



August 1, 2024

Dear Friends of Our Kids at Heart,

Words fail me when I attempt to capture the pride and awe, I experience watching children grow beyond their wildest dreams, discovering HOPE. The children you help support to attend Catholic schools are amazing. Why do I say that?

1. They are generally from the most disadvantaged families in our Diocese, from poor immigrant families.
2. Their families almost never knew about Catholic schools, because these schools are generally in the cities, for more well-to-do families, not the lowest families on the totem pole.
3. Their parents are generally laborers. Dads work in construction; Moms clean houses or work in menial jobs, restaurant workers, etc. Without Catholic schools, these children faced great difficulty advancing academically. They would likely be “trapped” in their neighborhood environments.

David's story:

“ There are many things that have changed once I transitioned to the Catholic school systems ever since elementary school at CSSM. I was essentially failing at everything, and I kept moving on to the following grade without having learned the material. I had quite a lot of catching up to do when I transitioned into my new school. I was beyond blessed to having one of the most amazing people I have ever met as a teacher for two years in a row. I went from being completely clueless in all my classes to even excelling in some. The support from Our Kids At Heart program and my beloved family I was able to keep improving and learning to the best of my abilities thanks to the emphasis on education throughout my upbringing. Such an opportunity like this one could not and should not be wasted. Now having graduated from SJDHS I take pride in having taken full advantage of this second chance and I am very grateful to all the people who helped make my journey possible. I likely would have not been admitted into UT Austin without them. I also would like to share that my success has inspired my Mom to start educational classes in English and in Technology. Thank you for everything you have done for myself and my family!” ”

-David





Kristian's Story:

“ Hey there, my name is Kristian Rosales, and I am a Catholic scholar with Mexican origins. While I was born in Texas, I grew up in Mexico, learning from a local public institution. Nevertheless, it was my parents' decision to move me early in my life to a Catholic, private learning institution so that I could grow up nurtured by the values that a religious education brings. This became a reality for the majority of my childhood, until we decided to move to the United States where, despite economic hardships, my parents did somehow keep me and my siblings in Catholic schools. The day I graduated middle school, I had a grand total of 3 choices for a high school education and San Juan Diego not only resonated with my Mexican origins, but also the religious education I have grown so fond of. My time at SJD was a blast; getting to make new friends, meet knowledgeable teachers, and have fun at the various events the school organizes is unforgettable. To my friends, thank you for being with me through the ups & downs while helping me, the new kid from Mexico, fit in. To my teachers, thank you for being so unique and capable of teaching material in a fun and engaging manner. I would like to specifically thank Mr. Tarin for literally being the scientist and friend I always sought, which also inspired me to follow his very own career. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for being the best supporters an odd and curious young man such as myself could have ever asked for. To me SJD is more than just a diploma, it is the memories I made during my time in it: the field trips, the epic fails, the laughs, the sharing of culture, the translations to Anglo Saxon, and of course the growth as a person I experienced while at SJD. None of this would have been possible without Our Kids at Heart. Because of your assistance I have graduated from SJD, an experience unable to be replicated anywhere else, and I have chosen to attend Texas State University. I want to pursue a Biology degree, with hopefully an opportunity to endorse my other interests which are ancient languages and game development. Yet, do not let my university of choice deceive you, because it is my highest priority to maintain my Catholic religion and values through my years at Texas State. In and out of the classroom, I have felt God's presence and I'll be damned to believe I am to throw away all the time, money, and effort placed towards my development. It is my choice to continue to grow to be the Catholic, virtuous man I wish to be, and I will make use of the opportunities placed before me, living to the fullest while learning forevermore.”

-Kristian

God Bless,

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Father Mark Hamlet



ourkidsatheart.com