al grupo, teniendo cuidado,  
ayudando,  
Cuidándote cuando estas enfermo, protegiendote si  
te quedas atrás,  
Protejo a mis compañeros, ellos me protegen a mi.

Me siento mal,  
Dame una palmada en la espalda

Un compañero para siempre  
Encontraré nuevas aventuras  
Flotando en la corriente  
Siempre y para siempre  
Cantando canciones de amor para todos.

# Fuerte Como un Abeto

**Luis Gonzalez**

Soy un abeto blanco, sólido y fuerte,  
Pero también podría caer.  
Soy áspero por fuera  
Pero dulce por dentro  
Con pequeñas agujas verdes  
Y corteza blanca grisácea

Nunca digo No  
A aquellos que me necesitan.  
Ofrezco mi fuerza  
Y sombra a quien lo necesite,  
Me muevo con el viento  
Flexible y tranquilo.

Soy un abeto blanco, sólido y fuerte,  
Pero también podría caer.  
Soy áspero por fuera  
Pero dulce por dentro  
Estoy plantado  
Defiendo lo que creo.  
Tengo ratos difíciles  
Pero salgo adelante.

Cuando me corten, no habrá problema,  
Porque mis semillas  
Crecerán una vez más  
Y seré otra vez  
El fuerte abeto blanco que una vez fui.  
No caeré  
Porque resistiré

Mi alma llena de belleza  
Y mi corazón lleno de alegría.

# Construyendo Grandes Castillos de Arena

**Luis Ramirez**

Soy una pequeña hormiga  
Negra y rápida  
Nunca me quedo en el mismo lugar,  
Moviéndome con fuerza, socialmente, inteligentemente,  
Como un jugador de equipo.  
Mi colonia siempre está activa.  
Nos respetamos y nos damos privacidad,  
Aprendemos a ser líderes.

Utilizo mis antenas para juntar al grupo  
Juntos, nos comunicamos de nuestro  
Plan del día.  
Nuestros días son largos,  
Pero divertidos,  
Porque cooperamos.

En casa nunca ayudo a mi mamá,  
Siendo flojo, sin darme cuenta de nada,  
Pero ahora ayudo.  
Trabajo con otros como equipo

Soy una pequeña hormiga,  
Chistosa y servicial.  
Cuando subo a tus brazos, te hago cosquillas.  
Trato de hacerte reír para que tu  
No te sientas mal.  
¿Necesitas descansar?  
Yo tomaré tu carga.  
Animándote, escuchándote,  
Construyendo grandes castillos de arena.

Juntos lograremos nuestros más grandes sueños.

# Soy Vida

**Jasmine Marquez**

Entra a la historia de mi mundo  
A un momento hace siete años,  
Sentados bajo los árboles que alumbraba la luz de la luna  
Enfrente de nuestra casa  
En la hermosa ciudad de Guadalajara, en donde las estrellas  
Aún brillan y puedes pedir un deseo  
En donde un sencillo regalo puede volverse  
Una memoria de por vida, tatuada en mi cuello.

Sin saberlo, mirando por última vez  
En tus ojos azules  
Casi ahogado de gozo,  
Mi abuelo, Juan Gonzáles González, con años de amor y sabiduría  
Difícil de creer; parece que fue ayer  
La cruz de plata que pusiste en mi cuello con generosidad  
Tú mismo  
Me la he quitado, para ponerla en mi alma  
Te quedaste con un pedazo de mi corazón desconcertado.

En fotografías evidentes, estás tan cercano a la tierra  
Tu dolor derramado en el mozaico  
Tu sangre se ha vuelto una con la tierra,  
Una contigo y una dentro de nosotros  
En la pared dejaste una memoria  
Marcada para siempre

Una bala ahogada en tu cabeza, saturada de  
pensamientos,  
Se ha transferido emocionalmente en mi corazón.

En este mundo injusto, afrontaste lo que muchos  
temen.

Es una pena perder  
Una persona por una televisión, radio, nuestras  
posesiones personales  
Por las manos de una persona que pensabas  
Te tenía en sus brazos.

Solamente de ocho años,  
Mi sabiduría limitada no me permitía comprender  
Pero aún tan pequeña  
Te llevaba dentro  
Un dolor tan grande  
Muy grande para sanarlo con lágrimas  
Y ahora me pregunto por qué, parece comenzar  
Otra vez después de que lloro.

Mis sueños se vuelven claros cuando hablas  
Cuando compartes tu dolor, el mío comienza a  
salir de muy dentro  
Tus palabras: ríos que corren  
Tu historia se vuelve más larga  
Tu corazón no sabe lo que busca  
Tus ojos tristes y hundidos explican tu vida  
mientras crece dentro de mí  
He crecido, he madurado  
15 años de edad, aprendí a brillar  
me han enseñado a expresarme, a no quedarme  
con mis lágrimas  
o a tener miedo  
Soy Jasmine Marquez Gonzales, acepto el desafío,  
Como te he aceptado a ti...

#### YO SOY VIDA

Soy Jasmine, Juan Gonzalez, soy toda mi familia  
Soy el reflejo de mis amigos  
Soy tus sueños, tus esperanzas  
Yo uno a las generaciones  
Conquistamos adversidad y logramos prosperidad  
Soy alta: mi largo cabello castaño cae sobre mis  
mejillas,  
Haciendo marco a mis grandes ojos  
Ventanas, que entran a mi corazón.

Amigos, Yo soy vida  
Para enseñarles, para mostrarles  
No para empujarlos, o arrastrarlos en el piso  
Abuelito, tuviste el privilegio de vivir y alguien te  
lo quitó  
Ahora, tengo la oportunidad de desenterrarte  
Y nunca olvidaremos este día.

#### MISION CUMPLIDA, Mara López (Truckee High)

Este verano quería hacer lo mejor de mí, volverme una mejor persona, aprender más Inglés, y descubrir las grandes experiencias que ARC tenía para mí. La experiencia que impactó mi vida más que nada, fue bajar las rocas. Estaba muy emocionada, porque iba a hacer algo nuevo, pero no sabía exactamente lo que sería. Victor fue el primero en bajar, después Ruby, Eric, Jasmine, Ramirez. Antes de Angel y Gonzáles era mi turno. Un sentimiento mezclado de emoción y miedo corrió por mis venas, haciéndome arrepentir de haber subido el risco de 45 pies de altura. Mi mente se puso en blanco y sentí frío en todo el cuerpo. Katie tomó mi mano y me dijo que todo estaría bien, pero yo no quería soltarla. Lo primero que pasó por mi mente, fue la muerte. Quería pensar en mi familia pero no podía, mi mente estaba en blanco, excepto por la muerte.

#### UN NUEVO CAPITULO, Ruby Xochihua (Truckee High)

He aprendido mucho durante este verano especialmente a ser directa con la gente. Ya no soy la misma persona super crítica de antes. Reflejo y digo las cosas que tengo en la mente. Valoro a la gente y reconozco lo que son, no no es solo lo que pienso. Espero nunca volver a ser la persona que era antes de asistir a este programa. Ahora que Dios me ha benecido con este sentido de comprensión, estoy muy agradecida. Aprecio a un alma valiente por ser intelectual, asombrosa y que brilla como una estrella. He aprendido y tengo buen corazón y compasión por la gente. Debido a mi nuevo sentido de comprensión, tengo un nuevo amigo.

#### RENACIMIENTO, Luis González (Truckee High)

Antes era flojo. Si me pedían hacer algo, no lo hacía. Me sentaba en el sillón y veía la televisión mientras mi familia limpiaba la casa. Durante el verano mi familia hacía los quehaceres de la casa, como pintar las paredes o limpiar el jardín. Yo nunca hice nada de eso; yo me sentaba y veía que otros lo hicieran. Cuando mi familia iba a alguna parte, yo trataba de quedarme lo mas lejos posible de ellos, o irme por mi propio camino. Nunca me importó nadie, solamente yo mismo. Cuando mis hermanos necesitaban ayuda, yo nunca estaba disponible para ellos. Al escuchar a algunos de mis maestros hablar acerca del programa ARC, pensé que sería una buena oportunidad de crecer y convertirme en una persona mejor. Lo pensé un poco, pero no estaba seguro si quería o no participar. Mi lado flojo a veces me decía que no lo hiciera, pero muy en el fondo, yo sabía que sería una buena experiencia para mí. Quiero agradecer a los "ARCies" y a los instructores por empujarme y hacer que me volviera un buen líder. Al llegar a casa lo utilizaré con mi comunidad. Voy a cambiar mi comportamiento en la escuela y ayudaré a mis compañeros, voy a poner atención y haré mi trabajo. Seré una persona diferente.

#### LA PERSONA INTERIOR, Angel González (North Tahoe High)

Hoy, no soy el mismo que era en casa. En casa, despertaba para ir a la escuela, tratando de mantener buenas calificaciones, después de la escuela, me iba directamente a trabajar, para obtener dinero y ahorrar para ir a la universidad, de ahí a la casa a comer y a dormir. En estos cuarenta días he aprendido acerca de mí mismo. Ahora sé quien soy. Esta persona es ahora más responsable en su trabajo, jugueteón con la gente y sus alrededores. También estoy dispuesto a encontrar nuevas aventuras, riesgos y desafíos. Como un buen líder y más importante, he desarrollado mi propio estilo.

La confianza que teníamos como grupo en la cancha de cuerdas es un ejemplo de mi transformación. En el círculo, el grupo no sabía lo que iba a suceder. Todos teníamos que compartir un desafío o un problema por el que estábamos pasando en casa o en la comunidad. Al escuchar a todos compartir emocionalmente, me conecté con sus problemas. Cuando fue mi turno, me volví muy emocional. Platiqué de cuando alguien me forzó a tomar drogas. Sentí que me había defraudado a mí mismo. Todos me animaron y aprendí a tener más confianza y a tener confianza en otros. En este círculo, aprendí a ayudar a otras personas con sus problemas. Conocí a la persona interior por primera vez.

# Community Interviews

On July 15th, 2007, halfway through our summer course, ten community members volunteered their time to be mentors for our students. These are excerpts from the narrative biographies the students wrote about their partners.

## Learning About Craig Threshie

The very last question I asked him was, "Do you have any advise for me?" He looked at me. He said that I was on a great path and keep on pushing towards it. To be able to experience new cultures and learn about them more and love it a lot because it is once in a life time that you'll be given that opportunity. I'm going to take this advice and keep it because it really does mean a lot to me. I always wanted to learn more about other people lives and life styles that they have. A short quote that he gave me and I'm going to keep it close with me: "Don't let anything stop you and keep on pushing through what you really believe in"

- Victor Martinez



## Learning About Jerry Conant

I was at Sagehen waiting for my partner during the interview project, and I was nervous because I had never done this before. When John announced my name and my partner's name, Jerry Conant, my hands started to sweat and shake. Jerry is medium height and a little bit taller than me. He was wearing shorts, hiking shoes and an adjustable baseball cap with a normal synthetic t-shirt. He looked like he was ready to climb a peak. He had a nice attitude, a friendly face and he smiled a lot. In a kind voice, he talked slowly. While we talked, he ate cherries.

- Luis Ramirez

## Learning About Tad Kitada

Tad and I have many similarities. Tad and I are both immigrants from Asia, our parents value our educations, and we both have the desire for education. We both like music and exercise. Additionally, he got his masters in social work at UC Berkeley; UC Berkeley is my dream college. He also taught me not to limit myself, try all the new things and enhance my knowledge as much as I can, so I can nourish myself in academics. The most valuable lesson that he taught me was, "Envision yourself where you want to be." Visualize myself at the end, so it can motivate me. He imagined himself at the end line of a marathon, which inspired him to finish. He suggested I work backward from where my goal is and keep working on it. I think this is a significant lesson that can stimulate everyone to do certain things successfully.

- Eric Chen

## Mara Lopez & Stephanie Blume



## Learning About Jessica Ramirez

Jessica Ramirez, an inspiring brave individual, told me about her difficult life. The one word that described adolescent girls for me was irresponsible. However, Jessica has taught me how motivated and determined she is to continue her life and reach her goals. Her beauty expresses her attitude and the smile that adorns her face states the confidence and compassion she has. Jessica is a wonderful role model for our community and for adolescent girls. Her three amazing children are the reason she wakes up in the morning ready for any challenges that come her way. Someone like Jessica Ramirez has given me a powerful example and has inspired me to focus on my goals but also be confident and compassionate.

- Ruby Xochibua

## Learning About Ray Villaman

After some more questions, Ray and I talked about our selves, life and got to know about each other a little bit more. I really thought I connected with him and learned a lot about him. I wrapped things up by asking him if he had any advice for me. He had a lot of good advice. The advice that got me was to "pay attention in school and you won't regret it later in life". I think that was really helpful because I want to do well in life.

- Luis Gonzalez

## Learning About Neil Cunningham

We introduced each other and began our interview. The first topic was college. Neil went to UC Sonoma. There he studied business management. During school he faced a challenge. This challenge was focusing because it was fun and he described it as a "playground". This challenge was hard to overcome but he did it by focusing on his grades. Grades scared Neil and he noticed that if he didn't focus he would not graduate nor achieve his goals. From this he learned that "In order to achieve anything in life you need to focus."

- Angel Gonzalez

## Learning About Guadalupe Hernandez

Towards the end of the interview, she also told me that no matter how hard life gets to keep pushing yourself and never give up because when you get to the point where you want to be, you'll never regret any move you made throughout your life. What really inspired me about Lupe and made me look up to her was that she pushed through her difficulties even though she didn't have the support she needed from her husband and father to go to college. She was very persistent in pursuing her dream despite barriers and lack of encouragement. She did have support from her mother, teachers, and peers, and she was able to take advantage of every drop of support she could receive. Lupe has accomplished a lot, and she has never regretted one single moment in her life.

- Jasmine Marquez



# Thank you for your support!

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Without all this local support, this extraordinary program would not be possible!



El programa "Adventure Risk Challenge" [Aventura, Riesgo y Desafío] es un curso intensivo de 40 días de inmersión para alumnos que están aprendiendo Inglés, este verano se graduaron a 18 jóvenes de las dos Universidades de California basadas en un campamento. Sagehen Creek Field Station en Truckee, California y Sadgwick Reserve en Santa Ynez, California. Esta escuela de verano es única pues combina un riguroso programa académico con actividades de aventura, como excursiones de mochila, kayak en el mar, y escalando rocas. Según la Directora de ARC, Katie Zanto, "todo está conectado. Los estudiantes crecen como individuos a través de las experiencias en el bosque, y crecen aún más al escribir acerca de lo que han aprendido. Integrando el liderazgo y las clases académicas, los estudiantes son capaces de hacer conexiones que raramente pueden hacer en el salón de clases." La mejor forma de evaluar el impacto que ARC ha causado en los jóvenes, comenta Katie, es leer lo que escribieron". A continuación tenemos algunos extractos:

El programa ARC está comenzará su quinto año de servicio en la región de Tahoe-Truckee. Este es un año muy importante para encontrar fondos a largo plazo, para poder continuar operando los programas. Si usted tiene alguna idea, contacto, o recursos para compartir, favor de ponerse en contacto con Katie Zanto a [klfeus@yahoo.com](mailto:klfeus@yahoo.com) o al teléfono 530-205-5649