

La Opinión

Young Latino supports students in his community

Alexis Hernandez is part of City Year Los Angeles, a program that seeks to help students achieve excellence



Alexis Hernandez is dedicated to helping students of Jefferson High School in Los Angeles.

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Alexis Hernandez, 22, goes back in his mind and remember the moment when he was in eighth grade at a school in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and saw a group of young aides arrive at his school.

"They brought gleaming yellow jackets" recalls Hernandez. "They said they came to help us be successful."

At that moment Hernandez joined the group as a student, but years later, and as a graduate of Humboldt State University in Northern California - with a BA in Political Science and Criminology - the young man returned. Now he was the one wearing the yellow jacket.



The young man that attends about 11 students who have problems with English and mathematics. (Photo: Aurelia Ventura / La Opinion)

In the summer of this year, Hernandez joined City Year Los Angeles, **a civic engagement program that recruits young people ages 18 to 25 years to help students with academic needs and to get them to graduate.**

With excitement, he expresses his pride in being able to serve as a mentor, guide, and tutor at Thomas Jefferson, south of Los Angeles.

Their job is to assist 11 students who have academic needs. Usually the students are made up of six students who need help in English and five in mathematics.

Hernandez says he likes it when he gets to work with English language learners, since they are usually more introverted when talking about personal issues.

"I was also very shy, I didn't know how to be outgoing," says Hernandez.

That's when he applies his best weapon; and proudly introduces himself as who he is: a young man of immigrant parents, with Spanish as his first language and the first in his family to attend college.

"Then they **feel a connection and feel they can identify with me,**" says the youth of Mexican parents.



City Year supports 28 LAUSD schools, located in Watts, Boyle Heights, among others. (Photo: Aurelia Ventura / La Opinion)

"It is gratifying to help the Latino community and make a difference in the place where I am from," says the young man with a smile.



Alexis Hernandez is 22 years old and is the son of Mexican parents. (Photo: Aurelia Ventura / La Opinion)

Taking The Oath

Hernandez, along with 287 other members of City Year, were sworn in Friday by Kevin de Leon, President Pro Tem of the California Senate, during the tenth anniversary of Opening Day.

The event was organized by City Year Los Angeles, a nonprofit education organization anchored to public service. The event gathered the young AmeriCorps members who seek to serve full-time with teachers in schools of greatest need, to provide one-to-one support to students, programs within the class, and organize school-wide programs.

According to statistics, "City Year has a track record of helping students achieve academic success and reach the path to graduation," says Luz Maria Castellanos, a spokesperson with City Year.

This school year City Year members will support more than 27,000 students with school-wide initiatives in 28 schools in Los Angeles Unified schools in Watts, South Los Angeles, Boyle Heights and Pico Union / Westlake.

AmeriCorps members work with students in grades 3 to 10, and in the last decade, City Year has totaled about 2,000 members who have directly served more than 22,500 students, Castellanos said.

To learn more about City Year Los Angeles visit: <https://www.cityyear.org/losangeles>