



Written by Coach Arce, former coach Citrus Hill High School

It was the beginning of the school year 2009-2010. I was planning my physicals event for Soccer; having a doctor come out and perform physicals for athletic clearance on campus. Mrs. Healey had talked to me about a young student in one of her Special Education classes who was interested in helping out with soccer in any way. He wanted to be involved. The day of the physicals came by and in walks Luis Plascencia. I knew it must be him because he approached the door very timidly. He then proceeded to take a seat in one of the empty desks. He put his hands around his head and began to cover his face with his notebook, as if deeply ashamed. Then one of my returning players said something to the effect of, "what's wrong with him?" "Callate", I yelled – "be quiet". Little did we know that this young, shy, boy with special needs would make such an impact on all of our lives.

I talked to Luis and let him know that he was trying out to be our team manager. I informed him that he would train just like the rest of the team and be required to do well in school too.

He agreed.

As the weeks and months passed by, we all began to get closer and closer to Luis. His jokes, his antics, and his bright smile gave the players a much-needed laugh after a long day of practice. The team began to embrace him as one of theirs. Luis took his job as manager very seriously, although at times I would have to make him hustle when he was feeling lazy. During our games, he proudly wore his team sweatshirt. His charisma was a much needed breath of fresh air during our contention for CIF playoffs; an endeavor that can be drenching and consuming for any team. Luis always kept us smiling. Even when he tried to flirt with the team captain's girlfriend; the same kid who once had asked "what's wrong with him" and now considered him one of the brothers.

Luis taught us all a very valuable lesson. My players and I learned more from Luis than they will ever learn from any coach; whether it be college or in the professional arena. Luis has taught us that life is about meeting your challenges head-on. Life is about counting your blessings and following your hopes and dreams.



[NOTE: Coach Reck, Citrus Hill HS current soccer coach, says Luis is once again Equipment Manager for the Citrus Hill Soccer Team! "Soccer involves virtually endless running, and it's important that our players stay fully hydrated to avoid cramps and injury. Luis makes sure everyone gets water during breaks, substitutions and halftime. He is our biggest cheerleader, fan and good luck charm. I guess that's why our team, through the first 8 games, has only one loss. Keep up the good work Luis!!!! Go Hawks!!!!"]