



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SUCCESS STORY: BOLD Mountain School

Student Profile: Antonio, 13 years old

Metrocenter YMCA

From: JoAnn Oram

Sent: Saturday, September 18, 2010 9:45 AM

To: Andrew Jay

Subject: Letter of Gratitude from a Grandmother.

Dear Andrew, his staff and supporters of BOLD,

I have been tardy in getting this letter to you, and for that I apologize. My grandson Antonio was one lucky fellow this past summer when he was accepted for scholarship to attend the Pacific Crest Trail camping and photography program.

He, his mother, and we his grandparents, were so very pleased for this adventure. While we were talking about how to get "his gear" my daughter made contact requesting a copy of the list of items. When she was told as he was on scholarship which included "everything" being provided for, she broke down in tears.

Jessaca is a single mom with two beautiful children. She works hard but often comes up short and has very little for extra's. Antonio had spent most of the summer, being big brother at home days to his 9 yr old sister.. He does not have a relationship with his father and I have often worried that he is without a younger role model for what a man might be. His grandfather (my husband) is a good man, forced into medical retirement and not able to model all that a 13 year old boy may use as a yardstick for developing the tools necessary to grow up through the teen years and into successful manhood.

This brings me to the purpose and reason I am so very grateful for the six days he spent this summer camping, hiking, taking photo's and being able to witness active young dedicated men and other boys who seemingly were able to share their hopes, overcome some fears and forge bonds. **The boy that came off that bus that Sat. had a different look, a different "essence". Something felt more at peace, more confident more able to allow his inner self to shine.** Believe me I know this kid, his heart, he is, I say "my heart-light". We have always had a very close connection and so when I say his eyes had a brighter glint, his smile deeper, his excitement in the car trying to put into words all that he felt about his week long experience, the day and the night.

I truly know of what I speak.

As is common at his age being reticent is more the norm than breaking oneself open like an egg being cracked, BUT, that is exactly what he did. He spoke of spending one night in the tent but after a night sleeping under the stars he slept outdoors, he spoke of never knowing anything could be so beautiful, (referring to some of the surrounding vista's). He spoke of feeling like giving up, being tired and then choosing to keep on going because it was going to be so worth it and



to keep going was far less difficult then giving in. Can you imagine this Nana heart?

This was a gift to Antonio, to his family and I think to the world he lives and will grow into. And this gift is because of all the work, effort, dedication and fervent believe in helping, supporting and building young men, boys, into leaders.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish to say thank you to Andrew, and every member of his team, every contributor, every donor. For taking this marvelous young man and giving him gifts that may never be able to be measured.

With a full Grandmothers heart. Thank You!

Sincerely
JoAnn Oram
Seattle, WA.