

## Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – 2014 Essay Contest

# Winner: High School Second Place



**Nicholas Alderete**

9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

SOUTH SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL, SAN ANTONIO

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has helped me see people different. In this program, I have seen that they actually care for me. I used to have a very bad attitude, and my grades are not the best. I have never been a good student. I have difficulty in math, reading, science, and basically mostly every subject there is. This program has made me realize that grades are important to keep up. The program is the reason my grades are passing, and my life is gotten better.

I had always heard about this program, but I have never would of guessed that it would be this life changing to me. The thing I do in this program is tutor kids, which is actually not bad. I would always think that it would have no effect, but it turns out that it does affect my life. The kids all love me because I help them succeed in school, tell them that it is fun and not that bad as you think. This program is amazing. The best part about this program is that I get to tutor three tutees from the elementary school. They are the best when it comes to learning, they actually enjoy leaning when I tutor them.

When I go to the school, they are excited to see me. When I start to tutor them, they know everything now. When I got there on my first day, I saw that they struggled, but throughout the year I have taught them a lot. Well, the only reason I know that is that every day I go, they get better.

These third graders have made me feel special. They welcome me every day I go tutor with a jump of cheer and scream my name “Nicholas!” It’s amazing how they do that and make me feel important.

I have tutored them in math, reading and spelling. They have learned a lot and come to school every day. Attendance was a problem with them, but now they show up every day. I am so proud of them. My attendance used to be off. I never wanted to come to school, but those kids made me come to school every day. They are also the reason my grades are up, so that they can look up to me and say “He is really smart.”

I would have never guessed that I would become the person I am today. It is still surprising to me. My grades were not the best, but ever since I joined this program I stay for tutoring and have picked up my grades for them. I am still struggle with algebra, but I am working my hardest to get it and keep it up. The program has made me feel important to those kids. I was even interviewed for the Channel 4 news and was on TV. I even came out in the newspaper for working hard at tutoring those kids. I told them that my life has completely changed since I have started the program, and nothing will make me go back to the way I was.

