

## **Amanda Alvarado, Class of 2013**

May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1994 is not any regular day and it is not just my birthday. It is also a day that provided me with great experiences. In seventeen years of life I never would have imagined all the experiences that I have encountered. These experiences all would describe me, but I feel that I would not be me nor would I have had all my experiences without Valente Alvarado, my Grandpa.

I am my dad, Jerry Alvarado's, first born. He was the baby of the family and when I was going to be born everyone was so excited. My whole family had a bet on what day I would be born; they even put in a pool. My grandpa bet I would be born the 21<sup>st</sup> of May in the afternoon, which is his birthday. What do you know? He was right! He used the six-hundred dollars he won to create a savings account for me. This money was to be used for school. Everyone, particularly my Grandpa, knew that I was destined to be someone great.

My Grandpa and I had a special bond. I would spend every birthday with him and never wanted to leave his side. He was my role model, and I looked up to him. He was a hard worker and did anything for his family. He even built his children houses. He managed to build one more house when he was restricted to a wheel chair. He always took care of his land and his house. I watched him get older, but his spirit was still young, and I admired that. I admired his persistence, patience, perseverance, and his love. I wanted to be just like him.

Right before I went into high school, my Grandpa became ill. He not only had diabetes but was diagnosed with Mersa. My family did not want to keep us away from him, so every day we would go to the hospital and visit him. One time he asked for me and said he would not eat unless I fed him. I went in the room alone, and he talked to me. I really wish I could remember

what he told me but I do know that I told him that I was going to start learning Spanish in school. He wanted me to learn Spanish, and I promised him I would so that I could talk to him.

Although he died as I began high school, I still love my Grandpa, and I love the fact he thought of my future because he taught me the lessons of life. He always said, "If you want to make a living you need to work hard. All we need is the right tools." He taught me to be patient, have perseverance, and work hard in everything I do. The most important lesson he taught me was that nothing should ever stop me from doing something, especially if it's something I love. Since my Grandpa won the bet, I was able to pay my tuition to attend San Miguel High School, where during my first three years I learned Spanish and now I speak it pretty well. At San Miguel, I also gained many job experiences in my internships, and I opened up out of my shell and gained confidence to be myself. I attend summer programs in and outside of Arizona, including the Catalyst Academy at Cornell University.

My Grandpa thought about my future and wanted me to have a great one. I know right now that my Grandpa is proud of me and loves me so much. I know that he wishes he can physically see me graduate, but I know once I am holding my diploma he will be right beside me, smiling.