

SEATTLE NATIVITY 'BELIEVED IN ME'

SCHOOL SHAPES FUTURE FOR STRUGGLING STUDENT AND FAMILY

Letter to Seattle is a new feature highlighting the good deeds and positive experiences in our region. This is a letter from Cristian Aguilar, a former student at Seattle Nativity School, a Catholic, Jesuit-endorsed middle school in south Seattle focused on a STEM curriculum. Submissions welcomed at rob@seattlemag.com.

Dear Seattle Nativity School,

Gratitude, intellectually competent, loving, religious, open to growth and committed to doing justice are all virtues I learned about as a middle school student at Seattle Nativity School. Today, I want to express my gratitude for the effort made to encourage me to stay in school and become committed to my own education. I am 19-years old now and planning my advanced education in construction.

In fifth grade, my family was homeless. I transferred three times in one year. School was a place to hang out and I did not understand the importance of my own education. Everything changed when my mom enrolled me in Seattle Nativity School. I felt encouraged by the teachers and I became committed to my own education. They believed in me. Seattle Nativity became a place where I grew and experienced a new life where education was important.

The teachers were so great and really cared about me. They helped me develop confidence in my schoolwork and taught me how to study — gave me that push to do better. With their encouragement, I felt committed to do my schoolwork and homework. Without my teachers, I know I would not have stayed in school. Graduating from high school on time would not have happened.

Seattle Nativity also gave me an opportunity to try different special classes and camps. I attended the AGC Construction Adventure Camp several summers and learned a lot about construction. Since I was homeless as a kid, it is really important that I know how to build my own home. Now, through Seattle Nativity's Graduate Support Program, I am working with a mentor from AGC and receiving guidance on a path for college and a career.

I am grateful to Seattle Nativity for improving my life and personal growth mindset. Because of my experience, it changed the school experience for my younger siblings. They feel better about school and take it seriously. Also, while I was in high school, my mom decided to go to the University of Washington to get her certification in Construction Management. This helped her get a better job and improve things for our family.

Thanks to my Mom, who decided I should attend Seattle Nativity School. Thank you to my teachers Dr. Vaughn, Mr. Bennett and Ms. Pentzien, who helped me build confidence, learn how to study and stay in school. I am looking forward to my next step toward an education and career in construction.

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