



March 17, 2006

Dear Friends,

*"Can you stay for a while?"* Ricky's mom said as she handed me a plate piled high with homemade tacos and opened the door wide for me to come in. As I took the plate, I couldn't help but remember the first time we met. Only a few weeks before, I was greeted by a half open door with suspicious eyes peering at me. I knew then that it would take much more than just knowing their language for Ricky's parents to trust me with their son.

Today, however, I'm invited into their home; I play soccer with their kids, and hang out with Ricky almost every week. Ricky and I talk about Jesus, we pray together and now he reads his Bible regularly.

After meeting Ricky at Lochburn Middle School, my heart was touched and challenged to invest in his life. He was the first boy I noticed. Little did I know that quiet little Ricky was so connected to the campus that he would lead me to at least five other Hispanic kids a week, each in great need of a mentor who they can trust.

The beauty of this ministry is that the message of Christ does not stop with Ricky. The ripple effect of the gospel is felt within his circle of family and friends. Through parenting workshops and church partnerships, my prayer is that God's word would permeate his family in such a way that this young life would be encompassed with God-fearing people. My hope is that one day Ricky would not only know Jesus, but that he too would share the love of Christ with others as well.

Working with kids all week long can certainly cause me to forget about their families, but when an almost closed door turns into a loving family and a plate of homemade tacos, I have no choice but to share the gospel with them too! Last night we completed the first session of a six-week course designed for Hispanic parents to have better relationships with their kids. Through means of weekly lessons, small group discussions, and free meals and childcare, these parents are drawn in and given tools to help them become better parents. In small groups, they are led by Christian couples who share their own parenting experiences and their love for Christ as they build up to the presentation of the gospel in the last week of the course. All of this is done in Spanish – the language they can share their hearts in.

Last night, one of the parents filled out an evaluation for the workshop and wrote on the last line, *"Thank you for worrying about the family."* As a part of my team, I also thank *you* for worrying about the family through your prayers and support. Without you, none of this would be possible. Thank you for keeping me in the schools, in Ricky's life, and with these families.

Gratefully,

Nathaniel Gutierrez