

Where Are They Now?

From Migrant Child to Future Teacher

by Lois Bailey

When Marco Vasquez started kindergarten at South Adams Elementary, his migrant family had recently settled in our community. As an ESL student, Marco qualified for our extended-day kindergarten program. He was a quiet, shy boy who worked very hard and wanted

to do well. He also had very supportive parents. His father was fluent in English, but mother was not. It was obvious that both parents loved him deeply and wanted what was best for him — especially a good education.

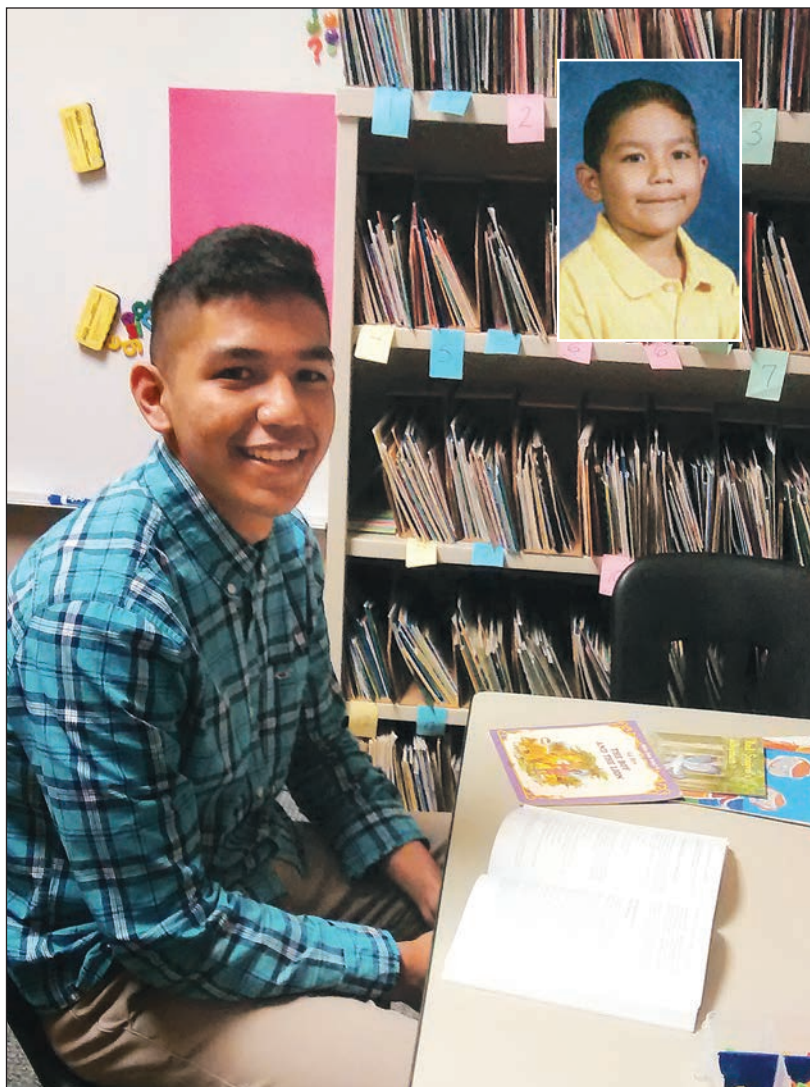
Marco did well in kindergarten, so his name was not on the list of teacher recommendations for fall

Reading Recovery testing. However, by the second round of testing, his teacher felt he needed Reading Recovery. Marco entered the program reading at Level 5 and when his lessons were discontinued 17 weeks later, he was reading at Level 20.

Mrs. Rohrer, his first-grade teacher, remembers Marco as a very polite, conscientious, and quiet first grader. She says, “With English as his second language, Reading Recovery was a wonderful help to Marco. It helped him take off in reading. Marco always was enthusiastic about whatever we were doing. I can still see his smile and remember his class color and number: Marco was Red 21.”

Middle school language arts teacher Gwen Habegger calls Marco a “model student.” She explains, “Marco always completed his assignments, whether it was writing an essay or reading a story. He enjoyed reading sports fiction books from the library, particularly about basketball and baseball. With a constant smile on his face, Marco was respectful of others and a hard worker. He is destined for success!”

From a quiet and shy first grader to a popular student athlete and role model for younger students, Marco continues to work hard and wants to help others.





As we have watched him progress through school, Marco is still a quiet young man who works hard and wants to do well, whatever he is doing. He has excelled in three sports. South Adams Starfires' High School coach Andy Brown said Marco was 'Most Improved' for the basketball team as a sophomore and was second team 'All Conference' in basketball his junior season.

"Marco is a hardworking individual, whom I was able to see grow as a leader," Brown said. "He leads by example and exemplifies a 'team first' attitude. Marco also cares deeply about people and has a passion for helping others."



Marco's achievements in academics extended to his extracurricular activities, where he excelled in three sports and won multiple honors. His soccer coach said he is "proud of the man he has become" and expects big things from Marco.

Soccer coach Luke McClung agrees. "Marco is one of the best young men I have met, both on the field and in the class. He has grown into a natural leader in whatever setting he has been placed. It has been truly great to watch Marco grow as a young man, and I'm proud of the man he has become."

He adds, "Marco deserves every good thing that comes his way and I wish him luck moving forward in life. I expect big things from him!"

Marco is a popular student, and he was elected to homecoming court. He has been a role model for younger students. Besides having a younger brother who idolizes him, he has interned in a third-grade classroom, one period each day, to further explore his interest in becoming a teacher.

Jamie Gerber, his supervising teacher, says, "Marco has been my intern for the 2014–2015 school year. He has proven to be a great asset to my classroom. He is very positive in his interactions with each of the students — even those who are difficult. The girls think he's cute and the boys look up to him as a role model!"

Marco spends most of his time in the classroom working with the students. "He reads one-on-one with students, reads tests aloud when needed, and leads small-group math review sessions," Gerber added. I can always count on him to do whatever I ask and to do it well."

High School principal Trent Lehman calls Marco a "talented, humble, kind, and solid young man." Lehman reflects, "There is an inner strength and confidence in him. He thinks of others."

Marco received two scholarships at the high school awards ceremony last spring, including one for students studying to be a teacher. He is now majoring in elementary education at Indiana-Purdue University in Fort Wayne. And we are all eagerly looking forward to the day when Marco is able to pass on to his own students what he has learned in Reading Recovery and beyond.

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