



# 2017

## FR. PEDRO ARRUPE, SJ

### WRITING CHALLENGE



**SPONSORED BY:**  
THE ZIMMERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION  
& THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

## WHAT IS THE PEDRO ARRUEPE, SJ WRITING CHALLENGE?

The *Pedro Arrupe, SJ Writing Challenge* is an opportunity for students to express in writing what principle or personal ethic is a driving factor in their lives.

It is meant to publicly recognize young people who reflect upon and write about their personal beliefs and values through the lens of their Jesuit Catholic education.

## GOALS

- Build the Arrupe Jesuit writing community
- Encourage students to explore their Jesuit Catholic identity through self-examination and writing
- Improve narrative writing skills
- Recognize exceptional writers within the Arrupe Jesuit community

# THE PEDRO ARRUPE, SJ WRITING CHALLENGE AWARDS BREAKFAST

## WELCOME & PRAYER

Fr. Tim McMahon, SJ

## BREAKFAST EMCEE

Michael O'Hagan

## PRESENTATION OF FINALIST AWARDS

Nicky Schifano

## PRESENTATION OF WINNERS

Kimberly Smith & Rhonda Zimmerman

## READING OF ESSAYS

Student Participants

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO  
THIS WRITING CHALLENGE, ESPECIALLY:

### ESSAY READERS

Barb Astuno	Diane Kyncl
Mary Barrett	Mary McMahon
Beth Brin	Brooke O'Drobinak
Tyler Burke	Maria Orozco
Diana Campos	Paul Ritzdorf
Ed Clements	Vianney Rodriguez
Ellyn Coughlin	Nicky Schifano
Walt Coughlin	Kim Smith
Elizabeth DeWaard	Kayla Sterner
Samantha Eckrich	Margaret Tezak
Connor Frick	Megan Turilli
Stephan Graham	Eve Vaccaro
Carmen Hall	Eugene Wiggs

### CHALLENGE SPONSOR

The Zimmerman Family Foundation

John Templeton Foundation

## WINNERS AND PRIZES

### 1ST PLACE

*Anne Zimmerman Scholarship*

Leslie Astudillo Rangel, *Class of 2018*

### 2ND PLACE

*The Zimmerman Family Scholarship*

DeMarco Randall, *Class of 2017*

### 3RD PLACE

*The Zimmerman Family Scholarship*

Victoria Deleon, *Class of 2018*

### FINALISTS

Lorena Delgado, *Class of 2018*

Victor Deloera, *Class of 2020*

Sarah Dorantes, *Class of 2019*

Valeria Gomez, *Class of 2018*

Sergio Madera Huizar, *Class of 2020*

Citlalith Medrano, *Class of 2017*

Isaac Prieto, *Class of 2017*

Daniela Rodriguez, *Class of 2020*

Jennifer Sanchez, *Class of 2018*

Melissa Villalpando, *Class of 2019*



# PROFILE OF THE ARRUPE JESUIT GRADUATE AT GRADUATION

Open to Growth  
Religious  
Intellectually Competent  
Loving  
Committed to Justice  
Work Experienced

## ESSAY PROMPTS BY GRADE LEVEL

### *NINTH: AWARENESS OF GOOD WILL/KINDNESS/LOVE*

When you reflect on your life so far, think about how you have been impacted by acts of generosity, compassion, care, service and love. At the time, you may not have recognized these acts as God's good will/kindness/love in your life. Describe an event or occasion when you've experienced good will/kindness/love in your life.

### *TENTH: DISCOVERY OF SELF*

Based on your first two years at Arrupe Jesuit, how would you define what it means to be a man/woman for others? Describe how you have personally grown into this definition since coming to Arrupe Jesuit.

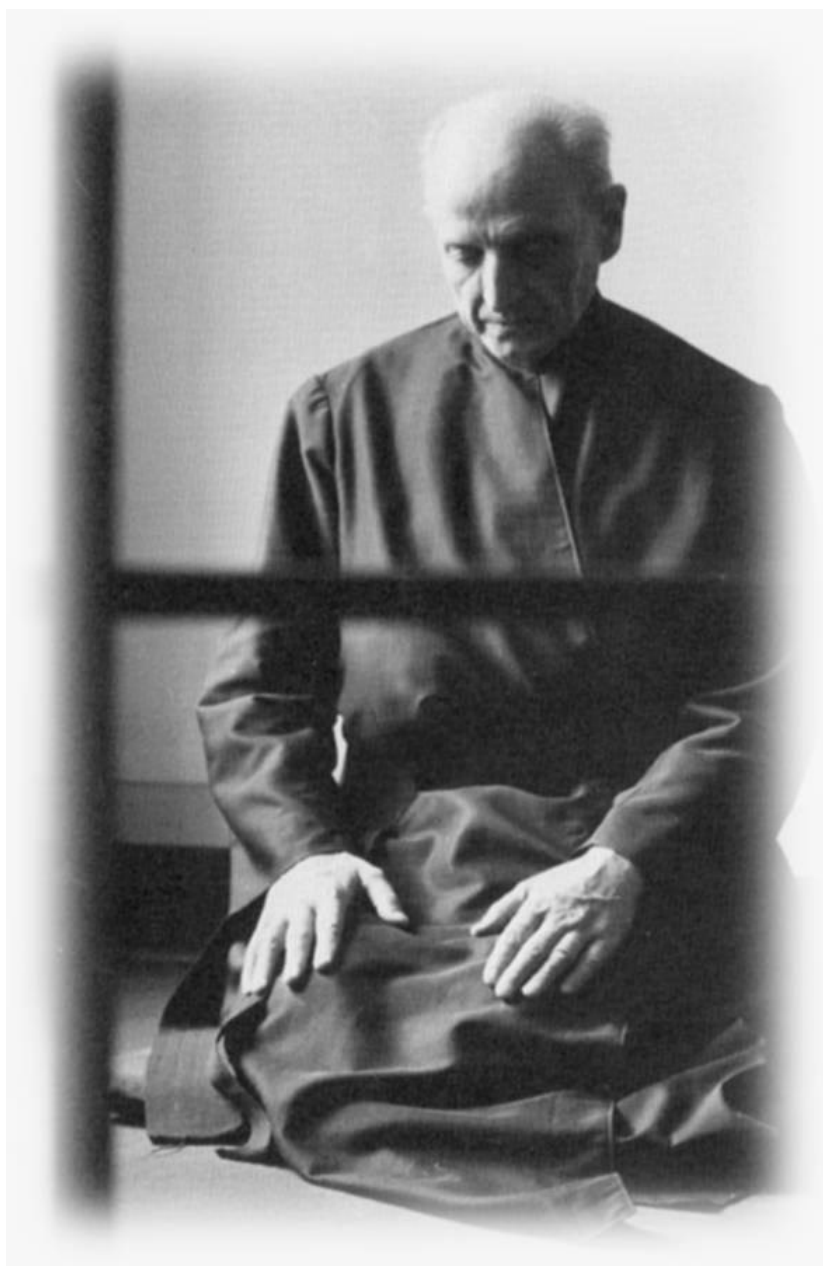
### *ELEVENTH: CHOICES*

While a student at Arrupe Jesuit, there have been moments when you have faced difficult decisions. Describe a situation or event in which you have made a choice that best reflects you as a man or woman for others. If you did not make this kind of choice, what might you have done differently?

### *TWELFTH: CARRYING IT FORWARD*

Look back over your time at Arrupe Jesuit. You've had opportunities to be a man or woman for others; additionally, you've been impacted by men and women for others both within and outside our school community. Now, envision how you will carry forward what you've learned from others and about yourself. How will what you've learned about being a man or woman for others impact how you live your life after Arrupe Jesuit?

THE PEDRO ARRUIPE, SJ  
WRITING CHALLENGE  
WINNING ESSAYS



1ST PLACE

LESLIE ASTUDILLO RANGEL  
CLASS OF 2018

I have never had a normal day change so drastically into disaster. As a student at Arrupe Jesuit, I have had my days where things are not easy, but I try to do right by others. I like to believe I was there at the right place and right time because God Himself leads me, emotionally and physically, to my vocation of being a social worker.

On the night that "it" happened, the dark blue sky without a star in sight followed me home. That Friday my day had ended at eight pm because Mock Trial goes on until that time. I was tired and ready to surrender to slumber and the ride home seemed to go on forever. My right hand moved to the flow of the wind that ran and ran outside the window. Coming to a stop just a block away from my destination, big streams of red light gleamed onto the street. My eyes covered from the brightness. It is silly, isn't it? The red stoplight didn't just mean for my car to stop but for the world too, because in that one moment, BAM! I jerked wide awake to a scream. The silence no longer traveled on the road with me. Tires burning rubber raced on forward, running away like a scene in *The Fast and The Furious*. The car had just done a hit and run on the other side of the crossroads. Soon, a crowd of people gathered. I decided to brace myself and go forth to look.

Once I left my vehicle, I walked over. I prayed that it would be okay. On the cold hard marengo colored concrete, a woman was on her knees pouring and pouring out her tears like a flood. Strangers looked unnerved and traumatized. When I got close enough, I saw it, or rather, I saw him. A man who looked fatigued after a long day at work was lying still on that same cold hard ground. I took a moment and closed my eyes. When I opened them again, no one had moved. Everyone was a statue.

I knew my choice was to either let my shock take control or snap out of it and start being the person who was a woman for others. Turning to the crowd, I yelled "Call 9-1-1!" When no one moved, I hollered at the crowd again. A lady, wearing sweatpants and a hoodie refocused her attention and nodded. Moving closer to the body, I got on my knees and asked loud and clear, "Sir, can you hear me? Sir, what is your name?"

The man didn't respond. I asked around for someone to pass me a jacket that they wouldn't mind getting messy. A young man stepped forward, took his jacket off, and placed it in my hands. I asked for assistance to help me gently lift up his head so I could place the jacket right under his head. After a moment of hesitation, a woman in heels stepped forward, introducing herself as Katherine. Katherine cradled the man's head like a mother would, holding her newborn.

It hit me in this moment how we are all someone's child. I thought about how unsettling it would be to hear bad news about your own child, even when they are all grown up, because they will always be your little boy or girl.

Once the man's head was carefully placed on the folded rugged jacket, I asked Katherine to look for a pulse. She quickly reacted which gave me time to turn back to the woman in sweatpants and ask if the ambulance was on its way. She responded, with relief washing all over her face, that they were coming. I gave a relieved sigh, but it was cut short when Katherine shrieked that the pulse was fading. I asked her if she knew how to do compression, but she said she did not know. I had

once taken a class when I was younger to see if I wanted to go into a medical career. It felt long ago and I was not confident, but I knew that it was up to me. I had to act fast.

Katherine was beginning to hyperventilate until she saw me move. A trace of sweat rolled down my face as pressure built up inside of me. I wanted to do right by this man lying on the gravel. I placed my hands on the lower third of his sternum, and did a 2 inch deep compression at a rate of 100-120 per minute. Breathing hard and sweat dripping down my face, I stopped and asked Katherine to check on his pulse. My own heart was so rapid, it felt like I couldn't exhale until I knew he was okay. Katherine had a small smile of gratitude when she looked back again at me. His pulse was ok. I finally breathed in the fresh air. In the background, I could hear the sirens blaring, coming right toward us. As I stared down at my palms, I saw the red, white, and blue lights flashing.

Then I realized everything was going to be okay. The man received help from the paramedics and was given an oxygen mask. A tear of relief had escaped from my left eye and trailed down my cheek. He was hauled into the ambulance and driven away. The people who gathered had said I had done an amazing job with handling a situation so dire like this. When I finally looked up, there it was. The sky was clear and the stars were shining so brightly.

I knew that I chose to do this because I don't want to be someone who stands around and does nothing when someone is in need of help. The choice to act will always be with me. I stood strong and was a leader to these people. To me being a woman for other means that I will always be there to help others in situations when they need it. I will continue to act by doing everything I can now and in my career as a social worker. Since my choice is to act, it has encouraged me to continue dreaming big and to try to help the world, one step at a time. My dream of being of service to others will never end.

2ND PLACE

DEMARCO RANDALL  
CLASS OF 2017

Over the past four years at Arrupe Jesuit, I have not only learned how to be a man for others but I have actually done it. What that means to me is that I am living my life through the six "Grad at Grad" traits. I have become work experienced by working at six different companies over the past four years. I have been able to study a variety of workplace styles. I went from working at a non-profit food bank to 9news where I am gaining the experience to know if journalism is truly something I want to do after I graduate from college. I am set apart from other high school students by my work experience and I am extremely grateful for that.

Being a student at Arrupe you have no choice but to be open to growth. A way I got involved socially at Arrupe was by playing baseball. I was able to build amazing friendships and lifelong bonds. I am so happy that I was open and tried out for the team. Baseball has allowed me to develop as a leader. I am an example to my teammates and was made captain of the varsity team this year. I think that every student should have to be involved in some sort of school-run program. While in college I plan on being involved in my campus by joining clubs.

Intellectually Competent. At Arrupe Jesuit we have to live up to high standards in the classroom. My teachers want the best for me. Countless people in the building of Arrupe sacrifice time to make sure we as students have the tools necessary to be successful. They are willing to show up to school early, stay after classes are done, or even meet during lunch. Without the men and women who devote their time to me as a learner, I would not be the scholar I am today. I want to have that same impact on someone in my life too, which drives me to want to pursue a career in teaching.

Committed to Justice. This can be just as simple as telling the truth at all times or not cheating in class or on homework. But being committed to justice is more than that. After being at Arrupe for four years I know that staying true to yourself and living a life through the image of God is what it's like to be committed to justice. I have learned that when I live my life through the image of God, I am honest and sincere in my actions. I am able to have a deeper connection with my peers and a deeper appreciation for those who make sure Arrupe Jesuit is able to function.

Loving. At Arrupe I have learned that I am loved. I am no better than one other person and no other person is better than me. In my Theology class junior year, I was introduced to human dignity. Of course we all have a general sense of what human dignity is but I was able to go in depth. Human dignity to me is loving everyone and treating them equally. Being that I received so much love, I am willing to give out love to the world through service.

The last and my favorite "Grad at Grad" trait is Religious. Going to a Catholic high school I have been able to expand my knowledge of my faith. I am a Catholic and my faith is very important to me. I make my faith a key aspect by going to church on Sundays and praying. I would say that I wear my religion on my sleeve. I am not afraid to invite my friends to come to church with me or even to pray together. I am a firm believer in living for a purpose bigger than myself. God's grace has been my bigger purpose and I strive to live in that grace every day.

Through these six traits, I am now a better brother, son, and friend. I am grateful for the people at Arrupe Jesuit that have helped mold me into the respectful young man I am. I know that my peers also feel the same way and strive to be the best men or women for others.

3RD PLACE

VICTORIA DELEON  
CLASS OF 2018

As a junior in high school I am constantly face to face with decisions. I have to make personal, academic, and work related decisions on a daily basis. In the overwhelming world of teenagers we come across good and bad decisions daily that make us look deep down inside of ourselves in order to choose the correct one. I have faced many decisions that would either break or make me, and as a teenager it is hard deciding which choice to go with when the outcome is sometimes unclear.

In January I began the process of applying to summer programs. I was nominated by my college counselor to apply for the Georgetown University Summer College Immersion Program. This

was a long and tedious process that lasted about a month, the longest month of my life. I had to complete three essays that asked questions like “What challenges have you overcome?” and “Describe an extracurricular activity that has been most meaningful to you.” When I saw the prompts I was so scared. Having to write about myself and open up to a complete stranger about a challenge I faced in my life terrified me. I was not comfortable with opening up to a piece of paper and I’ve never been a great writer. Regardless, I chose to continue the application because I knew this program would be an amazing opportunity for me.

Writing three essays for a program at Georgetown University is not as easy as it seems. I rewrote my three essays four times. I found it really hard to express my thoughts and feelings onto paper because I knew my application was going to be sent to a prestigious school. I was having such a hard time, I had to meet with my former English teacher to help me get my thoughts together. I became sick to my stomach whenever I heard the words “Georgetown,” “application,” and “essays.” Nevertheless, I didn’t give up. I powered through the application and completed it before it was due.

I waited a long month to hear back from the program. When I opened the email I was afraid to see if I was accepted or not, but deep down I thought I got accepted. I closed my eyes, counted to three, and when I opened them and read the words *wait list*. I immediately wished I hadn’t opened them. I was not accepted and was put on the waiting list. The rejection and pain I felt at that moment is indescribable. I cried and was overcome with anger and sadness. I was even more angry when I found out another classmate that applied with me was accepted and I wasn’t. I didn’t want to talk to anyone or even go back to school. Georgetown had seemed so far away and yet so close I thought I could almost grasp it, only to have it pulled away and given to someone else.

I know many of us have felt the sting of jealousy. The following day was the day I felt it the most. I was jealous of my classmate for getting accepted. I felt that it was unfair because we both had put in the same amount of time and effort into the application. I felt like a second choice and as if I wasn’t good enough. Hearing people congratulate my classmate and not me hurt me because I felt that I deserved it too.

Towards the end of the day I talked to one of my peers and told her how disappointed and mad I was. She gave me some advice that really opened my eyes. She told me that in life we sometimes have to know what it’s like to lose and feel rejected. All my life I have never really felt how to lose academically. She told me I had two choices: let the sting of jealousy eat away at me or to learn from this experience and grow from it.

I chose to grow from it. I wiped away the tears and held my head up high. I told myself that I didn’t get accepted into the Georgetown program because there was a greater and more beneficial opportunity waiting for me. My other classmate had worked just as hard as I to get into the program and I knew she deserved it; my mind had just been clouded with anger and jealousy. I regretted feeling jealous and felt terribly guilty about it. I sent her a message that night telling her that I was truly happy that she got the opportunity to go to the Georgetown program in the summer and that I hoped she would take full advantage of the opportunity she was given. She thanked me and I knew I had done the right thing.

From this decision I learned two important things. In Proverbs 14:30 it states, “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” I chose to be at peace and accept the decision made. I knew that a woman for others would choose to be at peace and be truly happy for another person’s accomplishments. I wanted to be there for my classmates and encourage them to keep pushing. In Galatians 6:9 it states, “Let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right



time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." This passage especially helped me choose not to be discouraged and give up. I knew that I had worked hard to get into this program but I also knew that if it wasn't God's will I should accept it. I am so glad that I chose to accept the outcome and keep working hard in my academics because shortly after I found another program that appealed to me much more and will be held at Loyola University Chicago, my dream school. Choosing to do the right thing lead me to a greater path and helped me be a better woman for others.

FINALIST

LORENA DELGADO  
CLASS OF 2018

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Life is made up of many decisions, some easier than others, but nonetheless decisions. It is very hard to take the right decision, especially if you won't be the one benefited. Nonetheless, these selfless decisions are the ones that characterize and reflect us as men and women for others. I know many people face difficult decisions daily; thankfully there haven't been many difficult decisions that I've had to make but a very memorable one took place my Freshman year at Arrupe.

My father retired from his last job a summer day in July of 2012; I was going into my seventh grade school year. After my father retired my family saw very hard days. The income coming into the household was significantly lower and we were facing new expenses we had never encountered before. My family has always been very united and close, supporting one another in whatever challenges/hardships we face. After my older brother and sister graduated from Arrupe they decided to go to college in state and stay at home so that my parents could further support them. At that time I was unaware of those expenses but the stress my parents were going through was cognizant.

My family and I have always lived a very humble life with nothing but the necessities. We never had brand name clothes or any type of technology. I thought this would all change when my father let me know that there would be a \$312 check coming in monthly for me. He explained this money would be used for my sustainability and needs. I was very excited to know that I would be having a monthly allowance and with that new things. I can still remember the first thing I had planned to buy was a cell phone. Most of my classmates had one and of course I didn't want to be left out starting the new school year. Along with my new phone I also had a new wardrobe planned. As you can tell this news had me feeling well above the top.

It didn't take long for me, however, to notice my father's worries and sleepless nights thinking of how he would make ends meet. The check he was receiving was the minimum to barely make a family of three pass by, because at the time I was the only minor under 16 and I was also the only one accounted for in his retirement plan. My father got very sick that year, the sickest I've ever seen him. My whole family was alerted and knew something had to be done. With my father in bed for a good 2 weeks all the stress passed down to my mother. The bills and expenses soon caught up to her and that was when my brothers and I knew we needed to help. My older brother and sister had troubles of their own with all their college expenses and there wasn't much my other brother could

do while at Arrupe. I was aware that the only other income we had was my monthly check.

One day I approached my sister and asked her if everything would be back to how it was weeks earlier and if my father would get up of bed. She was very aphonic and that's when I noticed that hard times were to come. It was then when I resigned to all my plans and told my mother to use my check for whatever she needed. This may not seem like a very impressive thing to do but at its time it meant the world to me because that that money was all I really had or owned. My mother at first was shocked and told me that money was mine and was in a savings account for college and that it would be untouched. This made my decision that much harder but I insisted that the money I was receiving was needed now and that I would take it upon myself to go to college. I had no idea what those words meant but I was certain that I didn't want to put another load on my parents mind at the time.

Time passed and my father was still sick, winter was coming and that meant more illness for him. I had had enough and wanted my dad and my life back as it was before I knew I had an allowance or before my dad retired. Most could say retirement is a time of peace and rest but that was not my father's case. I prayed for my father's well being and slowly he started to get better. My mother had no other choice but to use the money in my account, which wasn't much but was of great help.

This was a very difficult year for me at home and in school. My last two years in middle school weren't the best but I knew that if I really wanted to help my parents out I would have to get better grades going into high school. By this time my older brother and sister had jobs and contributed to the house more. Things began to stabilize more and look more like the good old days.

On my 14th birthday my mother and father had a talk with me and they expressed their gratitude on my help during the past four years but that things were looking better and the money I received would be saved in an account again. I was very excited to hear this but contrary to the way I reacted two years previous, instead of making plans I decided to let my parents keep the money. This was a much harder decision for me to make because I still had hopes for a cell phone and now more than ever wants of new clothes. I needed clothes going into Arrupe because of the dress code but despite it I still felt my parents needed the money more than I did.

Coming to Arrupe was hard for me. I would be leaving behind my childhood friendships- and eventually lose contact with them- pass on opportunities such as AP classes, and assimilate to the professional lifestyle. The first months of my Freshman year at Arrupe I wore my sister's clothes and recycled some of the notebooks I had with blank sheets. I wasn't thrilled about this but I knew everything would be fine. Slowly my wardrobe would grow buying a shirt here and there and as my notebooks would fill up I would get new ones. I never really needed anything growing up and I still don't. Although I could've easily kept the money the first time my parents told me or the second time on my birthday, I decided not to because I was aware of where the money would be of better and more use. Even though I didn't directly have or use the money on myself I still benefited from it with food for my mom's daily meals, water for my showers and consuming, gas for heat in cold winter nights, and electricity for light to illuminate my studies as well as my brothers'.

God works in mysterious ways and through each and every one of us. He never deserts us or makes us encounter events we cannot bare. Although we face hard times and with them hard decisions, He remains by our side. It is then only up to us to make the correct decisions that not only seek our own benefit but the well being of those who surround us. When we acknowledge the struggles our peers around us face and show solidarity to them, then will we be men and women for others. It's true that at the time I had no idea I was being a woman for others but as I look back I



realize that I was. I can now say that most of the difficult decisions I've made have resulted in me being a woman for others because it is harder to think of others' needs before your own.

FINALIST

VICTOR DELOERA  
CLASS OF 2020

An important event that happened in my life was my birth as a Quintuplet. When my mother told me the story, it impacted me and showed me generosity, compassion, care, kindness, service, love, and God's good will in my life. This transformed me into the person that I am today. The people that helped my family when we were babies are still very important in my life. I thank them for all their help and time. This is because having Quintuplets was very difficult for my mom, especially since she was a single mom. She needed a lot of help raising my siblings and me. With the help that we got from those kind people, I learned to be helpful, respectful, and kind.

During my short time as a freshman at Arrupe, I have been encouraged to be a person for others. I encourage myself to do this and be a role model for others, not just in my school but in my community. For example, I am a role model for others by being responsible for finishing my homework and having my locker organized and going swiftly from one class to another. Another way that I express being a man for others is by being generous and caring. I show this throughout my life by helping people around my community, by helping translate languages, by picking up trash around my community and by helping make my community and the environment safer for others. In other words, I like to help when I have a chance to because afterwards I feel good that I was a person for others.

The Arrupe Jesuit Graduate at Graduation is Loving. As young adults, we get to have an opportunity to be able to work for our education. This also stands for being Open to Growth, Religious, Intellectually Competent, Committed to Justice, and Work Experienced. I fall into many of these categories but the one that I fall into the most and defines me is being Loving. When I stop and think for a way to describe myself, there is no better way to define myself than Loving. For example, the definition of loving means the "demonstration or the feeling of love caused by great care." I show great care to the people in my community and beyond. I step out of my comfort zone to be helpful, encouraging, and a role model; in all, being a caring person, and a man for others.

# FINALIST

# SARAH DORANTES CLASS OF 2019

The Ignatian values to be “men and women for others” is not just a nice phrase, but rather touches at the very core of my commitment towards justice and the common good. And while this vocation summarizes my desire to help the poor and suffering in the world, my inspiration to work towards justice and the common good extends far beyond what any simple phrase can describe. My motivation to work towards my aspirations goes back to both the immense bullying I went through as a child and the great amount of healing I received after opening up to what I was going through. These experiences are at the core of my motivation to work with those of different backgrounds to make Arrupe Jesuit High School a better place that can be brought into greater fullness through my calling of being a woman for others.

While my commitment to working with and for others is bolstered by a genuine care for the common good, the seeds of such a desire were planted in the most horrific experience of my life. When I was 8 years old, I went through my first confrontation with my oppressors. It began like any other day at school but this time through my regular course of eating lunch in the library. I began to hear remarks on my heavy weight and sloped nose. Day after day I was badgered with these remarks, until I turned to self-harm. It was at that moment when I started to feel relief physically that I stopped feeling pain emotionally.

While this experience cultivated the greatest amount of insecurity I’ve ever felt in my life, it has also made the greatest motivation to love and serve others that show hate. However, despite the pain that I continue to feel through my insecurities, I view such internal suffering not as an excuse to be sad or angry, but rather as a motivation to try to ensure that nobody else ever has to experience the same amount of pain that I felt. My experience with my oppressors does not end at the suffering I experienced, but continues in a desire to serve those who suffer in the world today. This desire has been brought into fullness through the Jesuit ideal of being a “woman for others”. Such values at Arrupe enable me to further understand and fulfill my desire to serve others.

However, my responsibility and motivation does not just end at helping alleviate suffering in the world. Despite my anger that resulted from the attacks I faced as a child, I have recognized that such devastation was not just the result of a few evil people who wanted to cause harm. And while I have never been able to forget my suffering, through my involvement at Arrupe, especially with the people I have met, I have come to forgive my oppressors for the atrocity that made me view myself, to this day, as not good enough. But through many Dale Carnegie teachings at Arrupe I learned that the bullying I experienced was a result of a great lack of dialogue and understanding between our different backgrounds. It is because of this fact that I am motivated to not only help other people who are suffering, but to also engage with people that are different than me.

The experience with my oppressors has also led me to experience some of the greatest love in my life through people who were living out the Jesuit vocation as well. At my second year at Arrupe, I finally decided to open up about what I kept within me for so long. And while I can go on forever about how spectacular it felt to relieve what I had bottled up, it would suffice to say that the phrase “love incarnate” does not even come close to describing how amazing Arrupe’s counselors are

when it comes to being someone you can trust. But the thing about it that made my counselor visits so amazing was the people who worked at Arrupe exemplified what it means to be men and women for others by being supportive even in the most stressful days. In the face of such great stress, these people come together to help all when we are in need. And while there are many other ways they could have responded to such an impact, they chose to respond through service and through caring for those of us who lost a peace within ourselves. Furthermore, the first year that I came to Arrupe, none of the staff members had a clue of what I was keeping within. Yet these people would acknowledge your mental well-being and would rally around the common value of service and look past their differences to respond to what you might need. Just as my oppressors showed me the effects of a lack in communication, this school has showed me what can be achieved when people from different backgrounds work together. Aside from bringing me needed healing in the wake of my impact, this experience has opened me up to wholeheartedly accepting people who who hate. Overall, my experience has taught me how to live out this walk of life to be a woman for others in light of the amount of pain that I experienced. The people who served me and many of my friends through such tragedies have shown to me what can be achieved when people live out the Ignatian vocation.

While this calling to be men and women for others certainly asks us to serve those who are less fortunate than ourselves, the practice of such a mission goes far beyond simple community service work. Rather than just providing for the needs of the less fortunate, this phrase is focused on a central value of love and calls us to understand other people's cultures as well as to be with the people with whom we are called to serve. But overall the implications of this action are far greater than they may first seem. First and foremost, this phrase invites us to love others because such service cannot be achieved without a genuine love for the people whom we are serving. This is the love that I experienced through the people at Arrupe, which I mostly observed in participating in service projects as a whole 2019 class. It is this type of service, a service motivated by love, that we as an Arrupe community are called to. This love extends far beyond those whom we are called to serve and touches on how we engage with the diverse community here at Arrupe.

Aside from being a vocation of love, the value of being men and women for others also challenges us to engage in different cultures with acceptance and understanding. If we are to truly serve others, it is essential that we open ourselves to new experiences and allow ourselves to be surprised by different cultures and beliefs. If we do not do this, then we would never be able to fully be men and women for others. Proving that it is more than just understanding the needs and values of those we are serving, but also understanding each other's needs and values that come from our different backgrounds, faiths, and cultures. This is why it is imperative to not just engage with those we are serving, but also engage with the people with whom we are working. It is this understanding between each other which would prepare us to better serve our community and would help us to grow closer together. Through recognizing our shared values of love and service, we could come to make the Ignatian call of being men and women for others through an understanding and acceptance of each other's different backgrounds better.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ, described this mission as a challenge to be men and women for and with others. For me, this promise to live in solidarity with the poor is manifested through a commitment to engage with the many people from different backgrounds at Arrupe. By being in solidarity with others engaging in effective dialogue with people from different backgrounds, I am able to approach others not as being people who are different from me, but as people who are equal with me.

Primarily the Ignatian calling at Arrupe to be a woman for others is more than just a simple

metier to serve others, but rather is an invitation into a way of life. Ultimately, this stance goes beyond the basic service for those who are poor and suffering, but rather is a mission to love and understand other people and their cultures that becomes an invitation to live in solidarity with others of different religious and cultural backgrounds. The Jesuit value of being a woman for others is not just a phrase that sounds nice, but rather is a vocation that encompasses my whole life and inspires me to engage in an effective and productive interaction with people from different faith and cultural backgrounds while working to make Arrupe a better place.

FINALIST

VALERIA GOMEZ  
CLASS OF 2018

Everybody has a dream, but every so often there are those who are courageous enough to pursue theirs. There are millions of immigration stories, no one like the rest, but this is the one about the mother who dreamt of another lifestyle full of opportunity for her babies. Fast forward twelve years, to a room with four white walls, a desk, and a Bible. There's the anxious mom, and the little girl right next to her watching the clock imagining what she'd be doing at school, but is instead at a meeting. It was nothing new to her, it had become routine to her and she accepted it. That little girl was me. I have always been very close to my mom, and she's always leaned on me to help translate for her. Since I was around eight years old I've accompanied her to errands that have required her to speak English and I've spoken for her. It's something that has always been a struggle, coming to a country where you don't understand the language, trying to adapt in order to offer a better lifestyle to your family.

My mom has always been a very sentimental person, so on that morning I had to brace myself to not be emotional for her sake. We walked in, prepared to present the reasons why our family was a good fit in their school community. Of course, our life painted a much different picture than the majority of the families there: our family wasn't perfect. We weren't a family that was all smiles and we weren't one that drove the nicest cars, or got everything we wanted. We didn't have the luxury to vacation in the Bahamas every six months or have the most bountiful salaries either. The thing that our family had that placed us on a common ground with the families at that school was the desire to be there. Sacrificing for one another was not a new idea to us; we'd spent our entire lives taking turns starting with my mom. She had told me a few days earlier that she needed me to go with her to help her get Hector accepted into the school she and I had decided was the best fit for him, to talk to the principal about the next steps we would have to take. Anxious, she told me to focus, and I fixed her scarf. I told her not to worry; it would all work out if God willed it to.

The principal was a very good person, very kind, which always gives me a breath of relief because she might be a little more understanding. My mom immediately stood up and hugged her, because she's charismatic with people. We started talking, answering questions, and everything was going great and then they asked us the hard question: payment. I knew that meant that my mom was about to get emotional, and that meant that I was going to have to hold it together for her. It's hard having to go and speak about how we don't have all the money we need to have, but that

doesn't necessarily mean we aren't fortunate. I feel very fortunate and blessed. Speaking two languages is such a blessing, but speaking two languages at the same time, isn't the easiest task. I have to think of the words in English as I am hearing them in Spanish, and remember long conversations all at the same time.

Sometimes it's hard to drop everything and attend meetings the busier I get, but it is a choice that I have repeatedly made and will continue to make. My mom has done everything in life for me and to benefit me, so I take this as the least I could do for her in return. I miss school and have to catch up, but in my eyes it's worth it because I have the satisfaction that I'm helping my mom and my family get ahead in life. I have to prioritize and think of possibilities and the outcomes from doing these things with my mom and it can get really stressful and frustrating to be honest, but at the end of the day, I know I wasn't selfish and my mom appreciates it immensely. School is my first priority, but my mom puts my siblings and me first, so I choose to put her first too. Everyone needs help in their life; no one can live life alone. My mom just happens to need help with speaking a second language, and I'm her relief. Just like she's my relief. I like to think of us as partners in crime. My mom is my inspiration; she's the definition of a selfless woman that pushes me to be more like her and serve others just the same. I choose to help my mom, because it makes me feel good to know that I did something productive for others and for my mom, because it just gives a sense of satisfaction that my life is part of something bigger than myself.

A woman for others: A believer in helping others, not expecting something in return. Translating for my mom has taught me so much about life. I was eight years old when I started learning about

financial aid papers and I learned about the importance of school. More importantly, I learned that everyone has a story, and I learned truly about all the things that my mom does for us, the sacrifices that go unnoticed. Then I realized that this wasn't just about me; it was about my mom. It's brought me so much closer to her and taught me maturity. I think that it's made me grow up sooner rather than later, surely, but I don't think I'd have it any other way. Maybe translating seems like something simple, and an everyday task, but it's turned into a big aspect of my life. A few conversations now and again have helped shape me and formed the things I believe in. Speaking to adults is hard because they don't always take you seriously and it's frustrating, but there's a teaching in everything. That has taught me patience and that even if that's true at the beginning, after they listen to what you have to say, they realize it was wrong to misjudge. Translating for my mom was never a dream of mine, but God knows what you need more than we do, and I love my mom more than anything; she is my drive in life to choose to be the best me.



**FINALIST**

**SERGIO MADERA HUIZAR**  
**CLASS OF 2020**

**“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?”  
-Martin Luther King Jr.**

One event in my life where I was shown generosity, compassion, care, service or love was when I was first applying to Arrupe Jesuit High School. At that time, I was nervous. My sister was already at Arrupe as a Junior when I was applying. Because my sister was already here, I grew anxious at the fact that I wouldn’t be accepted for not being smart enough or other requirements for the school. When I felt like this, everyone in my family was there for me and encouraged me to try my best and stay on the positive side of things. Because of everything that they did for me, I got accepted into Arrupe. My family’s love and generosity had a big impact on my life because it led to my acceptance to Arrupe, which might possibly be the best thing to ever happen to me that benefits me in the future.

One event in my life where I showed generosity, compassion, care, service or love was when my little sister, Laura broke her arm. Naturally, because we’re brother and sister, we’re practically destined to argue and fight over the smallest things. One day, she broke her arm and my parents rushed her to the hospital. I had never heard her cry so hard or scream so loud in my life. As she went through all the pain, it passed on to me. It was like a primal connection between us that I couldn’t explain. Although I had always argued with her, I realized that there was never a moment in my life where I didn’t cherish having her as a sister. Ever since that day, I have been grateful every single day that I have her and everyone else in my life. When she came back from the hospital the next day, I changed. I cared for her and I still do to this day. This experience taught me that family is precious, and it is love, in spite of everything that makes it precious.

One characteristic of the Arrupe Graduate at Graduation that I demonstrated is “Loving.” To be Loving is for someone to spread joy and happiness to everyone around them, to love him/herself and have deep respect for everyone around them, and realizing that there is a unique value in every human being and knowing that they can make a difference in the world. The event in my life where I was shown generosity and love impacted me to do better because I realized that I am extremely lucky to even have experienced that type of love because not everybody gets to experience it. I began to show thanksgiving to everyone around me: friends, family, and important people in my life. After I was shown generosity during my time applying to Arrupe Jesuit High School, I knew that somehow I had to give back to my family and to God, and if I didn’t, the thought that I could’ve done something to positively impact someone’s life but didn’t would tear me up on the inside. When my sister broke her arm, God reminded me that I must be loving to everyone around me because anyway, anywhere, anytime, anything can happen. He showed me that I must use the humanity inside of me and share love with the world.

# FINALIST

# CITLALITH MEDRANO CLASS OF 2017

Every tree starts off as a simple seed. Although this seed is small and its value cannot be fully comprehended, it will eventually grow into a 20 ft. tree. But that moment seems so far off that it seems unrealistic. My first year at Arrupe Jesuit, I tried my hardest to look at a deeper meaning behind “being women for others.” I knew that it was much more than just an inspirational quote, yet I could not describe its definition. By sophomore year I thought I had accomplished finally finding the words. Being a woman for others meant I had to put my needs to the side in order to help others. I felt confident with this belief since I could now act it out. As junior year came, I got busier with school work. This meant I could no longer volunteer as much as I did the last two years. With this change I was afraid because all I could picture was my seed dying. I no longer had time to water it. To me the best way to be a woman for others was to volunteer and I was failing.

As junior year came to an end I had to fill out a survey for Corporate Work Study Program for my internship. When I came to the question if I wished to return to my company I quickly checked the “yes” box. I was surprised at myself. Did I really want to lose an opportunity at another company for the next year? Why would I want to repeat the same experience? I found myself not wanting to let go of my internship at Jones & Keller but I couldn't figure out why. As I went to work the following week I decided to analyze my experience for the day and see what was holding me back. At this internship, I experienced a law firm that spends its time and money in showing me that they believe I can accomplish my goals. Of course, every CWSP company does with its interns but it felt personal to me on this occasion. That work day I realized that I was constantly asked about school and about how I was doing. I received smiles with every interaction and I was trusted with projects. I was not looked at as a teenager that they were forced to work with but an actual coworker. I felt like a part of their team and as if I was truly helping them. I felt believed in and to me that's all I wanted from them.

Through my high school years at Arrupe Jesuit, I have found that the most important thing is to be believed in. Through clubs and teachers, Arrupe has also shown me that I am supported. They believe I can find my own path to help others. Specifically, a club that has helped me better myself is Mock Trial. Mock Trial is an act or imitation of a legal trial. Through Mock Trial Arrupe has given the opportunity to learn about law and how to be a public speaker. Arrupe also funds trips to visit courthouses where I have met many attorneys who have become my resources for college and the real world. By supporting this club mentally and physically, Arrupe has helped me gain a different view on the world. Mock Trial has helped me see that I want to be the voice for those that don't get to have the chance to use theirs. Thanks to Arrupe I found my own voice.

Through these experiences I have been able to water my plant without even realizing it. Yes, being a woman for others means to help others and not focus on our own needs but it goes much deeper than that. Volunteering is not the only way to be a woman for others. I experienced being a woman for others when Jones and Keller showed me they believed in me. I found it when Arrupe provided teachers who stay after school and after class to answer questions, and by hiring teachers who love what they teach and love who they are teaching. I experience it when the whole student body is gathered in the gym to listen to our principal address how politics are impacting us and our families

but to ensure that Arrupe can be our support. I experience it any time that a stranger lets me cross the street before they turn. I've felt it when I am walking into a store and the door is held open for me. Even to the smallest experience of having someone smiling in the street makes me realize I've been frowning unconsciously. I want to say that being a woman for others means to be believed in but even then I know that will change once again. Jones & Keller and Arrupe have helped my nurture my own tree now as I start a new chapter I hope I will do the same for someone else.

FINALIST

ISAAC PRIETO  
CLASS OF 2017

Arrupe Jesuit High School is a place that has impacted my life in unimaginable ways. It has passed the values of the Jesuits onto me. Arrupe has given me opportunities to bond with my community and has taught me how to form relationships. It has given me the opportunity to work in corporate offices through the Corporate Work Study Program. With the lessons that I have learned while at Arrupe, I hope to impact others the way that Arrupe has impacted me.

Throughout my high school career, I have been part of many communities that have made me the person that I am today. I define community as the people that we love and care for. I believe that although I might not see someone on a daily basis, they are still part of my community as long as we love and care for each other. I volunteer at many places, but the one that has had the biggest impact on my life was at Lutheran Medical Center. It was the summer of my Sophomore year in high school that I started volunteering at the medical center performing basic duties such as wheeling a patient from their room to their car. There was one day in particular that struck me the most. The cardio center called the information desk where I was stationed and asked for a volunteer to wheel someone to their car. When I went to the cardio center, the patient waiting for me was a tiny old lady. While on our way to her car we started talking and she asked why I was there. I told her I was volunteering. She smiled and said, "Well, thank you for everything you are doing here." Although it was only nine words, they made me feel appreciated. By telling me this, she let me know that my labor was not being overlooked. I felt as if I belonged to the community and had a purpose. Interacting with the patients helped me learn that even the smallest acts of kindness can make someone happy. Knowing that acts as small as wheeling a patient from their room to their car can make someone happy makes me want to be a man for others. In the future I would like to continue being a man for others, even when I graduate from Arrupe. A way I want to do that is by opening up a free clinic in the future.

As I grew up, I noticed many people denied medical attention or they did not seek it solely for the reason that it costs too much money. An example was my uncle who needed to have open heart surgery due to a heart attack. He refused surgery in the beginning because he did not know how he would pay for it. The only reason he agreed to the surgery in the end, was because he was at a high risk of dying. I believe everyone has the right to medical care because every human being deserves to be healthy and alive. When someone does not receive the medical attention they need or deny it because they cannot afford it, my heart aches. I want to help people like this on a daily basis. I want



to care for those that are hurt wherever and whenever they need it. I aspire to be a surgeon one day so I can aid those who are hurt. This drives me to make a difference in life by helping others in their time of need. When I become a surgeon, I would like to start a clinic that offers free services to those living in poverty, a clinic where people who cannot afford medical attention they need can seek it without worrying how they will pay the bill. I want to make a difference in life by saving lives. I want to save someone's life and prevent them from burying themselves in debt at the same time.

Moving forward, I will go to college and complete an undergraduate degree in four years. I hope to get a major in either Biomedical Sciences or Biology and then go onto medical school. I will continue to be an active member of my community by doing community service projects. I will keep believing in myself even when things get difficult. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning." I will continue to grow intellectually in order to accomplish what I want. Also by being an active member of my community, I will make connections with people that can help me make this change come true. Never giving up and always working until this goal is accomplished is what I strive to do. Why pay so much money to have your life saved? By working with those who live in poverty and making connections in the outside world, I will make this goal come true. By being myself and showing people the values the Jesuits -- ethics, integrity, honesty, respect for people, loyalty, reliability, and being a man for others -- I will make this impact on the world.

Arrupe Jesuit instilled the values of the Jesuits into me, and for that I am grateful. I was taught to respect others as well as myself. I was taught to be a man for others. Thanks to Arrupe I learned valuable lessons that I will carry with me through my life. I will move forward in life being a man for others. With everything that I have learned during my time at Arrupe Jesuit High School, I will impact people's lives for the better.

**FINALIST**

**DANIELA RODRIGUEZ**  
**CLASS OF 2020**

I believe to be generous is to be extraordinary. To give up some items, your time, or just a piece of yourself with another person is crucial. It can be hard to give up a piece of yourself but the amount of selflessness built up in your personality just resembles how big your heart really is. The time spent actually speaking to other human beings is not common anymore. However, when you have that correspondence and when you realize that person has been trying way too hard to try to be the perfect song, you realize you need them as much as they need you and that is a special relationship. This is something not usually formed through the internet. Kindness and love is a heavy feeling that God has given to human beings. It is a gift.

Lately, there has been a person in my life that has helped me through a lot. He is always giving me advice. Being angry at situations is completely normal for me but preposterous to him; he is always finding ways to make me smile. He trusts me enough to share his problems with me. He rationalizes why he gets angry and I always end up backing down from our arguments because he has great persuasion skills and evidence to support his claims. This friendship was accidental for

me. It was after 3:30 pm on a Friday of October. I was sitting on the grass against a tree outside of the front doors of Arrupe. With closed eyes and an open mind, I sat there thinking about my imperfections and everything going wrong in my life. Then, one of my friends joined me at my tree. We were speaking to each other and after a while a stranger joined us. It was a different experience for me at first because I do not frequently speak to upperclassmen. The first question he asked me was a strange one concerning who was my favorite out of two superheros. Apparently, I answered correctly for the stranger to like me and speak to me. I cursed myself for letting this happen and soon enough my friend left because he had to go home. The stranger stayed. We talked to a degree. I was not shy, however I just did not feel like opening up because the stranger demolished my moderately peaceful evening. After a while, he got a hold of one of my social media accounts by asking my friend for my account name. We started talking quite periodically. He was an awe-inspiring, a "sui generis" soul, and I ended up liking him for a collection of one of my few friendships. Little did I know, he would be quite meaningful to me.

That stranger became my best friend, if you want to call it that. I used to think he was an intruder and he just did not want to be alone. I felt uncomfortable with speaking to a stranger much less one that is athletic and an extrovert. He was the one that mostly spoke and I was blasting the music from my phone partly singing along to the lyrics. I was emotionally stable as long as I did not have to speak. I used to think my opinion or whatever words that escaped my lips did not matter so I kept my mouth confined while he was present.

I realized what I was doing under the tree. My mind was destroying me and he saved me from completely ripping myself apart. For some reason, when he first sat down, I felt safe as if I would be okay in the end. I did not trust that feeling so I tried to keep my distance. He may have seen something other people walking by did not see and wanted to get to know me better. I have learned that he is more observant than most, kinder than most, and quite calm. Since then I have decided I should not dislike people just because they start speaking to me when I am doing nothing or when I believe the action of what I am doing is more important than socializing with that person. He made me realize that being a person of higher quality takes no effort whatsoever. His heart and soul have helped me by showing me that little acts of kindness could positively change someone's life. I want to be like him. He is like a real life superhero; helping people, showing them that he cares, and just simply trying to make conversation with someone about their interests. He does not realize what he does. He does not realize the beautiful impact he has on people. I do realize who he is and I try to remind him nearly every day. I do my best to thank him for all that he has done.

I am grateful for him and his magnificent brain and soul. He was the sun. I believed I was a small star. He made me realize I was the moon, wishing to be as bright as the sun. But now, I am okay with it. I am content with my level of brightness and I am joyous to actually know this person. Currently, I do not look at the mirror with as much distaste or despair. I see myself and see most things that make me who I am. Without him, I would probably abominate myself more than I used to. I try to be optimistic with myself and with the other people here at Arrupe. It has helped me more. Everybody is so positive about life and so content with everything they have to work for and the items laid out in front of them. Because of that and the current experience and events I have to deal with, I have realized it is easier to be angry and have my heart taken over by anger and despair. This does not mean it is the right thing to be done or that it does not affect others. It is exceptional to not let your demons get to you. Rather I have learned from him to be kind and to bring someone up instead of bringing them down to your level of suffering. I know what it is like to be hurt, to be numb, and to not want to get out of bed. I do not want others to feel that way. I would rather let them know

how important they really are. I would rather let them know they are not alone and that they are loved no matter how many ignorant people told them they are not. Compassion is a huge thing for me because it saved me when I thought I was a lost cause, hopeless to rot in my bedroom, a slave to words people describe me as. I am not going to be its slave anymore.

FINALIST

JENNIFER SANCHEZ  
CLASS OF 2018

Since the first day of school here at Arrupe Jesuit, I have learned the principles of being a man or woman for others. We have been taught to go out of our way to be able to help others and give to our community. Even though sometimes situations aren't the best, we must maintain a positive attitude. We must strive to brighten someone's day when it isn't going well. We must be the best people that we can be, even in tough times.

A time when I had encountered a difficult situation but maintained a positive attitude was my sophomore year while working at my CWSP job at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel. At the Sheraton, I worked at the front desk checking guests in and out of their rooms. I normally encountered some guests that weren't having the best of days or great experiences during their stay. There wasn't much for me to do, but I would try my best to be as kind as possible and maybe try to get them to smile a little. Sometimes they would project attitude towards me and there really wasn't much I could do for them, but I wouldn't let it affect me because I knew it wasn't anything I personally did, and everyone has their bad days. One time, however, a lady decided to attack me personally.

At the hotel, check-ins are normally at 3:00 pm, but this lady and her husband arrived around 10:00 am so I decided to help them and check if I had a room available to place them in. The other option was just to pre-check them in and text them once their room was available. The lady was part of the hotel's Starwoods Preferred Guests program (SPG), where people get points for every time they stay at a Starwoods hotel. There are different levels to SPG depending on the amount of stays one has, and the lady was barely at the first level meaning she didn't have very many stays and she wouldn't typically receive first option. At the pre-check in I told her that all of our rooms were occupied, but I took her information and told her I'd give her a text once her room was available. She became angry at me because she had the misconception that I was going to put her into a room already, and she was mad that I wasn't treating her as an SPG member. I tried to explain that I was doing everything I could for her but that was a busy week so we didn't have any rooms available and I couldn't get her a room until the normal time.

Around one o'clock she decided to come back and tell me that she got a text from the hotel saying her room was ready. I knew that wasn't true because her room was still being occupied and we had her listed as pending. Since she had waited for a long period of time and clearly was in a really bad mood, I decided to offer a kind gesture and upgrade her room to a suite with a nice view. Every morning we were told by our supervisors that we would have the chance to make one

person's day by upgrading their room. I decided to use mine on her in hopes of helping her have a better experience at the hotel and highlighting her day. The whole time I worked to upgrade her she was complaining and whispering things under her breath to her husband about me. I acted like I didn't hear anything and went on trying to help her. Once I set everything up I told her that I felt bad that she had to wait so long, so I informed her of her free upgrade and I gave her a smile. I was hoping to try and get a smile from her at least, but instead I got something that has stuck with me ever since.

She told me, "It's about time you do something right for me," rolling her eyes and with an annoyed voice and I never heard a "thank you" or anything.

I knew I had done everything I could and I never once insulted her or said anything to infuriate her or make the situation worse. I always gave her a smile and tried to make her feel better, but she was just not having the best day. Not every situation is going to be easy to deal with, but the way one responds is what matters. That day I was proud of myself for being able to keep my cool and try to be the best person I can be, even when I was in a difficult position.

Situations can be tough, but how you react is what shows who you truly are. Patience is always key! One must never give up and keep giving a smile even when situations drag us down. Father Pedro Arrupe once said, "Only by being a man and woman for others, does one become fully human." Patience and consideration are key to being able to understand people. To be fully human one must understand one another and be able to help each other out instead of making situations worse. One must keep their heads up and give the best version of themselves to everyone around them. Be gentle, be kind, but most of all, be loving.

**FINALIST**

**MELISSA VILLALPANDO**  
**CLASS OF 2019**

### **The Flightless Bird**

The idea of attending a Jesuit high school not only spikes excitement in myself, but it also reminds me of the purpose I was brought to this earth for. Attending Arrupe Jesuit has taught me that there is such thing as a community who cares about each individual. This Catholic high school has also opened so many new doors for me. I have started a new beginning into the working category. The Corporate Work Study Program has given me the opportunity to build onto my working experience. I really appreciate this opportunity in building character, confidence and the potential to be able to adapt in an environment where I see myself in the future. Arrupe has changed me into an outgoing person where I feel comfortable speaking to other adults who I am not quite familiar with. This could really help me with focusing and determining where to set my goals. Arrupe has helped me academically as well. My grades have grown much better since my Freshman year. The policies which Arrupe contain have kept me focused on my education. One of the main reasons I personally was looking forward to attending a Jesuit school was getting closer to God. Towards the end of

Freshman year, before attending Arrupe, I was participating in Catechism in order to earn my Confirmation. During this time period, I began to build onto my faith. Then in the summer, I saw an opportunity to also help myself grow in so many ways. Long before becoming a Freshman, my mother had heard of this school and urged me many times to try joining Arrupe for my 9th grade year. I obviously did not grow too fond of the idea of attending a Catholic school. But unfortunately, that was only one out of many of my questionable decisions I have made.

Before Arrupe I was completely different from who I am now. My mindset was in a different perspective. Freshman year was a new experience coming from a strict middle school. Denver Center for International Studies is where I attended before my Sophomore year. DCIS was completely new for a small naive girl who was ready to begin the high school fun. I began my first year at DCIS with sort of a negative attitude. In the summer before Freshman year, I had just gotten out of some drama with friends and had to deal with drama at home. For some reason I had not developed any motivation to build or keep my grades a certain way. Nor did I realize how serious high school really is compared to middle school. DCIS had so much freedom. They never had any strict homework or any disciplinary policies. At first, it seemed to be a dream come true. There was not a dress code either, which led me to let unnecessary things take up my time instead of focusing on the important events and responsibilities. As any typical girl, there was no surprise that I had also let the idea of "boys" occupy my mind also. With so many distractions and taking advantage of my freedom, it did not lead me down the right path. To add on to the unfortunate decisions, I had surrounded myself with people who made and encouraged me to make not quite intelligent decisions. From this point on, my life had gone down hill. I became angry with the way my life had been not realizing most of the events took place because of me. It became difficult for me to take responsibility of how low my grades had gotten. All I knew how to do was be angry with the world and with myself. Things were getting rough at home and I always slipped in the middle of the drama between my parents. I took advantage of how vulnerable my mother was to realize how much I had been slacking in school. Later my conscience had changed my opinion dramatically.

During my Freshman year, it had felt that I was a flightless bird who befriended many others who had the ability to fly. I spent so much time and attention just to feel welcomed and happy. And as this flightless bird, I would question if God had actually cared for me as an individual. I would beg for a sign to be able to have a clear view of where someone who was much different from the others was supposed to be. Eventually all the birds flew, and left the flightless bird behind and it was the cue for me to then open my eyes and realize I belonged somewhere else. I had already been attending catechism and at this point I began to pay attention in those classes. I grew closer to God. I listened to what my mother had to say was best for me and my future as any other loving parent would. I knew about Arrupe but when I had heard about the school, interest would spike inside me. I would always hear such great things about this school. Great things in which I wished to experience and achieve. Not long after God purposely had me cross paths with a friend who would soon be extremely important in my life. This important person had filled my mind with new wonders and facts about Arrupe. This friend had already gone to Arrupe, and later helped me reach the requirements of this school. My mother was pretty excited that I had chosen and voluntarily asked to attend Arrupe, and so she also had a big part of helping me get accepted. In that way she was encouraging me to attend and always being a mother for me. Unfortunately I had disappointed my mother for so long I had almost forgotten the excitement and thrill that would fill my heart when I heard the five simple words "I am proud of you" come out of her mouth. Arrupe has been one of the main factors that has changed me for the better.



The person who I have become only existed in my ninth grade dreams. I may have thought about changing in the way I am now, but never did it cross my mind to set this lifestyle as a goal. My grades are growing and getting much better than what it is permanently printed for my ninth grade year. I learned how to set goals and actually succeed in achieving them. My plans are set and I feel that I have a clear picture where my life will head to. I surrounded myself with people with good intentions and have a focused mindset for their future. People who do not worry about the fact that they will get into trouble for not doing their work correctly, but those who worry that their incorrect work will cost them just a few points. These are the people I will soon become. I am slowly becoming a woman for my mother, my friends, and for those who will be a part of my bright future. Before all my learning experiences, I always felt that I always have to be a woman for myself. In reality, I need to become a woman for others before I can become one for myself. By becoming a woman for others I will put my own needs after God and my family and friends. In the future God will help me and show me the way, just as He once had. I no longer carry anger in my heart, I have learned to accept my past and comprehend it all as a lesson. I may be a flightless bird, but I am the way God created me. In the end, I may be a flightless bird, but my faith and determination will forever be my wings.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2017  
WINNERS AND FINALISTS!**

Nothing is more practical than  
finding God, than  
falling in Love  
in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.  
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you do with your evenings,  
how you spend your weekends,  
what you read,  
whom you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in Love, stay in Love,  
and it will decide everything.

FR. PEDRO ARRUIPE, SJ  
(1907-1991)