

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – 25th Anniversary Essay Contest

Winner: Middle School Third Place



by Crisol Ortuño
Seventh grade

A memory is something that you can carry on forever. I have the memory of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in my mind and in my heart. I remember seeing my tutees' flashing white smiles as I entered their classroom. Who would have thought that I, the always quiet and shy girl, could have changed their minds about learning in school?

My heart was pounding loudly against my chest as my sweaty hands reached toward the rusty door knob. I turned the door knob, and I entered the classroom. The young and happy students all flashed huge white smiles. Those adorable smiles made my stomach flutter. I walked toward my assigned tutees. They ran up and hugged me with their little, soft hands. I felt so liked and important that I had to give them a smile in return. That day was amazing! Their teacher said that she had never seen them so excited to learn. I felt so proud!

That was only the first day. I have been in Coca-Cola VYP for only one year. The rest of the year will be even better. Every day, they are more excited to learn. They are so motivated to learn, and I feel so glad. When they do not understand the problem, I explain it to them. They understand it very quickly.

I am truly amazed at how fast they learn. I know there are good times and bad times, so I have to be very nice and understand my tutees. This program has made me appreciate learning and teaching. It makes me proud to know that I am making a difference in a child's life. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has given me this opportunity, and I am grateful. It has made me want to become a teacher when I graduate from school.

