

adventure risk challenge a leadership and literacy program

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University of California Merced and Berkeley | Yosemite Field Station



Writings of the Mighty Marmots

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I Am An Eagle

Flying away from my family
Doesn't break me
It makes me stronger
Leaving mom in the heat of Tijuana
Two beautiful little sisters
Saddens me but gives me strength
I know they'll be okay
The man up there will protect them

I'm an eagle
Intelligent
Always learning how to be patient
Looking for the best
For the people I love

Fighting and never afraid
Always strong and brave
I'm an eagle

Younger siblings depend on me
One playing video games
The other playing Buzz Light Year
The little ones need a model
Someone who teaches them how to fly

My parents can get tired sometimes
Step-mom and Dad always working
Dad laboring in a market
Smelling like onions when he comes home
Doesn't have time to protect us all the time
But we are strong
I've taught the chicks to be eagles

I'm an eagle
Always showing the young ones
How to be brave, to listen
To be responsible and to be strong

Courageous, Courageous like an eagle
Lack of funds and oppressive people
Can't hold me back from reaching my goals
Working will be hard but I know I can do it
People will be jealous and rude
But I know I can face them

I'm an eagle
Fighting for what I want
The only chance of going to college
Depends on me
Flying from one place to another
From Mexico to U.S.
Moving from green to smoggy
Moving from light to dark
My nest changed
But I'm still the same eagle



Missing my mom and my sisters
Trying to get them a better life
Trying to make them proud
Sacrificing myself
Because that's how I have to be
Strong
I'm an eagle

Doing what I think is right
My head, always up
Looking at the horizon
Searching for my dreams

Never forgetting who I am
Never forgetting where I'm from
Helpful to my family
Caring for the people I love
Aggressive when I want something
Patient to my little siblings
Strong in my beliefs
Proud of being Mexican
Intelligent, brave, fearless and courageous
I'm an eagle

Knowing Myself Better

Before becoming the Ana I am now I was the kind of girl who didn't really know about nature and the beautiful things that exist out there. I didn't like trying to learn new things. When there were problems at home I would ignore them and be alone in my world where the coolest things to do were to text and hang out with my friends. I feared expressing my feelings. Cell phone, computer, clothes, shoes, make-up and friends were the only things that mattered to me. Everything started changing when Summer Search accepted me in its program. They helped me find Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC), an amazing course where I've grown and become more independent.

When I first heard of ARC they told me the program requires backpacking for seven days without taking a shower. I thought, "Whoa! This program must be really cool and difficult." I felt excited and nervous every time I thought of ARC. Finally the time arrived and I was ready to put myself in a place where I had never been before. I wanted to experience new things and get to know myself better, so I said goodbye to my computer, my cell phone and my friends, and I turned around and left. I worried about getting sick or hurt. I knew only Huy, another Summer Search student, and we didn't talk as much as we do now. We met two other Summer Searchers when we got on the train. When we all arrived in Merced we met Sarah, the Program Director, for the first time. Every second I spent out of my house made me realize that I couldn't go back. After meeting Sarah, the time arrived to be face to face with my new group-mates, the ones who became my family over time. They taught me how to work as a group and helped me change and develop into the person I am now.

Our first backpacking expedition, the first of many challenges, transformed me. Living outside of the city and hiking in the backcountry for seven days without showering and brushing my hair everyday made me appreciate the things I have at home. Existing without electronics for a while didn't kill me; instead, I had more time to pay attention to the people around me and the beauty of the mountains. I gave myself a chance to not be afraid of interacting with other people or doing something new. I learned to respect nature and its magnificent waterfalls, mountains, plants, animals, weather and

diversity. Backpacking out in the wild took me away from the world where all your surroundings are buildings, cars and annoying people. Nature gives me tranquility that I will never find anywhere else. All these features made me respect nature, become more responsible with the things I do to it, and think about the beautiful life that it guards. I've always cared about the environment and tried to encourage my community to be conscientious about what's happening in the world. I saw wildlife with my own eyes. And now, more than before, I will do anything I can to maintain and protect it.

Rock-climbing was the hardest and most transformational moment for me during ARC. I'm scared of heights and whenever I started climbing I felt my legs shake and my heart beat faster. My group always supported me, and gave me confidence to be able to trust myself and be stronger. I felt proud and scared at the same time. I still can't believe I climbed that fifty-foot rock. Even though I felt petrified I showed myself I could do anything I wanted to, I just needed determination. That day I became braver and more positive about myself and the strength I have, physically and mentally. I learned that everybody can face their fears; we just have to be courageous, strong and confident in ourselves.



Before ARC, I had a hard time showing love to people and expressing my feelings. My best friend would always tell me how much she appreciated me and how much she loved me, and most of the time I responded, "Thanks, I love you too." I never liked to say how I felt or talk about my problems. I reserved my thoughts and feelings to myself and I never thought other people experienced the same problems as me. ARC helped me become more open and talk about my life. The activities in Leadership class where we needed to

be honest were the most difficult and the most helpful at the same time. I cried when talking about the challenges that I faced as a child and, instead of feeling ashamed; I felt good to know that my group supported me and understood my story. Giving feedback to the leader of the day every night helped me to not dread telling people how I feel about them, and to encourage them to make a change in their attitude to turn into a better leader. I don't just say "thanks, I love you too" anymore; now I can go to a person and tell them how important they are in my life and how glad I feel to have them with me.

Surviving by myself for twenty-four hours in the wilderness solo helped me to get to know myself better. I thought about all the things I've done in the past and reflected about things I could change about myself to grow to be a better human. I've made a lot of mistakes and there's no time to fix them now but I know I can prevent those mistakes from happening again. I care about my family a lot, but I didn't pay attention to them in the past. I've told them things I wish I never had said. I've hurt them so much and I think the time has finally come to tell them how much I love them and appreciate all the things they've done for me. We might have some problems sometimes and argue, but I will always love them and be there for them whenever they need me. Doing my solo in the middle of the Sierra Nevada, lonely and homesick, made me realize I had grown and recognize the changes I had made.

Ana Hernandez, a girl that can tell someone how much they mean in her life, the girl that was afraid of heights but climbed rocks, a person who appreciated clothes and now appreciates family--that's me. I feel proud of myself, and every challenge I've overcome has made me change. I did things I never thought I could be able to do. I feel thankful to my group and my instructors, my second family. I never imagined strangers becoming my brothers and sisters. Now, I have a new family and I know I can count on them whenever I need help. That's what being in ARC IS like. I learned that even if I'm scared I can keep going. I will always remember the good times I had with these people (Mighty Marmots) and I will always stay the person I am now by always having in mind the four core values: Determination, Integrity, Compassion and Service.

bao huynh

Something Right

I couldn't sleep
My eyes were closed and I still was thinking
The wind mixed with the storm in my mind
Dangerous, it blew everything

I felt uncomfortable and useless
I made mistakes and bad situation worse
I felt tired and terrible
Like snow melting to a flood

I always asked how to survive
How to support challenges and accept hurt
'Cause I knew I was weak
Inside and outside
Always in a safe place
In my family circle



I felt my life had no way
It was a freeway
Turn left, turn right, go straight
Never had a stop light
I was lost in the forest with no compass

I faced my opponents
Gangsters intimidating with knives
Teachers hitting us everywhere
I was scared and afraid
My body was trembling
I had no way out
I faced the trail
Couldn't see the top
Where the sky and mountain meet.
I faced life
My family and I against the world
No food to eat
No money for school.

Time to change!

I believed in my strengths
Only one way to move forward
I am part of nature:
A big tree,
Standing tall and defending my ground.
A waterfall,
Stopped by nothing
The sky,
Changing everyday
Every morning starts a new day
Fix problems that you made yesterday
Finish work that you're not done with yet
A lupine flower blooms
It is a chance to learn new things
Improve yourself day by day

There's no reason to be afraid.
Live for family, friends and me
I'm on the right track, like a trail
Leading to the top of the mountain
And I know, I'm doing something right.

Smiling, My Son

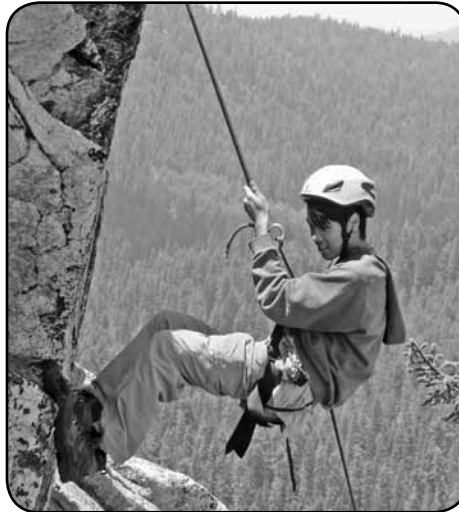
“How was school today, son?” my dad asked me when he picked me up after elementary school. “Daddy, I got 10 points today! Yah.” I said proudly and didn’t forget to give him a big smiling too. “Good job, my son. This is a reward for you.” He gave me a big smile with popcorn that I really liked to eat. I loved to see my dad making popcorn and selling it to people when they walked by. I smiled when somebody bought his popcorn. I still can remember the taste of the popcorn he made. That was one of the beautiful memories of my life. Everything started to change when I grew up. I didn’t want to go to school and I played games all day long, hung out with my friends and got home late. I went to school hopeless and fearful. I couldn’t find the happiness in life anymore. I didn’t smile with my friends anymore. I didn’t even think that I could find the smile of 10 years ago when I was a funny kid until I participated in the ARC program.

I joined the Adventure, Risk and Challenge program with support from my family, my teachers and my mentors at Summer Search. I couldn’t have imagined how ARC would change my personality during the 40 days course. Backpacking in the forest 7 days with my teammates was the first and one of the biggest challenges we overcame together this summer. Before ARC, my family always called me a lazy boy. I didn’t want to go to anywhere except stay at home playing games with my friends. I didn’t want to learn new life skills, and I didn’t know how to build good relationships with other people. I wasted my time. I wanted to change how I lived but I couldn’t get myself to do it. During this time, I thought about my father. He was the person that affected me the most. He is knowledgeable and a strong man. He has a lot of experience and he can do everything by himself. He wanted his sons to have a good future so he pushed us every day to grow up, learn new things and be stronger. He believed that education is the best way for us to have a better life. He did everything for us to make sure that we had a good environment to study and be good students. But all I did was play games and I didn’t care about school. He felt sad and disappointed in me. He became serious and got mad easily. Inside of my father, he loved us and forgave all the mistakes I made. Before I got on the train to Merced to join the ARC program, me and my father just stood together silently. I could feel things he wanted to say to me in his eyes, “go ahead my son, make me proud.” Based on the four values of ARC, determination, compassion, integrity and service, I trained myself to be positive. I learned how to take care of myself, organize my stuff and be responsible.

Leadership was another big challenge for a person who didn’t like to talk much like me. I remembered when I went to school in Vietnam. Nothing really interested me at school.

I couldn’t see the point in learning to solve useless problems. I didn’t enjoy talking with my friends and especially strangers. I heard my classmates say: “Why did he never smile with us?” I just silently walked away from them. I did smile, but just only for myself. I didn’t know how to build good relationships. Nobody understood me and they didn’t get me when I said something. I didn’t care about what they did or thought about me. I was independent and did things I wanted. After participating in the ARC program, I had to change to become a leader. The leader of the day gave me a chance to push myself, doing things I haven’t done before and learning about the importance of communication with other people. My father also has qualities of a strong leader such as listening, watching and building good relationships with his friends – who do different jobs and can support him in different ways. He knows how to get people’s attention and trust him. I learned a lot of skills from him even if I didn’t use them much before. I realize now that it’s not just learning that’s important. It’s what you do with what you learn that matters. Being a leader gave me a chance to practice what I learned and improve my skills. My teammates at ARC were friendly, helpful and supported me a lot. I felt comfortable when I talked to them and my English improved. I talked more, not scared to share my ideas with the group. I learned how to become a strong leader that can support my teammates, help them when they need help, get people’s attention and remind them to follow the schedule. I learned to build good relationships and they could trust me. The most important thing that I learned was put myself in other people’s shoes. I tried to understand other’s feelings. We worked together to become a stronger team. We became a big family.

I always asked myself how to deal with challenges and accept hurt. Living in a new environment without support from my family made me scared and afraid to do difficult things. I just wanted to hide and forget about trying. Now I have an answer for my question: “Face the challenges.” The answer is very easy but hard to do. Rock climbing was a challenge where I had to face fears. At the beginning, I couldn’t find good spots to step and hang on to. I got stuck on the rock for a few minutes. “My father and my family are not here with



me right now, what can I do?” my mind just keep saying. I knew my dad never wanted me to give up easily. I realized that if I always needed their help, I would never grow up, stand tall on my feet and control myself. I remembered my dad solved his problems by trying again until he made it work. He always tried to think about new solutions, thinking outside of the box. Luckily, I had support from my friends and instructors. I paid attention at every step I made because I didn’t want to fall. Higher and higher I climbed. I felt more comfortable stepping forward and climbing up to the top. I made it – that was awesome. After rock climbing, I learned how to relax, feel free and fearless when facing challenges.

One day on the hiking trip, me and two other friends had a conversation about Japan, a beautiful country in the world. We realized that we all want to travel to Japan someday. We made a promise that we will travel to Japan together after we graduate from high school. One night, we made a plan for how to save money and reach our goal. We felt excited about that future. After that day, I thought more about my future too. When I finish the 40-day ARC program, I will come home and make a daily schedule and set goals for my future. Although I know it may be hard to do, I will try my best to reach my goals. The first thing I want to do is improve my health. I want to be stronger. I’ll push myself to wake up at 6:15 in the morning and try to run around the lake near my house. I’ll try to be more helpful and become a good family member: clean up my house, dishes, cook meals for family and wash car with my brother.

I’ll try not to turn back to the “old” me from before. The second thing is I want to improve my English skills to prepare for my future. I’ll practice speaking English with my sister and brother. I will try to read books, a few pages per day, and write essays. Listening to music is also a good way to improve my English. The third thing I want to do is communicate with other people. I’ll apply to become a volunteer at Oakland public library to meet new people and do community service. My commitment is make a plan for future after I finish high school. ARC can support me by checking on me every week like summer search does with me. I can also write a letter for ARC after I’m back home for few months to see my improvement and if I’m still pushing myself to grow up. It’s hard to change my values to be positive in a short time. But I believe that I can do it and I will try my best to reach my goals. Just like my father says: “Smiling, my son.”

benjamin meza-lemus

Making My Dreams Come True

I am an Aspen Tree
Growing quickly and extending my roots.

We always lived in a united world
Where our roots were connected.
All slept in a small room
I shared a bunk bed with my brother Salvador,
And my dad and my mom shared a queen bed.
We had a leaky red clay tile roof
That always smelled damp,
Like dirt after the rain.

Then our roots got strained.
My dad packed his bag with some shirts and pants.
He took an apple and an orange,
Put them in his pocket,
said goodbye and left to go work in the U.S.
That was the moment where the sadness started,
Where all my leaves turned gray.

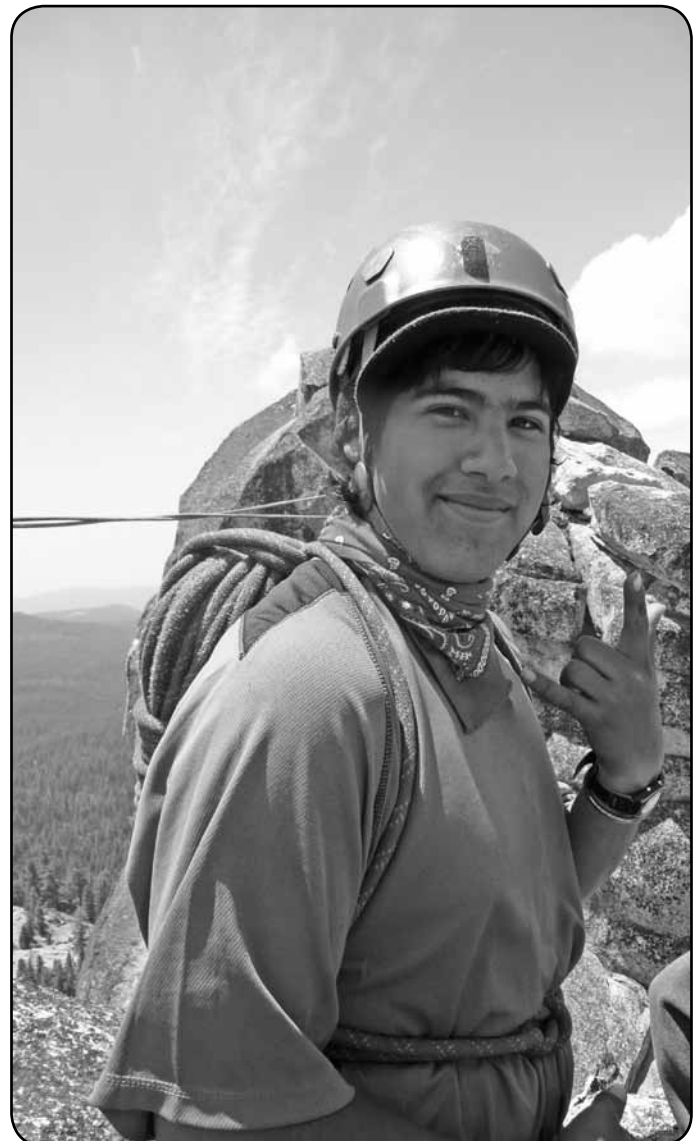
I used to face the same challenge everyday
Being away from my dad.
I heard the wind sing the song “como mi papa”,
It taught me to stay positive.
No matter what the problem was
I had to extend my roots.
I patiently waited for my dream to come true,
And felt happy that one day we were going to be together.

My leaves changed into a new color
They turned green meaning new life.
My dad reached his branches out to me
No matter how bad the weather was
I knew he would be there to support me.

Reunited with my father
The weather started to change
Into a new sunny day
All I needed was to be positive.

Now we live like a strong family.
My family is all around me.
Hearing my dad say that he feels proud of me
I know that he wants the best for me.
We're both looking for a better future.
I will try to attend college and make our dream come true.

No matter how far apart we will be when I'm in college
Our roots will be strongly connected.
Graduating will not be the end.
We will both work to make a big ranch
Surrounded by animals and nature.
A place of happiness for new aspen trees to grow
And for new dreams to come true.



The Other Me

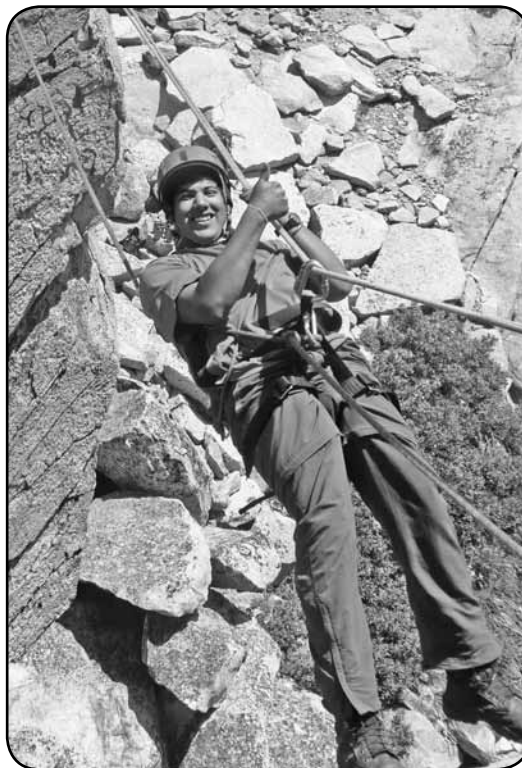
This summer I think my values have changed a lot. I have become a better person by being more determined and living with integrity. I also have learned and experienced activities that I think I never will experience at home. Taking on challenges like writing a poem, completing a ropes course and spending 24-hours alone in the wilderness has strengthened my character.

Another way I grew this summer was learning science, English, and leadership. In every single one of those classes I improved my knowledge. In English I had to learn how to classify past, present, and future tense in an essay. I have learned to use strong verbs, and I have improved my English skills. In my science class I have learn about watersheds, agriculture, dams, and wetlands. In all of those topics I learned how the planet is affected. For example, one interesting fact is that the majority of drinkable water on Earth is used for agriculture, and this can have major impacts on ecosystems.

Before this summer, I thought the word determination meant simply trying. During these forty days I learned that this word is a really important core value. Now I see that being determined is trying my hardest in what I'm doing, and doing my best. ARC has showed me that I'm capable of doing things I never thought I could do before, such as writing a poem that doesn't rhyme and compares my life with the life of a tree. I also never imagined that I could talk to a stranger and ask him questions about his life. It was one of the best experiences of the course, but it took a lot of determination because I usually don't talk to strangers. At the ropes course later in the summer, I jumped off a 25-foot-tall wobbly telephone pole. All of those experiences could look easy to other people, but they weren't easy for me. I did my best and I never said "I can't do this." The instructors said that everything in ARC was optional and that I could tell them if I wanted to go home. When I got letters from my family and felt homesick I wanted to leave to be with my loved ones, but I decided to stay in the program.

This program has shown me the meaning of integrity: to do the right thing even when no one is looking, no matter what the situation is or how hard it's going to be to accomplish. At home I used to do things the easy way,

but in ARC I have learned that if I do it the right way it might take longer but it will be easier to do next time. When I wash the dishes in basecamp we go through a process: wash, rinse, dry, and put them in the right place; but in my house I used to clean them and then just leave them on the counter and go to play. But sometimes going away to play will affect others negatively. For instance



on my solo day when I spent twenty-four hours by myself in the wilderness, I showed integrity to the instructors and to the group by staying in the same place. I didn't move or do something I was not supposed to do, even though it was really tempting for me. Around my solo spot there were many cool places I could go and check out, but the instructors said that if they came to check on me and I wasn't there they would cancel the whole day for everybody I would have ruined the solo for the rest of my teammates. I knew leaving my spot wasn't the right thing to do for me or the group.

In these forty days I have learned and experienced things that I never would be able to learn and do at home. One of them was to set up a shelter, which was one of the easiest and hardest things for me at the same time. The easiest thing is to unfold the shelter and use two poles or a tree to support it. But the hardest part is to find a

good place, make the knots, make sure that the pole doesn't move and is always straight, and to tie the rope corners at an angle of forty-five degrees. Packing a backpack also looks really simple, and people could say that it is like packing a duffle bag, but it's nothing like that. In this backpack I needed to pack clothes, aqua socks, group gear, and a bear canister with food - and I needed to pack it correctly, because if I didn't I would feel like it weighed more than it actually did and I could end up more sore than my teammates. Learning these things made me understand that things aren't always as easy as they look. I also have learned how to rock climb, kayak, rappel, whitewater raft, and how to do a Tyrolean traverse. In all of those adventure sports I learned new ways of communication, how to support others, and how to work together as a team.

To make sure that the meanings of these values don't change for the rest of my life I will always remember my teammates and their hard work - they also showed a lot of determination. I also will think about how they told me to never give up and always keep going. To make sure that I don't go back to the old me I will remember that my family is always there to support me and that they want me to be a better person. I know that my family will not let me go back to the old, lazy me, who cared only about himself. I will use my new integrity to keep doing the right thing everywhere I go. My ARC family of teammates, the Mighty Marmots, has supported me too. They have taught me that a family is not only one that is connected by blood and love. My ARC family has taught me that a family can also be made out of a strong friendship. They have cried with me, they have sung with me, they have laughed with me, and they have been with me in the best days of the forty days. These forty days I have seen that through every experience we grew a little bit more, and we did it all together, now we feel more confident and we trust each other more. After this program I will miss all of my teammates, their happiness, their hard work, and the encouragement that they gave me. I will remember all of them like brothers and sisters. I will also laugh about those moments that changed all of us to be better people. This is my second best family and I would never trade it for anything. Thanks Mighty Marmots, and thank you ARC.

brenda cardoza

I Am An Ant

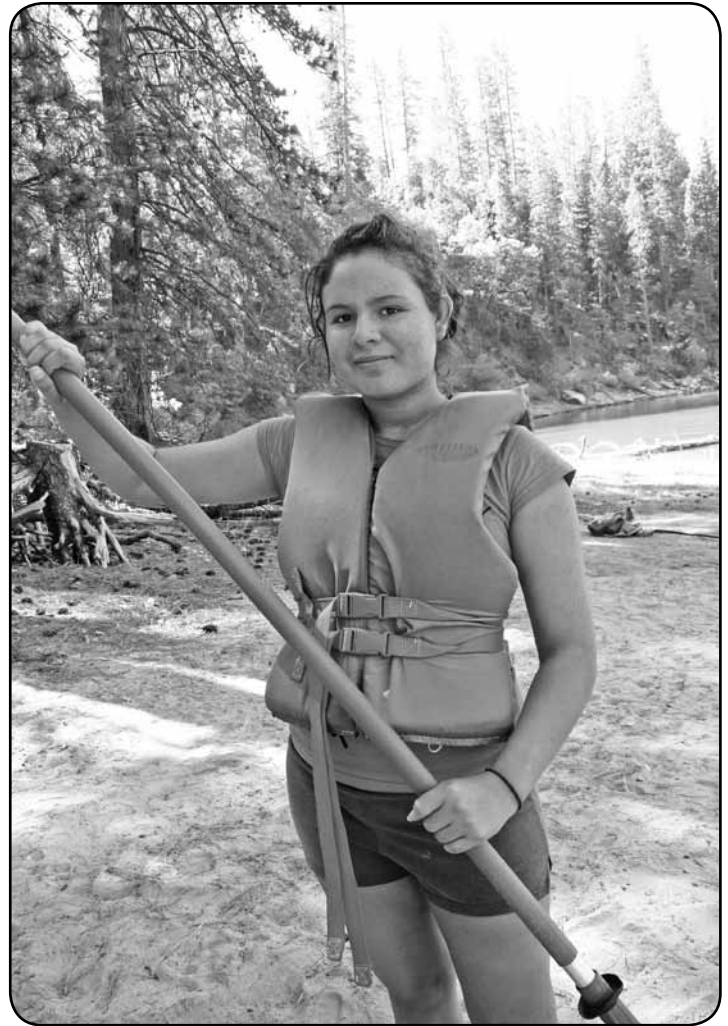
Ants are small and tough,
Intelligent and hardworking just like me.
No matter the challenge,
I know I will persevere.

I have struggled in the past,
Taking care of my little brother, changing him, feeding him,
With no one to help me.
Moving from Firebaugh to Oroloma
and to Dos Palos High School was also difficult.
From the excitement of the city,
I was bored in the country and facing racism at school.
I felt trapped and lonely,
But I have persevered.

Whether it's physically or mentally,
Nothing can prohibit me.
Always working hard, as an ant does,
Overcoming obstacles everyday,
pushing myself to do my best.
My bother thinks he is the king ant,
while I feel like a slave ant,
Cleaning the house with no one to help me.

Always dreaming of succeeding at school so I can thrive,
Become a doctor, and have a great future;
If I accomplish this I would like travel the world.
I am always dreaming of traveling to remarkable places,
Especially to France, Italy, and China
that have their own special features.
I dream of smelling the garlic bread in Italy,
Seeing the Eiffel tower in France,
Eating Chinese food in China.
I know I can accomplish this dream!
Just as an ant is hardworking at overcoming obstacles,
I will also persevere!

I can accomplish this dream if I keep studying hard
Believing in myself and trusting others
I have the ability to pass the test
Like I have climbed up the challenging rock wall
I am an adventurous ant who can accomplish anything.



A Big Decision

Have you ever experienced something that has changed your life for the better or worse? One of the best decisions I have made in my life so far was coming to ARC. Although it was difficult, the experience was worthwhile. Three activities that taught me to push myself were backpacking, rock-climbing, and doing a 24-hour solo. These events helped me grow immensely as a better person and appreciate the small things.

Backpacking changed me in several ways. It showed me that I can survive in nature and not be afraid. During the cold nights I learned how to keep warm in just a sleeping bag. I learned how to go to the bathroom in the woods, pack food in bear cans and always do a sweep to make sure that I left no trace. At first I was uncomfortable with digging a hole to go to the bathroom in the woods but then I discovered that the worst part was that ARC gave us a limited amount of toilet paper to use so next time I brought extra. You have to be responsible on backpacking trips because if you aren't on schedule you may not reach your destination or, if you do, you may arrive to camp late and eat your dinner in the dark. While crossing creeks and logs we gave one another a hand and worked as a team. Before I came to ARC I used to think that all bugs, including spiders, would bite me. During the last backpacking trip I found a spider under my sleeping pad and it didn't bother me at all. But I am still afraid of bees!

I learned that I can accomplish anything with the support of my teammates. Rock climbing on Fresno Dome helped me learn how to trust others. There was one time when I couldn't find a rock to hold onto and I said "I can't. I can't do this."

My teammates kept cheering me on and they told me where to go and what rocks to grab. I used to think that I could do everything myself but now I understand that I need the support of others, especially when I am afraid.



During the 40-day course we backpacked a lot - almost 5 miles every single day when we were in the wilderness. It was difficult and I felt tired waking up so early, packing my stuff and walking, especially in the snow. When we hiked in the snow on the way to Ten Lakes Pass and had to turn around I could barely feel my feet because they were so cold and wet. That night was the coldest night of the 40 days. Before, I never valued shelter and a place to get warm, but now I am grateful for my warm bed at home.

The solo is an event during the third expedition, in the second half of the course, when you are alone for 24 hours in the wilderness. ARC instructors asked us to stay in the same spot so that we would have time to think for ourselves. During the solo I started to realize all of the wonderful things I took for granted. I reflected on my bed, shelter, warmth, my mom's cooking, and other things that seemed like simple luxuries back home. I mostly missed my parents and my family. I used to value friends more than family but while journaling during my solo I realized that friends come and go. When I moved from Firebaugh to Dos Palos I hardly got to see or talk to my old friends. I realized that family stays with you no matter where you go or what you do. I am thankful that my parents try to give me what I want but sometimes they can't due to lack of money. Still I appreciate the food, love, shelter and warmth that they have always provided. I know I take them for granted, but I will try my best to change even though it is going to be challenging.

ARC has taught me to have a positive outlook on life and to appreciate everything more. In order not to go back to the old me I will try to come to all the ARC weekend retreats to remind myself of all the things we did in ARC. I know that in the future ARC will support me by giving me advice, helping me with college applications, having writing workshops, mentoring me when I do my community service project. I consider myself fortunate to have attended the 40 day course.

charly mijares

Not A Second Thought

I started out as a rabbit,
Fearful and small.
Running from predators
Pain, Pain, Pain.

They liked to torment,
For they were huge.
Either a bear, puma, or coyote;
All were hungry for pain.

The most common words:
Brown, Wetback, Short.
The older the predator,
The harsher the word.

I never fought back,
For what could a rabbit do?
Because all I felt was
Pain, Pain, Pain.

One day, I saw some boots,
(Two old Justin Boots)
I gathered my wits
And slipped them on.

The boots were the best,
Nobody messed with me;
For who tangles with a rabbit
That wears cowboy boots?

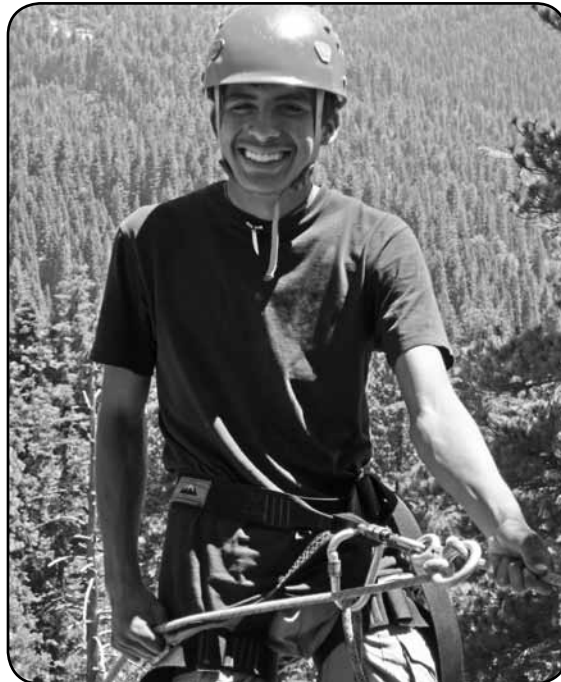
Over time, I became a coyote.
I had friends,
Humor,
Outrageous fun.

I scavenged for food,
As skinny as a twig
But I still possessed hope
As fat as a tree.

But someone who wears boots
Works all day;
Everyday I wore the boots,
I worked hard, too.
Thorns as long as nails.

Absolutely no stopping.
“Dig a hole, drop the trunk in,
bury the trunk,”
The only thoughts in my head.

Mesquite trunks,
Thorny weeds.
All exposed
Harsh labor.



Blisters,
Calluses,
Ripped flesh,
All over my scrawny body.

All day long,
I scurry through fields.
The scorching sun and sweat
Burns my wounds.

Bloody paws,
Ripped boots;
Keep hoeing on,

Just a thousand acres more.

My boots were getting old;
The soles worn to strips,
Mule ears long gone,
Dirt filled my boots.

Both of my packs
Work as hard as me.
Some even harder
But all we feel is pain.

The sun burns my eyes
My tongue hangs loose
My paws are scarred
Pain, Pain, Pain.

The puma's blood-rich laughter
Made me taste blood.
The iron metal taste,
Stopped me from howling.

I knew that my boots proved,
The life of a working man.
It was time to speak up again
Or never at all.

One day, I realized that even though
I was proud of working,
I didn't want to work in
The fields my whole life.

I found a pair of Tony Lama Boots
They gave me the courage
and knowledge
To walk out of the field
To show the world
the man that I became...

Today, I'm almost there
I'm proving the pumas wrong
Three years is all that determines
If I accomplish that goal
and go beyond.

Cowboy Up

The sweltering, sizzling sun struck my back like a whip but had no effect on me. It was barely an hour from dawn, and already felt as if it was over a thousand degrees. I felt back at home at Dos Palos, as if I was at a Saturday swim meet. The day was so great and hot, that the boulders gripped my skin at touch. I wrote furiously in my journal, to finish the task given to me and to reflect on the whole summer course. My water was running low and Colin had just shown up a half hour ago to fill my water bottles. All I knew was that he wouldn't return for a while, but I didn't care much about my thirst. During these twenty-four hours alone, I reflected over the past course on how I have changed.

The solo was an extraordinary experience for me because of the challenge it gave me: staying in one spot for twenty-four hours. The challenge was too great for me, and I left my campsite three times. The temptation to leave camp and explore was unbearable. On the first day of the solo, I was flabbergasted on how awesome my area was: a flat dirt area surrounded rock from the left and right; a creek ran silently by; and three, forlorn looking trees huddled next to the creek, as if planning some mischief. "The best and farthest solo spot ever," was all I could think. But temptation to roam came and shook

me awake. I felt the urge to leave and explore more beyond the barrier of my camp. When I got back, I started to feel alone and vulnerable. I shook it away, not letting my feelings take over me. Around dusk, I knew that my feelings had the better of me, and I started to become frightened. I shook it away as well, by leaving spot and looking for basecamp. I was afraid to be afraid. Of course, Scott and Colin saw me and moved me to my new spot. In the morning, I awoke in my new area, realizing that my original spot was way better off than the new one. I had no shade until around noon, when a little tree next to my pack shaded a boulder. During that time, I left my new spot in search for some shade on the other side of the boulder, where there was plenty of shade. Colin came to my camp during that time, and saw that I wasn't in my per-

imeter. When I showed up, we had a talk. That's when I was really scared because I believed he was going to take me to camp. I told him that I had temptations that I had really tried hard to fight. I tried my best, but I couldn't take it anymore. He then said he understood and that I could do better if I just fought temptation harder. Temptation to leave my camp was mostly all I told him, until I told him that I was afraid to be afraid the first day. After that day, I learned that just saying what you feel is better than holding it all in, because then people won't understand you. I didn't realize it that exact day, because I didn't know it until a week later. I also learned that just doing what is right is right. You have to trust yourself that it'll be worse off if you don't do what is right.

Poetry has opened my mind more to English. I used to hate English because all that the teachers taught and showed me was how to write poetry straight onto paper. ARC has taught me differently by asking us



about our emotions and then asking us to write them on paper. Sarah had tried for a year to help me with English, and I slowly progressed. When I came to the summer

course here in Wawona, our first writing assignment was to write a poem about our hardest challenge in life. "Oh boy," I thought to myself. I was never good at poetry, because our teachers never taught us how to write it with emotion, only to write it formally like a "business guy". I remembered what Sarah and Alyssa had said about emotion. I just wrote, and rewrote my poem, with loads of emotion. Sarah read over it, and she said that it's the best she had seen me write all year. She said I finally found my strong point in English. After she read it, I read it to myself, and I liked the work I did. Poetry truly is my gateway to English.

Another challenge for me this summer was at the ropes course. We swung like monkeys for about three hours in the trees until the

final event of the day. We were challenged to jump off a telephone pole to a trapeze bar, which was about six feet from the pole. The jump off that bloody telephone pole has taught me to sticking to a goal and finishing it is better because turning back is either impossible or difficult. I looked at the pole and said to myself, "Heck a easy." I scaled that pole in less than a half a minute, using only my arms up the rope ladder. The challenge for me was not climbing it, but dragging myself onto the platform on top of the pole. The platform was about a foot and a half long by a foot wide, scarcely any room to climb onto. I didn't realize that that was the hardest part of the whole thing. Like bull riding, the hardest part is getting on. Everything else just goes really quick. I looked down, and realized that turning back was pretty much impossible. But I also realized that I had come really far as coming up onto the pole. I looked at the trapeze bar and looked back down. It was six feet in front of me, about a yard high. I knew I wasn't going to reach the bar, but I had to jump anyways. If I didn't jump, I would regret it later. "It's now or never," I thought to myself. I took one last look at the ground and jumped off the platform. I was three inches from touching the bar, but I never reached it. Abruptly, I stopped short and hung in midair. I didn't reach the bar, but I had tried my best. After the ropes course, I thought about what had happened that day. I realized that sticking to a goal and following through with it is important because feeling satisfaction is better than regret. I also learned that the smallest challenges can be harder than the noticeable challenges.

What I'm going to do back at home is practice what I accomplished and learned. The solo expedition taught me that living with limits such as rules and limited resources can be frustrating but good for one's character. My personality changed that day dramatically; I used to not express myself, hiding my emotions from everybody. Now I know that it is important to express myself more in order for people to understand me. Not only that, but I learned that writing poetry in English can be easier if you just honestly express yourself on the paper. At school, I'm going to have patience with my writing and take the time to organize my thoughts and ideas on paper. The ropes course taught me that everything isn't always easy, that most things in life are really hard. I will not reject any chance to succeed. At home and at school, I'm going to try to achieve all these lessons I learned. In order to be the best I can, I'm going to have to "cowboy up," and live up to my new challenge.

huy dao

Breaking Through

I am a Great Grey owl
My strength
It stands for intelligence
It is hard to see me
Because I'm quiet
I dig deep into lessons
To solve problems.

Positivity
Lives in me
Sharing moments with my family
And seeing their smiles
My family came here
With nothing in their hands
But I believe we will navigate through the night.

The time came
To separate me from Viet Nam
I packed my nest to fly away
To look for a better chance
Like an owl adapted
For a new warm season.
My future will fly despite the dark

My parents' sacrifice
To take care of me
They work to grow the family
They gave up
For me to step up.
I try to live worthy
Of their sacrifice
Always work hard for a brighter future

With wisdom
An owl can see through the dark
And catch food to survive
Quietly,
I can hear everything
Openly,
I listen to improve myself

I chase after what I want
A nice peaceful place



Where I can take care of my family
Teaching, passing all valuable things
For the next future
So they don't get lost
And everything will get through the dark.
I am a Great Grey Owl.

Big Step of My Life

Before I came to ARC, I used to sleep until noon, sit in front of my television, and hang out with friends during the summer. To me, those summer activities were expected of a teenage boy. My parents had sacrificed their home back in Vietnam to create an opportunity for me to come here. All I did for them over here was get good grades and pass my classes. Besides studying at school, and playing soccer, hanging out with my friends was all I did. Sometimes I forgot how hard my parents were working to take care of the family. They always encourage me to have a better future. I didn't know I could be helpful to my parents because all I did was focus on me. Then one day, my teacher gave me a letter and nominated me to Summer Search program. Months later, Summer Search introduced me to ARC for a 40 days course at Yosemite. At first, I refused to go because I didn't want to spend most of my summer away from my family and friends. The main reason why I did not want to come was because I didn't want to miss my soccer tournament with my team. My mom thought this was a good chance for me to travel to new places and meet new people. After a few days thinking about it, I decided to give it a shot. On June 14th, I packed my stuff, said goodbye to my family, got on the train to Merced, and prepared myself for 40 days alone.

The first few days, I was so worried. I thought I had made a wrong decision to come to the 40-day course because I had to fit in with new people. One of the main reasons why I was afraid was because I had to speak out to new people and my English was not very good. On the first days, I was thinking about my friends back home and wondered what they are doing. Then I started thinking about my family and it made me feel worse without them. Then my thoughts started to change completely. After the first backpacking trip, I discovered how much I love hiking. There are many interesting views to see in the wilderness that I cannot see back in San Jose. After the second backpacking trip, there was a rafting trip. This helped me open my mind and learn new skill that I never had the chance to learn before.

I realized how many adventures I could have in this summer with ARC. The most important part that I discovered about myself this summer was that I could practice new abilities and face my challenges.

At ARC, besides going out into the wilderness, they also helped me improve my English. My first challenge was writing my poem. With the few English words I knew, there was no way that I was going to be able to complete my poem. At that time, I was thinking about my family, and their sacrifices. Then new ideas began to form in my mind and helped me organize my thought for my poem. It reminded me of our lives back in my country, and my grandfather who always took care of me. My poem is filled up with all my strengths and my goals for the future. In this poem, I included and talked about my family and my life. I cannot be more proud to read it out loud. By writing a poem about them, I feel more appreciative of my family.

Through rock climbing and a ropes course, I learned about commitment and trust. For rock climbing, I had to trust my feet and my physical skill. Those were not the only



abilities that I had to trust, but I put myself into my teammate's hands. They made me feel safe, and I knew that I could count on my team. When I was up in the air, I was so nervous, but I knew I would be fine because my teammates were watching me. They were always ready to catch me with a belay rope. I realized that I can trust my team and they are always watching out for me. I'm afraid of heights, so I thought that the rope course was not for me. I figured I'd never know how it feels unless I tried it. Then I decided to step up and I passed the ropes. During that day, I also learned

about commitment. By staying with my goal of walking on the rope that connected from one point to another point, 30 feet above the ground, even though it made me feel sick, I accomplished my goal. To me, I will live my life with commitment and it will help me pass all challenges that I have to face in the future. During the rope course, there were not any short cuts that allowed you to jump to the end without passing other ropes. It made me realize that life is not easy and there are no short cuts to your success. The only way to achieve your dream is to stay with it.

The Interview day and Open house was a setting to build my confidence. That day, I had a great chance to interview Lindsey Prell. She works at Yosemite National Park with volunteers for resources management and science. I learned many valuable lessons from her that day. I learned that when I travel alone, I can discover more about myself, and no matter where I go, I can still land on my feet. Lindsey also gave me a lot of good advice that I will take home and make practice of them. I really appreciated what she did for me, and I hope I can see her again someday. On that day, I also learned to believe in myself. At the Open House, I felt confident and proud to read my poem out loud in front of about 100 people. I found out that I feel good on stage and that I am a good public speaker, at least according to other people's opinions. To me, these experiences really push me to consider teaching later in my life.

During the 40 day course with ARC, I learned many valuable lessons. For example how to be a leader in my community, speak and write in English efficiently and I learned to appreciate nature. The best part of this experience is that I made new friends. I am glad that I got to meet them this summer. We worked as a family and always got through challenges together. From now on, the hardest challenge I have to face in the future is saying goodbye to them. They taught me that there is no "I" in "TEAM" and if we stick together, we will pass through difficult challenges. When I go back home, I'll try to help my family and care more about people around me. For the future, my goal is to graduate from high school and then go to San Jose State University. I'm very committed to my goal. With my commitment, I will do my best and, thanks to Lindsey's advice, I will achieve my goal.

jiajia yu

I Am A River

Summer is coming
River moves strongly, majestically,
Oh! Life in China
Busy life, never stopping.

Wake up in the morning
Ride my bike to school,
study until afternoon.
Research science project, analyze poems, prepare for quiz,
Cooking and cleaning in the evening.



Autumn is coming
River moves quietly, patiently,
I am walking on the street in San Francisco by myself
I curiously pace up and down.



Barbecue fish and milk tea “NaiCha”
Tastes like hometown,
Watery soup and hamburgers
Tastes like this new city.
I used to flow through crowded rocks
But now they look sparse,

I used to meet the same kind of rocks,
But now some look black, brown and white.

Winter is coming
Nature sleeps; river freezes into ice,
I am learning English on my own
Preparing for my future.

Construction sounds in China, always building
Peaceful park near my house,
Trees silent like nature in San Francisco
Cheering fans at the baseball game.

Spring is coming
Nature awakens; ice melts into bubbling water,
I am flowing with my adopted home
Oh! New life!

I am traveling in San Francisco with my friends
Communicating with them genuinely in a fresh way.
Laughing with them joyfully,
Laughing with my exciting life!

I hope I can continue to flow in the US
Achieving my dream to teach children
Providing water to little plants, rocks and animals
Sharing my life experiences with them!

The Real Me

I moved from China to San Francisco about one and a half years ago. Luckily, I became a student in a program called Summer Search. At the beginning of this summer, Summer Search recommended that I participate in Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC), a 40-day program that combines academic and physical adventures. I felt nervous and worried when I first heard this news. I was the person who didn't like exercise at all and did not speak English well. How can I spend 40 days with strange students that I don't know and only speak English? How can a person who is scared of nature hike in the wilderness? I felt more scared when I asked myself these questions. However, my mentor from Summer Search and my family strongly encouraged me to join ARC. I knew that coming to ARC would be difficult and challenging for me, but I knew that in my mind taking this opportunity is better than staying at home and spending time on my computer. I figured, "Maybe I can improve my English and make more friends during the course," so I decided to come to ARC. In ARC, I found the real me.

The ARC course started with seven days backpacking in the wilderness. Since I was scared of nature and never backpacked before, the first trip was a huge obstacle for me. I had to walk, sleep and lick the bowl in the wilderness! The combination of all these was the most difficult experience for me. At the beginning, I was scared of everything in the wilderness: trees, animals and the night. By the second expedition, I learned how to appreciate nature and I started to get closer to the wilderness. I saw the little animals that try very hard to survive, like ants. I stood in front of a Jeffrey Pine tree which smells like vanilla. Suddenly, I had an interest to learn about nature. I enjoy waking up to the songs of birds in the morning. I enjoy falling asleep with millions of shimmering stars in the black sky. My values changed during this summer.

Family and friends are more valuable to me. During this summer, I cannot use the Internet, my cell phone or Facebook. First I thought not having this technology was terrible, but after going without them, they seem less important to me. I know that we can use technology in our life, but it is not necessary. Family is more important for me now than it was before. Before I came here, I lived with them, ate with them and talked with them. But now I cannot live with them or talk to them! I felt uncomfortable and I miss them all the time! I thought that all young people live with their parents. Now I understand that not everybody has the chance to live with their families. We should



remember every day, every second that we are with our families, that we are lucky to have them. Friends are very important for me as well. They are part of my wonderful life. Not just the friends that I made before, but also the friends from ARC. They are beginning to play an important role in my life. My friends from ARC have to go through many obstacles with me, for more than a month. We studied together, hiked together and faced challenges together. These challenges helped us to start to know each other and care about each other, just like a big family. ARC students combine the role of friend and teacher. They taught me helpful knowledge. The first time I hiked, they taught me how to make my backpack

more comfortable. When I felt cold, they handed me a jacket. When I felt bored, they tried very hard to make me laugh. We are connecting just like the dirt and trees. Friendship overflows with help, care and laughter. They encourage me when I face challenges. They support me when I make decisions.

Before I came here, I thought challenges simply made my life more difficult and I tried to avoid them all the time. However, the value of a challenge totally changed after the ropes course. Ropes course was one of the scariest experiences this summer, but I am glad that I did it. Going through the challenges of the ropes course helped me find the real me. The most risky

part was the Perch. I stood on the tiny wood about 25 feet above the ground, closed my eyes, calmed my shaking legs and jumped in the air, reaching out for the trapeze. At that moment, I realized I am not the weak girl anymore. I found the real me, who is strong, confident and brave. I learned that if I face my challenges with confidence, I will get to have many amazing experiences that I never thought about before.

I have grown a lot in ARC this summer. I realized that nature is not scary at all if I give my love to it. Family is very important and

I will be grateful for them. I will appreciate all the things that they have done for me and spend more time with them. I cannot survive without friends; they are just like water and I am the fish. I will continue to work hard and try to get a good score on the SAT in my junior year. I am determined to face all my challenges and glad that I have challenges to face because I grow a lot from them. After I come back home from ARC, I would like to travel to Africa and volunteer there. I would like to try different food from different countries. I would like to hike in the mountains with my friends in San Francisco. I want to do all these things so that I can keep transforming myself and ensure I will not go back to the "old" me.

marcela avina

Becoming Marcela Porterella

Gently blowing in the wind
In a meadow vast and free
With different grasses surrounding me
Withstanding the elements
Just like a wall
Feeling strong enough to face it all

Just when I thought I can take the heat
I'm suddenly crushed by Tragedy's feet
Losing my loved ones to natural disasters
Karina, Margarita
And the rest on my mind
Just going through phases life left me to find
Superfluous sympathy is showered on me
While experiencing fire and ice
I want to accept the help I receive
But none of it would suffice.

Haunted by memories
Memories that never cease to exist
I'm lonely and charred
My heart is dark
My mind is scarred

Grief-stricken by all of this turmoil
Struck to the ground
So I only breathe soil
Fallen once more
Flat on the ground
But rising again without making a sound

Others have problems
Other Porterella lay dying
I witness my friends
Uncontrollably crying
I put my issues away
Just to brighten their day
I stretch out my roots

While forcing a smile
Just to sit by their side
And console for a while
I embrace them sincerely
I reach out my hand
I remind them all
That together we stand.

So let's become Porterella
Let's claim our ground
Let us rejoice
When the wind comes around
Let our stems grow stronger
Our minds more profound
Then let us explore
The courage we've found.



Once a Mighty Marmot, Always a Mighty Marmot

“40 days. 40 days. 40 days of my summer,” I thought as I stared out the car window, “Oh well. I’ll have time to do my summer assignment.” I reclined casually on the seat. June 14 had arrived and I was on my way to a summer of outdoor activities and freedom from everyday chores. I honestly thought this summer wouldn’t be anything too special and that I wouldn’t find much except for fun and new friendships. I mean, gaining confidence, building strength, and having faith in myself? Why would those things even cross my mind? I had no reason to believe ARC would change me. After all, the course would only last a little more than a month. How much could possibly happen in 40 days? Fortunately, I would soon realize that I had never been so wrong about anything in my life.

After being introduced to everyone, my adventure began with a week-long backpacking trip. Although I detested backpacking, I decided I would need the good practice for upcoming physical events. Unfortunately, my body failed me. We had been hiking uphill for about 3 hours in the blistering heat with our heavy backpacks when I felt a twisted knot in my stomach. I tried to ignore the discomfort, but I felt worse and worse until the pain spread throughout every vein in my body. My muscles ached and cried, pleading with me to allow them to rest. My temples pulsed, throbbing in agony as my eyes struggled to find sanctuary from the sun’s fiery fingers. I needed a break but I couldn’t just stop. I kept hiking until finally I just couldn’t keep up with the rest of the group. I felt small tears burn my eyes even more as I took a load off my feet. One of the instructors mixed my water with some sort of vitamin powder. I felt shameful tears streak my face as my fellow backpackers watched me drink and rest. Everyone else looked a bit tired but otherwise energetic and ready to go. I brooded in humiliation as I realized the third day proved to be tougher than me. I hadn’t counted on showing helplessness so quickly. I hiked on with wounded pride, trying to consider the possible outcomes for the next few days. The next day my buddy Sarah became terribly sick. She was feeble, cold, and in so much pain. The entire group offered to carry her things. Even with the sick feeling in my stomach and the aches in my muscles, I still offered to carry some of her possessions. With that turn of events I realized I had the courage to step up in order to help a friend. I kicked away the negative clouds to lend a hand to someone in more need than myself. The will to carry on surpassed the feeling of defeat. From that moment on, I truly understood what integrity felt like. Helping someone even when you’re the one in need never really stuck in my mind before as a value. An experience like this opens your eyes and allows you to take on other values, such as determination.

What does determination even mean? I learned the definition by repeating 4 words continuously... “24 hours by myself.” The time for the 24 hour solo crept closer with every second. The very thought sent my heart into a frenzy and my lungs into hyperventilation. Although the instructors had given us detailed instructions for that day and assured our safety, fear somehow managed to stay lodged deep in my



veins. After arriving at my “spot” I opened my backpack and set up my camp according to how the group would normally set up camp. “Gearage, bedroom, bathroom, check, check, check.” I went through everything on my mental list, one by one. All of a sudden misfortune appeared in the form of rain. I re-packed everything quickly as the sprinkles grew to heavier drops. As soon as everything settled safely in my pack, the rain decided to bid me farewell. I hesitated to set up camp again but with a crushed spirit, I managed to get everything unpacked once again. As I lay on my sleeping bag I heard noises come from the darkness all around me. My heartbeat accelerated as I attempted to convince myself to pay them no heed. I shuddered uncontrollably throughout the whole night. After a few hours of hearing noises in the night I was greeted by warm rays of sunlight. I sat up and realized I lasted the whole night, an accomplishment I achieved purely because determination willed me to pull through. At any given time I could have told the instructors “I want out! I quit! I’m done!” I didn’t quite understand why I had been so determined to persevere in my solo since fear had practically taken over my mind. Somehow

I discovered a way to see through fear and find the strength to go on, as if I cultivated compassion for myself. I picked up compassion from my second family.

I encountered compassion through one of my worst fears. “We’ll all share what we wrote down.” Every muscle in my body tightened as the words Alyssa, one of the instructors, had just spoken circled my head. Speaking my thoughts out loud? The idea made little sense to me. Nothing could possibly change my perspective. That is, until I heard the things everyone else had to say. I noticed many of my fellow group members shared feelings I caged in the depths of my mind. The first time I shared a personal story with the group I felt relieved when I finished reading. After a few minutes of consideration, I accepted that fact that I felt relaxed after sharing my feelings with others. I came to an agreement with myself to reveal my opinions regularly. Over time, I developed a sense of compassion for others. For every story they shared I could imagine myself in their situation and make an effort to comprehend their emotions. Even when their situation seems like an experience I couldn’t possibly conceive, somehow I manage to consider their feelings and their past. Although I had always been fairly supportive of my peers, I never quite felt benevolence so profoundly before. Contrary to my expectations, I embraced my newfound compassion. With this being said I finally grasped that my summer was coming to an end.

Before I experienced ARC, I assumed my summer would be filled with amusement, sunburns, new friends, and summer assignments. Not once did I think about the opportunities and experiences I would endure. Lucky for me, ARC proved me wrong. Throughout the whole summer I submitted myself to both physical and emotional challenges. My past experiences paved the road to better character and stronger confidence. With the help of ARC’s core values, my body grew stronger and my mind more profound. With integrity, I managed to gain the confidence I needed in order to help out anyone who required my assistance. Through determination, I built physical and emotional strength. Using compassion, I opened my heart and mind toward expressing feelings. Pushing me past my limits seemed to be the goal of every instructor. I put in effort as much as I could yet room for improvement constantly surrounded me. This course encouraged me to be the very best I could and go beyond what I felt comfortable with. Every aspect of me could use improvement, but at the same time I was good enough just the way I was. ARC wasn’t here to change me. It simply helped me improve on whatever I felt I needed to improve. Thanks to ARC, I’m proud to say I endured the best summer experience I could ever imagine. My only regret is not realizing this from the start.

Gray Fox

Walking wherever I want
Moving around
Not letting people see me
I'm a gray, bashful fox

I wasn't the best guy at making friends
Just like a gray fox who encounters humans and flees
I don't like people touching me
Like scary violent short-tempered gangsters
When they get close to me
I get scared and run
Because I think they have a weapon
The weapon scares me like the possibility of falling off a cliff

Afraid of humans
I hate being photographed
The light of the flash burns my eyes like the sun's rays
I know the world's there;
But I can't see it until my vision returns

I got my independence by showing respect
As a boy I was always alone
Proving that I'm trustworthy on the streets
Letting my parents now that I can take care of myself
Leaving my pack to find food in a camp site
Like smart fox that always finds food and gets away with it

I'm always dodging danger
Like people, cars and predators
Now I almost never travel alone
My pack is very unique
We complete each other
Five will always protect me

I leave the foothills to find a field with flat places
to play with my brother
Showing discipline on a field
Leading on the court
I'm an athletic gray fox, avoiding injury

Now that I have all this knowledge
I will run around the woods
Teaching my family about nature
Talking about it at my school
Telling my friends
Using all of my knowledge for my future and job
I'm no longer a bashful, gray fox
Now I am a strong, outgoing individual
Ready to go live my fun and athletic life the way I want it to be



My New Life

My life has changed since I've been here at ARC. The 40-day course has led me to make good choices in life. The people in ARC care about me and about my education. I have never done anything like what ARC has challenged me to do. This program has given me a lot to think about and made me go through some of the hardest things. The hardest things I did was carry a big pack for hiking, pull my physical weight across some ropes during rock climbing, and write a poem. The ARC course is pretty hard because you have to commit to facing a lot of challenges. Facing those challenges actually makes you a better person. ARC is also a fun educational course that a lot of people would enjoy.

While backpacking you have to carry your own weight so that your teammates don't have to carry more than their share. I show service by helping out the group if they need help with anything. If my teammates backpack was too heavy I would take some of the weight and put it in my backpack. If I see trash on the ground while backpacking I would pick it up and take it to base camp so I can recycle the trash there.

Before coming to ARC I really didn't care much about recycling. After what ARC has taught me about recycling I'm going to help clean up my town. I don't want people to pass by Dos Palos and say it's a crappy town so I will try and clean up litter there. Recycling is good for the environment because trash gets burned and thrown into a landfill that pollutes the air. I will use integrity in my community when I pick up trash.

Cleaning the bathrooms or kitchen without being asked is an example of integrity. Integrity is one of the core values in the program. I didn't even know what that word meant until now.

Rock climbing took courage because you have to be willing to climb high off the ground and face your fear of heights. In football, my fear is getting hit so hard I get concussion. Thanks to rock climbing, I've learned how to face my fears and use my physical strength. The lessons I learned from ARC will help me at home because I will try my hardest during all of football practice, even when I am tired. After doing the ropes course I feel tougher.

The solo backpacking trip taught me a lot of things. When I was alone and if I ate all my food right away I would have starved for the next 24 hours. It showed me that I can survive on my own for at least 24 hours. I had a lot of time to write and a lot of time to think. It was the first time I was completely alone for 24 hours. After the 24 hours I felt very relaxed. My values did change this summer because I really didn't know I had any values before coming to ARC. ARC has made me express them by acting with integrity. During the solo I also had to write a three page essay.

Writing was always a problem for me because I was never a good writer and I had trouble making sense with my writing. In the ARC program the teachers challenged me to keep trying to improve my writing. Until this program, I was never forced to write much in school and now that I have been writing for several weeks I have noticed that I'm a good writer. My teachers at ARC encouraged me to write a good poem by feeling my emotions and expressing them on paper.

Compassion is when you're kind and caring to everyone in the group. I would show compassion, but not to everyone before I got introduced to ARC. ARC taught me more about expressing compassion in my life, to my friends, and mostly to my parents. Without my parents I wouldn't have known about compassion. After I graduate from ARC I'm going to be more compassionate to everyone. I will use compassion by being nice to everyone in my community. I'm really glad ARC introduced us to the four core values. These values will stay with me for the rest of my life. Now I will get along with my coach and help out my team more. I will also be more understanding of other people.

If some day I start to act out I'll call Charles, my interviewee, or talk to Sarah, the ARC director, on the phone or computer. ARC is something I can look back on and

say "ARC has really changed my life and a little bit of my personality." It changed my personality because I used to be mean sometimes and not care about people. I had a short temper but now I have learned how to control it.

What I value the most is getting to know the other ARC students, creating friendships, seeing the act of kindness, and learning how to trust other people. Hiking



with those giant backpacks, weighing so much that it hurts my back, made it so I didn't enjoy that part as much. The four core values that I learned in ARC helped me during backpacking. I will make sure that I will continue pushing myself in the upcoming months and years by remembering the 4 core values. I will use service, integrity, determination and compassion in my community. I will make sure that I won't go back to the old me because ARC is a lifelong lesson to me. I've done so many new things at ARC that I don't remember the old me actually.

ARC has really changed me. I'm nicer now, I don't have a short temper and I care more about people. ARC has given me a lot of support to help me in life. This summer when I go back home I don't know if I'm going to stay the same or am I going to go back to the way I was. Also I will apply the four core values to my everyday life. After ARC, I'm going to do everything I can to clean up my town, and help people in need. I will help even if I'm not asked, and will not get tired of my community, even if they always need my help.

Bighorn Sheep

I'm am a very curious Bighorn sheep
And like to experience new things,
Bighorn sheep wanders the hot,
Dry, wet, rocky, and steep hills,
Surviving in the wilderness
Can be very hard.
My parents have worked hard,
Traveling thousands of miles
To give me and my brother shelter and food
I'm always there to help them
A Bighorn sheep is what I am

When my parents are out,
I had to look out for my little brother,
The sky is dangerous and very harmful
Don't really know when it's



Going to be raining, cloudy, sunny, or thundering
A Bighorn Sheep is what I am

Some Bighorn sheep are very protective,
Protecting themselves from predators,
And protecting everyone in the Herd
As a Bighorn sheep I choose very wisely,

To work in the fields and save money
To help out in the family

Bighorns are powerful
At running up steep hills,
I never give up and
I help them never give up also,
The herd is always there for me,
Encouraging me to reach higher,
To go beyond their expectations,
A Bighorn sheep is what I am

I'm intelligent and like to work hard,
Able to do things that I never have done before,
My dad encourage me to hunt for food
When I don't even know that if I can do it

With their hard work they have done
Choosing a safe area for the Herd to eat,
And not be eaten;
also just keep moving forward,
A Bighorn sheep is what I am

To help the Herd patiently
And keep them together,
The pressure that I feel is
To do good in school,
And finish the chores at home
My lungs don't stop me
From going to a higher altitude.
That I have strength to protect me,
But also my family is very important for me.
I have to keep them alive
Away from all the trouble.

My herd is from different mountains
And here the culture is different
Tigers or lions bullying and name-calling
I keep going and keep climbing

A better future is to start college in California
Find a good job
Support the family
Take the herd to the highest altitude
Have fresh air and a good view
I am positive, brave and very strong
A Bighorn sheep is what I am

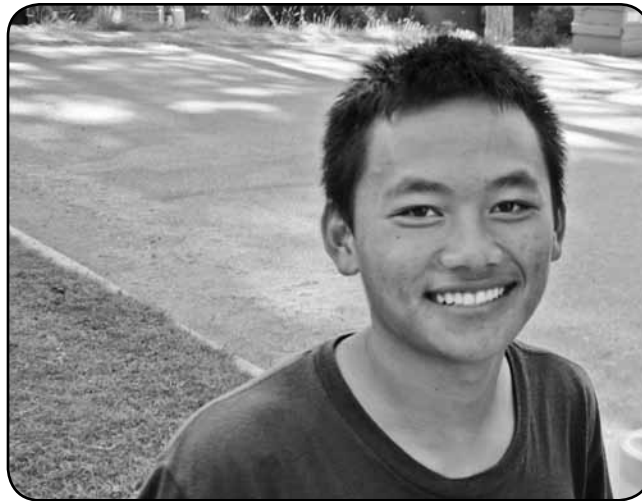
The 40-day Challenge

Dang! Say what....40 days? I have never been away from home this long before and it was very challenging to leave my family and love ones behind for the summer. When I came here I really liked what ARC was doing and it got me interested. ARC has helped me to not be lazy at home and to do more chores. When I'm at home I have no responsibility to take care of myself but ARC made me more responsible. My writing overall did improve a lot by writing more and thinking more details in the ARC program. This summer I changed my values a lot by pushing myself, appreciating my family, improving my English, and becoming a good leader.

This summer the ARC program pushed me hard and I have gotten way farther than the old me. At home I did push myself, but not as hard as when I'm up here in the forest. When I'm here I have to try my best in the outdoors and in the classroom, because I need to learn how to live outdoors and to get good grades in class so I will have a better future. This summer I pushed myself to get in shape and got healthy for my family. I don't want to be the old me anymore - lazy at home and not caring at all about anyone, only me. ARC has made me want to keep helping my family when I go home. My new schedule is to wake up early and help my Dad cook for the family when they wake up. The new me will go back home and spend less time on the computer and watching TV. I'll try to read more and interact more with my younger siblings. I learned to treat others the same way I want to be treated. The new me will be more likeable in the future and will try to trust other people. ARC has taught me that doing good things to help others is important and that I should be more responsible, especially with my family.

I have learned to appreciate my family more by being away from home for so long and hearing other students' stories about their families. This change makes

me want to help my family more, be nicer at home or anywhere else, and be more responsible about my own stuff as I grow up to be an adult. Wherever my family members go it's my responsibility to make sure that they are going to a safe place. I enjoyed hiking and kayaking and learned how to do both, and when kayaking by yourself sometimes you have to be very careful and conscious. Wearing a life jacket will protect you from drowning in the lake or river. I can use my new responsibility when my family and I go kayaking and fishing, making sure they are safe. Hiking can be very dangerous at times because you might not know where you're going. Responsibility like that can be difficult sometimes but I will push myself to be safe.



Another place I have had to push myself is in English class, writing more than the old lazy me usually did. The ARC instructors gave me an essay and poem to work on, and they really supported me by adding more details and making my writing better. My first transformation in English class was writing a poem because I had never written a poem like this one before. Writing an essay was also difficult even though I have been writing essays my whole life. This essay was very hard because it's not just about some topic... it's about me. But I did it and the experience will help me to know what to write next time. We also had to answer a question in English class about what

risks we are taking for the future. That was the first time I had to answer a question about my future and it was very hard. These challenges will make me write more in the future, by thinking more about ideas or details for my topic.

Leading in the ARC program can be very difficult when people or your group won't listen to you at all. The feedback I got back from those people was to not play or horse around with other people and to keep reminding myself that I'm the leader of the day and to keep everybody on time. I felt proud when I was able to lead my team to the top of the mountain near Ten Lakes Pass. I was challenged to speak more loudly so that I could communicate with the group. As a leader I would check on the group to see if they were doing well. I learned that a good leader motivates, encourages, helps, and has respect for the group. I hope in the future I can be a better leader for my family and friends.

This summer I learned a new lifestyle, how to be more responsible for myself, helpful to the group, to recycle because it cleans the earth, and how to be efficient in writing. This experience will help me to make a difference in my future, because it helps me to be more independent as I grow up. My goal is to be a good fisherman and a role model for others. I wanted to be a fisherman my whole life. These ARC experiences help me to appreciate nature and take care of it by cleaning trash that is in the water so it won't be polluted, and fish won't have disease. Over here in ARC the instructors mostly teach me everything I want to learn this summer. My friends from ARC have really helped me not get homesick and have fun this summer. I don't think I could have done it without their support. ARC has made a big difference in my life by helping me become a better person.

yessenia holguin

Changing Cloud

I'm a cloud that moves gently and slowly
Hurtful arguments I hate
Peaceful words I love

Problems with my family transform me
From a fluffy white cloud
Sweet, pretty and loving
To a thunder storm
Dark, nasty and crying

Getting hurt over and over
Hot summer days in the afternoon
My brother's voice on the phone
Words destroy me like harsh winds
And leave me depressed, lost in a dark fog
Saving feelings inside, not letting them out
Then throwing hail and lightning bolts,
Not caring what people think

Being kind to all races
Without prejudice
Loving all religions
Just like a cloud that provides shade without discrimination

I'm a cloud that is looked up to
For her intelligence and ambition
Wanting to get a degree in criminal justice
Family, friends and people admire me for
My bravery, strength and courage

A degree is what I want to achieve
I'm the cloud that needs help with her dreams
People see what they want to see in the forms
I make and shapes I take
My shape is one of success

Attaining a life of beauty with happiness
A secure future is my dream
With a job that challenges me to brighten the sky

Drifting to the tallest peak
Refusing to evaporate even if it's stormy
Enjoying new adventures even if they are hard
I am a cloud who brightens the sky



Out With the Old, In With the New

Have you ever been alone for 24 hours in the forest? Without any type of electronics? I have, with only a journal, a sleeping bag, a little snack and the clothes on my back. Have you ever been away from everything and everyone you love, spending the next 40 days with 11 teenagers 24/7? I have, and 16 days out of the 40 I was in the backcountry with them. The rest of the time we were going to a school in Wawona. Every day, nonstop I had class, had to write in a journal and learn science. To top it all off I had to wake up at 6:15 a.m. everyday. Before joining this program, when I got a letter telling me about all this and kayaking, white water rafting, rock climbing, repelling too, I told myself "let's give it a try." Little did I know that ARC was going to give me the opportunity to appreciate my family, discover how brave I could be and learn many new things.

I always knew that my family was really valuable for me but I discovered just how much I need and love them at ARC. Before this program, I always took them for granted because I'm the only girl and I have gotten what I want, when I want ever since I was born. My parents are really loving and if I ask them for something I get my way with it, even if I don't need it. I never cared what my parents told me; I just did whatever I wanted to do even if I knew that it was wrong. After this 40 day course, I learned that you shouldn't take anyone for granted because what are you going to do when they are not there next to you? I miss my parents, I miss the food at my house, I miss yelling at my brother, I miss everything. All I could say is that I love them with all my heart. When I go back home I'm going to remember how I felt while I was apart from them and I'm going to tell my mom, dad and little brother that I love them all the time. I'm going to listen to what they say even if I get mad. I don't know what I would do if they were not there next to me to push me to do the best in life.

One value that grew inside of me was bravery. I knew I was brave but I didn't know how much. ARC has made me realize that I could always do whatever I put my mind to. ARC and everyone here has taught me that fear shouldn't come in between you and what you want. I would have never ever thought of pushing myself to repel, do ropes course, rock climb, or just even to hike. One other thing that I would never have done by myself is train to run five miles by running everyday in the morning. I value my bravery more than ever and I know that others do too because after the ropes course one of the professionals that was there went up to me, shook my hand and said smiling, "I admire you

would make her proud? I was still afraid but I kept going on and finished the ropes course with happiness and a big smile in my face.

I also feel that I grew intellectually in the ARC program. I learned a lot about environmental protection, like not leaving trash in the backcountry because animals can eat it, get sick or get habituated to human food and be unable to fend for themselves. How to be a strong leader was a focus here at ARC; I learned how get the whole group together to do our jobs on time. How to go backpacking in the back country was a skill I learned as well; I learned how to set up a shelter, how to look at a map to

know where you going, and how to arrange my backpack to make everything fit. I can't imagine that I could learn so many skills in a couple of days. All I had to do was focus and put my mind to it. In addition, my writing improved tremendously. I would have never thought that I could write a poem. It was tough for me to sit down and think about what words to use to have it all make sense. The good part was that I wrote my poem to the best of my ability and I love it.



for your bravery. I've never seen someone so afraid who kept going and still did the trapeze. You are a brave young lady." When I started to climb up to do the ropes course I felt like throwing up. I thought that I wasn't going to be able to do it. I started to panic and told myself that I wasn't able to do it. When I heard everyone cheering me on I had this weird feeling inside. I wanted to keep going and to not let them down. I kept going and I finished the first part, five elements 30 feet from the ground. After the first part my heart beat started to accelerate. I didn't know what to do. I had mixed emotions. Then I asked myself what would my mom want me to do. What

This summer was the best summer ever. I learned new things while I was having fun, with people that became like my family. I also had the opportunity to appreciate my real family, and know how brave I am. I would have never thought that I could have so much fun with my new family for just 40 days. I wouldn't trade this summer for anything. When I return back home I'm going to focus more on school, pay attention to my teachers and parents, and do my best to apply everything that I learned at ARC to my everyday life. I appreciate ARC for giving me the opportunity to get away from some things that I thought were important, and end up realizing that they were not.

community interviews

On June 30th, halfway through our summer course, eleven community members volunteered their time to be mentors for our students. These are excerpts from the narrative biographies students wrote about their partners.

The Best Coach

Today I woke up very nervous, wondering what the person I was going to interview would be like. When we got to the Wawona Hotel I saw a magical place that reminded me of the 18th century, its architecture and surroundings were breathtaking. We got in a circle and the ARC students started to talk about what our day would be like. The adults started to arrive around 10:00 a.m. and joined us. After playing a game to break the ice I was told the name of my interviewee. "Is he going to like me? What if he thinks my questions are stupid? What if I don't know what to say after he asks me something?" These were some of the worries I had about my day.



Mickey Fearn is the name of the man I had the honor to interview. He had a very serious and intelligent look that intimidated me, but he also had love in his eyes. At first I thought "Oh my God! This man must be really stern and critical". I told him I was nervous and he gave me more confidence when he said, "There's no difference between you and me." After a while I realized that he's an awesome person and a good model for me.

- Ana Hernandez



Flying Without Wings

I interviewed Renee, a manager of her own business. When I looked at her, I felt like there was something in common between us. I didn't know what. I just know that she was the same in age as my mom. She was really friendly and her voice was soft like my mother's voice.

Renee's parents emphasized the value of education. She learned a lot of things from them. From them she learned "to work hard, make my own life, create my own future." She and her mother both loved to read books. When she felt bored and didn't know what to do, her mother always said, "Go read a book." Even now, she still reads when she has time.

- Bao Huynh

All You Need is to Be Positive

One of his challenges in life was when he went to college. He had a hard time in college because he was very lost and he didn't know what to study. He then got inspired about nature and he decided to study Resources Management and Environmental Planning. The job is to manage places like Yosemite for the future generations. Then another challenge in his life was when he got Melanoma Cancer. He survived from cancer and he asserts that "If you focus on being positive you live longer." Now thanks to his positive and encouraging emotions he is a healthy man. A risk that he had to take in his life was when he got his first job in Alaska. He had to be away from home and work in a remote place. Although he had many happy adventures he also missed his family.

- Benjamin Meza-Lemus





Jasmine Marquez

Jasmine comes from Lake Tahoe a place with similar geography and landscape to Yosemite. Jasmine says that her parents play a huge role in her life and they are the most influential people to her. She looks up to them because when her parents first came from Guadalajara, Mexico, her parents started from scratch, but now they own their own restaurant. It is truly amazing that their restaurant has survived the economic challenges the last couple of years. She loves her parents and her family including two little brothers and a little sister, making her the oldest.

Like many of the students at Interview Days she attends UC Merced, where she currently has major in Biology and a minor in Spanish. She studies science because she is amazed to know how organisms work; her religious beliefs did not change her love. After she finishes college she doesn't know if she wants to become a doctor or get her masters in Biology and work for ARC.

- Brenda Cardoza

One in a Million

Marek told me that he has worked for the Fresno Bee as a reporter since 1998. He likes to write about subjects related to the outdoors, especially recreation. He lists activities in the newspaper that people might enjoy because he loves nature, and wants to share that with others. He also writes a weekly sports column for the Sunday edition and covers the Grizzlies, a minor-league baseball team, during the summer. His job requires him to write about both adventures and tragedies. Sitting in an office and answering phone calls is annoying to him. Marek likes the fact that anything he writes goes directly into the following day's paper; everything is immediate. He also told me that his number one fear is getting laid off. Since the newspaper business is hard to keep alive due to the Internet, television, and laziness, Marek stated that, "I'm the last of the Mohicans... What I mean is that I feel as if I'm the last one defending the fort." I have always felt that I'm also the last of my kind.

- Charly Mijares



Lessons from Moving Away

Lindsey loves to work with young people because of their energies. She claimed that her favorite part of her job is: "Working with volunteers and especially young volunteers, I love it!" Later she also admitted about her least favorite part of her job: "It will be data entry and entering number in computer". At that time, I stopped and think what I want to be in my future. I hoped no matter what I do in the future, I have to love my job and be good at it, just like Lindsey and her job. I wondered what a person who has to work with people and moving around like her does in her free time and what are her hobbies. Lindsey shared to me that she loves to hike and explore new places, which she is doing, and sometime she feels like she is getting pay to go on vacation. Besides that, Lindsey also likes running, yoga, dinner with her friends, and fishing.

explore new places, which she is doing, and sometime she feels like she is getting pay to go on vacation. Besides that, Lindsey also likes running, yoga, dinner with her friends, and fishing.

- Huy Dao



Pursuit of Passion

I was sitting on the lawn, next to the big Ponderosa tree. A lot of lichen fell on the ground around me. I felt like I was waiting under the green ocean and trying to find something to hide my heartbeat. People walked by and broke my daydream. All the adults were coming and interview was going to begin. I held my breath and came over to sit with her. She introduced herself as Catherine Connolly; she said she is a fund raising consultant. She dressed casually and smiled at me all the time. Her hair turned into white on top of her head. Maybe that is because she works very hard on her job, I thought. She shared her life experiences with me nicely and all my stress went away.

“My goal is to put my passion into my everyday life,” Catherine said confidently during the interview. She enjoys painting, drawing and other different types of art. Getting into college was one of the biggest challenges for her. She went to University Of Pacific and majored in art. However, it was not easy for her because she needed to work to pay for college. Even though that was very difficult, she didn’t give up and still pursued her passion.

- JiaJia Yu

Small Town Girl, City Boy

I knew from the start that George McDonald and I led two very different lives. Actually, I thought we wouldn’t have anything in common. After all, how could a city boy and small town girl be anything alike? Although I was very skeptical, it didn’t take long for me to realize that we have a lot in common when it comes to our views on life and goals. George believes in being true to oneself, always dreaming big, and being ambitious. “Go out and get what’s yours. Jump in the ocean and swim to it. Don’t stop, just go get it,” he encouraged me enthusiastically; “Don’t put boundaries on what you can do.” His own ambition is very inspiring. He isn’t afraid to fall, to take chances or be himself. His general attitude on life is ambitious and optimistic. His ability to step up courageously is both awe-inspiring and contagious. George McDonald truly knows what it means to believe.

- Marcela Avina



Our Lives

Charles inspired me to do well in school and not to act out just because someone in my family gets hurt, He encouraged me to help who ever if is hurt. Charles also told me to believe in myself and never give up on my dreams. My dream is to finish high school with good grades so I can go to UTI (University Technical Institute). I want to go there because I’m interested in diesel mechanics. When I was a little boy my dad would take me with him to work to help him with his diesel truck. I felt very excited to be around those big trucks. I’m hoping this job will make me feel good and give me a good life. If it wasn’t for ARC I wouldn’t be able to pursue

my dream, and because of ARC I was able to relate my life with a stranger that I never knew. I found out that he had a similar life to mine.

- Oscar Avina

Meeting New People

The biggest challenge for Kathy has been moving away from home to go to college. “I never thought of moving away from my friends and family,” she said. When she was at school and maturing, she learned a lot of new things and had new experiences. Kathy overcame this challenge by persevering and never giving up. Kathy learned that family can be whoever is close or around you.

After interviewing Kathy Murphy I feel great, no more shyness, more talkative, and comfortable being around her. Kathy is a very nice person who is very kind, calm, and respectful. Her advice for me is to not give up on my life, always do the right thing, never stop learning, have good core friends, and be helpful to others.

- Xiong Vue



Preparing for the Future

“Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of good.” That’s what Kristine Zeigler lives by. It’s fine to not be perfect all the time, trying your best is enough. That’s the advice that I got from Kristine in the ARC interview.

Kristine came from a humble beginning and always loved school. She grew up in a little town called Bishop with one younger sister. Her parents didn’t attend college and had little money, but they always wanted the best for her and her sister. Her mom stayed home, and her dad worked in construction. Kristine and her sister loved school, even though they moved and changed schools often. Their favorite subjects were reading and math. Kristine didn’t have a stable school until she got to El Capitan High School in San Diego. Her parents stopped moving, and she went to that school all four years consecutively. El Capitan had the biggest agriculture program “and rodeo too,” she exclaimed.

- Yessenia Holguin



Dear Parents,

Thank you for letting us come to the forty day course. We really appreciate you. Our biggest challenge has been staying away from you guys and the things you have provided for us in life. Throughout the forty days we have learned to appreciate you more. Now we realized that all your hard work is to give us the chance to have a better life. We also want to thank you for taking care of us. We appreciate your support and confidence in us. Thank you for showing us that you care for us by sending us letters. There are not enough words to describe your love for us. Every time we are facing a challenge we think about what you have taught us and that give us the strength to get through the challenges we have faced. Thank you for being our wonderful parents.

Para nuestros queridos padres:

Gracias por darnos la oportunidad de asistir a los cuarenta días. Los apreciamos mucho. Nuestro reto más grande ha sido estar lejos de ustedes y las cosas que nos han provenido. Durante los cuarenta días hemos aprendido a apreciarlos más. Nos dimos cuenta de que todo el esfuerzo que ustedes hacen para que nosotros podamos tener una mejor vida. También queremos agradecerles el cuidado que nos han dado. Apreciamos el apoyo y confianza que tienen en nosotros. Gracias por demostrarnos que les importamos por medio de las cartas que hemos recibido. No hay palabras suficientes para describir el cariño que nos tienen. Cada vez que enfrentamos un reto, pensamos en todo lo que ustedes nos han enseñado y eso nos da la fuerza para superarlos. Gracias por ser unos padres extraordinarios, los amamos.

Ba mẹ thân mến,

Chúng con cảm ơn ba mẹ vì đã để chúng con tham gia chương trình 40 ngày này. Chúng con rất biết ơn ba mẹ. Thử thách lớn nhất mà chúng con phải trải qua là xa gia đình một thời gian dài và tất cả những gì ba mẹ đã trao cho chúng con trong cuộc sống. Ba mẹ đã làm việc vất vả để nuôi nấng chúng con nên người. Cảm ơn ba mẹ vì đã động viên chúng con. Nhận được thư của ba mẹ, chúng con cảm thấy vui lắm. Mỗi khi chúng con đối mặt với khó khăn, chúng con nhớ lại những gì ba mẹ đã dạy và những điều đó đã giúp chúng con vượt qua thử thách. Chúng con cảm thấy hạnh phúc vì có ba mẹ trong cuộc sống. Chúng con yêu ba mẹ rất nhiều.

亲爱的父母：

感谢你们给我们这个机会来参加这个40天的课程。我们最大的挑战是离开你们和你们给我珍贵的教导。在这个40天的课程中，我们学会了如何去感谢你。现在我们体会到，你辛勤地工作就是想给我们一个美好的未来。同时，我们想感谢你们对我无微不至的照顾，你们对我们无限的支持和信心。感谢你们寄信到这里，用行动来表示你们对我的爱。我们找不到更多的话语来形容你对我们的爱。每一次当我们面对挑战时，我们都会想到你教导我的东西，所以到最后我们都会成功。最后，感谢你们成为我们的好榜样，好父母。



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