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## Alum Rock Counseling Center

*"Creating responsible adults from East San José's highest risk youth."*

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This month there will be two editions of the ARCC monthly newsletter. Next week, with the regular edition, we return to a familiar format and share the news of what is happening here at the agency. Today, though, we wanted to pause to pay tribute to an incredible member of our ARCC Mentoring & Support Program family.

## Alex-Jacob Jaramillo

### Remembering Alex

The Ocala Middle School Mentoring & Support Program would like to honor, and to remember, one of our mentors who we lost last month. Alex-Jacob Jaramillo was killed on January 30th, 2014 on his way home from work by a drunk driver. Alex was 19 years old.

Alex was a gift to our program and made everyone's life better by simply being in it. While I am proud to say I recruited him, Alex really took it upon himself to sign up for our program. I remember Kassandra, one of his friends and fellow mentor, mentioned that a couple of her friends were interested in mentoring; one week later they were both waiting for me in our reception area.

Now, to shed light on how amazing Alex was, non-profits struggle recruiting male mentors. In our program only 20% of the mentors are male. I remember the day when our receptionist called me downstairs saying there were two young men interested in mentoring. Alex was so excited to become a mentor that when I told him that it usually takes



Alex with his mentee

a few weeks or months to complete all the security clearances he responded, "I did them all! I'm ready to be matched today!" Both Alex and his friend Scott had completed all of the necessary paperwork to be turned in that day.

Alex was an amazing mentor because he was always so kind and easy to talk to. He was a rarity in our community, that someone so young would recognize the importance of mentoring. I am deeply saddened he is no longer with us on Earth but I know he will live on in our hearts and especially in the heart of his mentee, who looked up to him and cared about him dearly. His mentee initially did not want to be matched and showed little interest in a mentor but was completely won over by Alex. Alex's spontaneous and fun spirit was incredible to be around-especially for a thirteen year old kid.

Alex loved to travel and see the world so his family is starting a scholarship in his name sending a student abroad every year. I am putting the link below and encouraging people to donate so Alex's life can still be improving the lives of others, a value he wholeheartedly believed in.

<http://www.gofundme.com/6mw5iw>

Thank you,  
Courtney Groszhans  
ARCC Volunteer Coordinator

## The Magic of Mentorship

*by Andrea Urton, ARCC Director of Operations*

Author James Baldwin once wrote, "One can give nothing whatsoever without giving oneself, that is to risk oneself." This statement is representative of those who work in any type of helping profession. I see it every day here at ARCC. Some folks that embody this idea for me are our individual and group mentors.

These people carve out space in their own lives after work, school, family, and personal issues to be present and supportive to our Ocala Middle School students. They coach, support, listen, spend time, and care deeply for the youth with whom they are matched. I have seen the smiles on faces younger and much older as a direct result of the relationship that is built between youth and mentor, and more often than not, it makes me shed a tear.

I would like to personally thank every mentor and every youth who have made themselves open and available for such a special relationship. I have seen firsthand the difference it can make in the life of a youth and also

experienced the fulfillment it can bring as a mentor. Thank you for "risking yourself" in an effort to give of yourself and make the world a better place. We are truly grateful for you!

Albert Einstein said, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." There is little doubt that Alex's approach to life and to helping others was the stuff of miracles!



There is no way to completely comprehend the sudden and senseless death of a young person. And grief is the natural, human response to Alex's death. The heart seeks a way to heal a broken heart. For those who knew Alex this will be a process. Even for some who never met him, this news may provoke past or anticipated grief. It is healthy; it is a tribute to share those feelings, to share fears and to remember. Find someone who will listen and celebrate, even in sadness, a life as well-lived as Alex's. The staff and mentors of ARCC are here to listen and share your memories.

Some are bound to die young  
By dying young a person stays young  
in people's memory.  
If he burns brightly before he dies,  
his brightness shines for all time  
Author Unknown



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