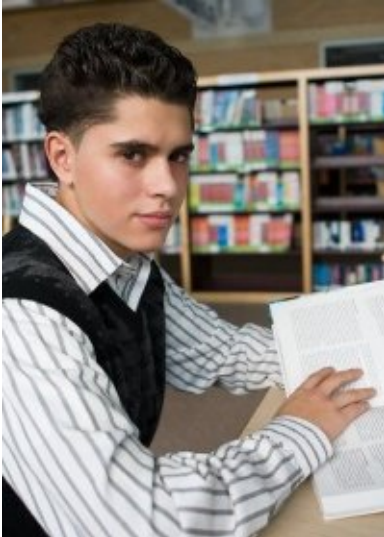




By Blanca Avila • Hoy Reporter
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We Must Change Stereotypes



Chaidez is the Co-President of the Boys II Men Fraternity

Gilberto Chaidez, 17, a senior at West Aurora High school said that it is his dream to study Civil Engineering. This career would allow him to do what he likes to do and, at the same time, give back to the community that has helped him become the young man that he is today. Gilberto would like to inspire others to realize that your success does not depend on your current circumstances in life; if you change your mind, you can change your life.

It was because of this type of leadership, commitment to the community, and academic excellence that Telemundo Chicago and Hoy Newspaper recognized Chaidez as the Student of the Month for January. From early on life, Chaidez faced challenges that shaped his character. In spite of being an American citizen, Chaidez had to learn English as a second language while his peers were progressing forward with their studies.

“As a baby, my parents took me to Mexico. I returned to the United States at 6 years old and did not know English. At that time, my school did not offer a bilingual program, so I had to study even harder just to keep up with my peers. After passing my examination, I learned that if you believed in something and worked hard at it, you will be successful,” emphasized Chaidez.

Chaidez says that mentality has stayed with him, especially in school. As a student at West High, he is enrolled in honors classes and has maintained a GPA of 4.12 on a 4.0 scale. His academic success has earned him such distinctions as being named as a State Scholar, a recipient of the Salute to Academic Achievement Award, a recipient of the Phenomenal Man Achievement Award, and the Telemundo Chicago and Hoy Newspaper Student of the Month Award.

Even with his academic success, Chaidez says that his desire to become a leader focused on excellence and service was not fortified until he entered into the brotherhood known as the Boys II Men Fraternity. Boys II Men is a service fraternity for young men that promotes positive achievements and encourages its members to break stereotypes.

“When I first heard of Boys II Men and its mission, I became so excited. I realized that Hispanics and African-Americans are the ones who are responsible for changing the negative stereotypes and for motivating the next generation to go beyond expectations. This is all done by simply changing your mind first. Then you can change your life,” exclaimed Chaidez.

Boys II Men has regular chapter meetings that gives its members the tools necessary to become phenomenal young men. Chaidez helps to lead the fraternity’s initiative, B2M Juniors, which conducts conferences for elementary and middle school students taught on how to become better young men. The conference are conducted by Chaidez and his high school peers.

Chaidez said that being recognized as the Student of the Month will help him to be a better example for other Hispanics. After applying to six universities throughout the nation, he has been accepted by four to date. He has narrowed his choices between the University of Illinois and Marquette University but he is still waiting on word from Harvard and Princeton too. Chaidez has already been award a number of scholarships, included the top award from the Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board for the City of Aurora.