

# *Fabian Ramirez*

## *2007 Volunteer of the Year Nominee*

Fabian Ramirez is not your average 18-year-old. In one year, he has volunteered 1,000 hours and impacted more than 1,100 children as a teacher's aide, after school recreation leader, and Head Start preschool assistant. What's so remarkable about this young man is that he is a high school senior and a full-time employee who has managed to "give of himself" every week for the past year.

Fabian's parents separated when he was merely a child and his mother raised him in a single parent household. Growing up without a dad was difficult for Fabian to accept, but he pressed forward nonetheless. High school was challenging and Fabian dropped out his freshman year. Determined to get back on his feet, Fabian re-entered school at SOUL. He immediately found success at the school – receiving support and encouragement from caring adults and teachers. Determined not repeat his past, Fabian made a personal choice to turn his personal pain into 'power' by giving to others.

Over the next year, Fabian volunteered nearly 500 hours as a teacher's assistant with Head Start where he tutored, mentored, and coached 600 preschool children. "I enjoyed playing make-believe with the preschool children, hand painting, celebrating holidays, and doing puppet shows," said Fabian.

When not attending school, working at his new full-time job, or volunteering at Head Start, Fabian found the time and energy to volunteer as an after-school recreational leader at Tower Community Church. There, he led 30-60 children each day in board games, outdoor activities, and homework assistance for nearly six consecutive

months. Over 550 children benefited from Fabian's volunteer service of 250 hours as a recreation leader.



Fabian currently volunteers at his school as a teacher's aid and helps his fellow classmates with their schoolwork. He enjoys tutoring 20 underclassmen

on difficult subjects, grading papers, and enforcing the class rules. He takes this responsibility very serious, knowing the importance of being a positive role model. Fabian has also volunteered with the Sanctuary's Safe Place outreach program as a camp leader for inner-city children, participated in numerous outreach activities, and served as a youth organizer. This volunteerism earned him an additional 100 hours of service.

Fabian's future goals include graduating from high school, becoming an auto parts manager, and attending college as an electronics student.

He credits his success by stating, "I did not have role models to follow, so I became my own."