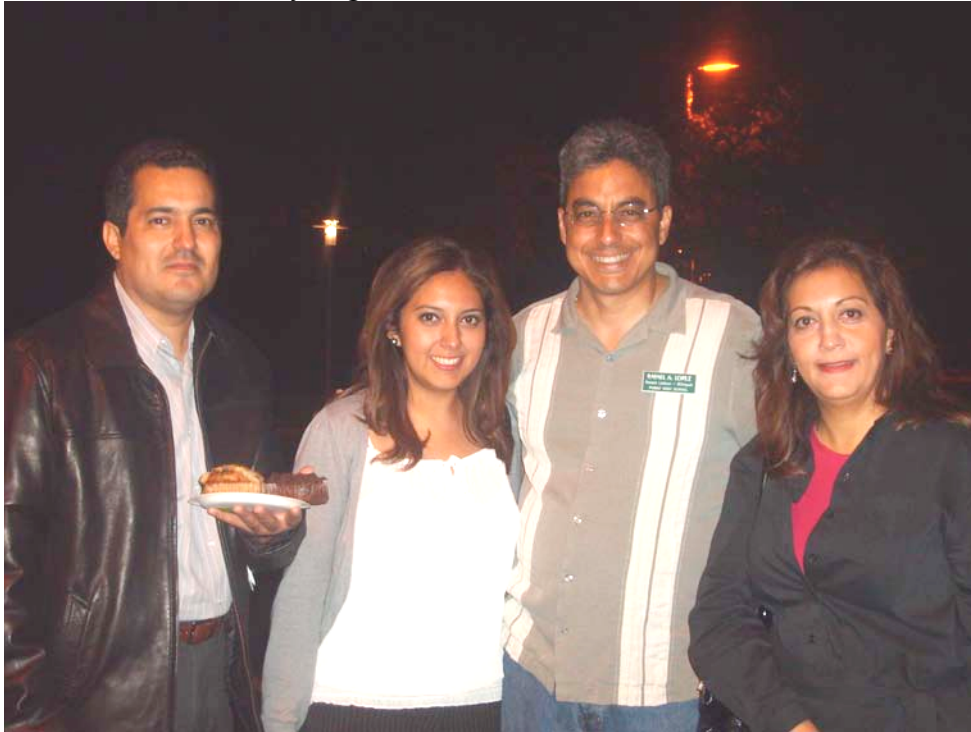


Ed Trust Awardee and Family Speak at Poway High School Conference

Araceli Saucedo received a GEAR UP Educational Trust Award, valued at \$2,000, at De Anza Junior High in 2004. Since then she has continued to achieve, graduating as the Valedictorian of Calexico High School in 2007 and is currently a sophomore at University of California, San Diego (UCSD) with a Structural Engineer major. She and her parents were invited by Rafael A. López, Parent Liaison-Bilingual, to speak about the university challenges and advantages at the November 2008 Poway High School Conference.



CAPTION: Mr. Peter Saucedo, Araceli Saucedo, Rafael A. López, Mrs. Araceli Saucedo



CAPTION: Parents and students at the Poway High School Conference



CAPTION: Parents ask many questions.

1. What are some of the questions that parents ask you at presentations?

I think that one of the most important questions asked by a mother was this one:

“Thank you for coming to Poway High School and speaking to us, but everything appears to be so easily put; you speak so beautiful but my reality is other. My son does not seem to understand. What are you doing that is giving results that we can apply to our kids?”

This in itself is a very broad question, and we all know that it is the situation that many families find themselves in. Trying to hide our emotions because it is a question touching deep fibers of our being, my husband and I explain that at home we, as a family, create a comfort zone for every member. Home is a unique place where our hearts are able to be open. An example of such is that we always have dinner together. Dinner is a time to be together, build confidence, communicate with one another, and most importantly develop our family’s self-esteem and create plans, visions and goals.

Araceli says, “Values, principles and morals take place at home. Throughout the years my sisters and I have become secure, proud, intelligent, and wise human beings thanks to my parents’ guidance. Another thing is to witness the role my parents take. My dad is a provider, protector and head of the household and my mother’s priority is the family. Both of my parents are always present in any academic, social, cultural, family and/or political events, supporting my sisters and me to reach great heights. Also, it is important to have students be aware of the situation at home. Some parents find it better not to tell their older children about economical, health or family hardships taking place. Yet, telling your sons and daughters about the issues at home sometimes brings great maturity in a young person’s life because with it there is a sense of responsibility to try to make things better. If the sense of responsibility is focused on education, students strive to get better grades, finish school, and go on to higher education because there are great rewards at the end such as a good career, knowledge, and ability to help others around you.”

Araceli explains how at an early age she understood that as the first child born, there is responsibility on her shoulders to make the situation at home better and help her parents. Many times she has seen her father working hard to earn a wage below the minimum. She sees her household pulling strings trying to make ends meet. Araceli thinks to herself, *“I am not going to win the Lottery. We are not rich. I am the first born in my family, and I am the one who can help bring this family up. I am the one that can bring stability; it is my turn to make things better. I have all the tools. I CAN DO IT!!”*

Speaking directly to the students, Araceli offers this advice: *“Don’t let the temptations that teenage years bring steal your goals, plans and visions. In this stage of high school there are a lot of parties, boy/girlfriend things going on. I know—I passed through them too; and, believe me, by letting those things be secondary, there is a much greater reward at the end. Nothing beats walking up to receive your high school diploma and turning around to see your family cheering for you in the audience, seeing the pride of accomplishment in your parents’ faces because it is not about you, it’s about who you represent. Nothing beats going to a university, living at the dorms, studying what you really like, meeting new people, and gaining knowledge daily.”* Her answer brings a lot of tears to everyone present, speakers and public.

Our most important objective is to provide a wake up call to both the parents and students to the vision. We hope that this testimony of what worked for our family will be useful to others; we want them to use it and start doing it with their family.

Parent Question: What is the difference between high school graduation requirements and university admission requirements?

Many parents are confused because they think that the high school graduation requirements and the requirements for university or college entrance are the same. Parents think that their students after graduating from high school are eligible to apply for any university of their choice. I provide some copies of requirements from the California Department of Education website and show them to the parents and students, explaining that the requirements for graduating from high school are less than what the UC requirements are. We also explain the difference between what is required and what is recommended to enter into the UC system. We advise the parents and students to always go beyond what is required in order to be in a competitive standing.

California Department of Education website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gc/hs/hsgtable.asp>



CAPTION: Parents read copies of requirements from the California Department of Education

Parent Question: Where can we find information about scholarships?

Financial Aid can be divided into several branches—work study, loans, grants and scholarships. We encourage students to apply for as many scholarships as they can. But, the key is to apply for the scholarships that they have the greatest possibility of winning. One needs to pick scholarships in which the requirements match one self. For example, some scholarships are for minorities, others for first generation college students, others for low income, etc. We also describe what applying for scholarships entails: writing essays, letters of recommendation, and time.

We provide copies with important web pages for parents and students to have access to:

- College applications by UC On-Line application
- Testing Information on SAT and ACT
- Test Prep
- Financial Aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Scholarships available on Fast Web & Scholarships sites



CAPTION: A mother reads the copy of important web pages.

2. What do you think is the biggest challenge for parents to help their children be able to go to college?

Breaking the Hispanic stereotype—breaking the pattern. The biggest challenge is to say “No” and strive for change. No—to making the high statistics of Hispanic youth pregnancy, crime rate, and high school dropout rates real. It is true that when Hispanics migrate to the United States, it is to search for the “American Dream”. It is to make a better life for their families, seeking minimum wage jobs that offer no benefits. It is to bring milk, pay the rent and even sometimes to send money back home out of the U.S. to help other relatives. Between all this, it is sometimes difficult to see education as a priority. This is inherited from grandparents, to parents, then to their children and it keeps on going. When we go to conferences to speak, we try to touch the hearts of the people. With our example, we let them know that we can. Yes, we can change for a better future through education. Education will bring greater rewards in the future. Araceli tries to make sons and daughters understand the sacrifice of their parents. Araceli tries to open their eyes into seeing the value of their old, sick, tired, and over-worked parents. This does not come easy. Many times it is a process full of pain because it brings memories of past hardships and injustices, but from it one gains maturity and wisdom. When this takes place in front of our eyes, we see a new Hispanic

generation being born with a new purpose and with a new perspective of life, with a genuine motivation to break the mold and reach higher education.

3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I do not leave any conference without explaining to parents that every student can continue his education no matter what. I explain that there are different requirements for each educational institution. Some institutions are more demanding than others. There are different possibilities that students have depending on the package they present to colleges, which includes the GPA, SAT and ACT test scores, extra curricular activities, and A-G requirements. Students can apply to different institutions such as community colleges, state universities, UC and private colleges. There are many universities and colleges where their children can attend. For example, a student that does not have a high GPA, SAT and ACT tests results can apply to a community college and after two years, transfer to a four year college. State universities ask for a lower GPA than the UC so there are a lot of possibilities for students.

In, addition we continue our efforts to be at conferences to present this useful information—information that cannot easily be found in admission requirements, books or pamphlets because it is information that comes from life experience. At the end of the Poway Conference a student representative gave us two copies of the school newspaper where the Saucedo family was published, a Barnes & Noble gift card and a warm sentimental thanks. We did not expect that. For us, it was Awesome!!!



CAPTION: Mrs. Saucedo explains the different educational institutions.



CAPTION: Araceli explains that every student has the opportunity for higher education.