



Dear Friends:

May 1, 2006

How important is completing high school? For the 38% of teens ages 16-19 in our community who drop out of school, it is something that will probably never be accomplished.

For Miguel and Amanda, however, it's an exciting, extraordinary milestone!

Each has persevered to overcome huge obstacles. They have trusted caring people in hard situations. They have accepted help along the way, but have used their own initiative in the end to realize their goals.

Amanda earned her G.E.D. – general equivalency diploma – in March 2006 with the loving care and support of NM's G.E.D. teacher Simona Donaldson, and her tutor Pat McCormick. She was the first in her class to make her goal.



The strides Amanda has made are remarkable. She had moved and changed schools many times, and until December of last year, Amanda had spent the last six years in and out of jail.

One of Amanda's friends told her about our Jeremiah Program for adjudicated youth. Amanda convinced the parole board that this was her chance to really change her life and succeed. Allison Nagle, Jeremiah Program Director, became Amanda's advocate.

God is good....Amanda's life is truly transformed and now she has the promise of a real future! Not only is she applying for the nursing program at ASU through the ADVANTAGE Program, but she says "that her parents' attitude toward her has become so much more positive."



Miguel will graduate from high school on May 20 – the first of his entire extended family! Having been a NM "kid" since 3rd grade, Miguel says that "Neighborhood Ministries has become more of a family to me than my real family. It's so good to hear positive rather than negative things." Miguel said that education is not valued by his family. "They wanted me to help pay the bills, but I wanted to do something with my life – to follow my dreams." Having said that – now that he is graduating, his family is throwing him a huge celebration and relatives from California and Mexico are joining in the party.

Miguel's toughest challenge and victory, however, was overcoming depression. Over the past two years, Miguel trusted God with his life and was baptized. Although at times he still struggles, he says "I'm not afraid anymore."


So what's next? Miguel is set to follow his entrepreneurial dreams and is also applying to ASU to pursue a business degree through the ADVANTAGE Program. As a high school senior, Miguel was elected President of Student Government, and he already runs an informal D.J. / Videographer business. He is very tech savvy, especially digital music and other media and he plans to operate a professional business in the future.

Our long term goal is developing indigenous leadership – leadership for families, neighborhoods, schools, and the workplace. Leadership that depends on Jesus to find a way when the obstacles are huge.

This can best be accomplished through young adults like Amanda and Miguel and a growing cadre of others who are serving as **powerful role models** to their peers and even to their own families – leaders who are perceived as authentic and relevant with Jesus in their hearts.

We are excited as we witness these young people developing their **God-given potential** - Jesus is growing leaders right before our very eyes.

Thank you for supporting God's amazing work in our city,


Kit Danley
President


Richard Speck
Executive Director

MAY EVENTS

- May 11-13 NM Staff and Board Retreat
- May 18-20 Urban Youth Workers Institute, Azusa, CA
- May 25 – August 2 Summer Internships
- June 26 – July 7 Kids Club

For more details, go to
www.nmaz.net
or call
602-252-5225