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Jocelyn Ramirez, New York University



Growing up, I never knew about the many opportunities outside of what my public school offered. With the help of my family therapist, I signed up for my first filmmaking class and embarked on an artistic journey at age fourteen. I came from a 5-member Mexican household and was exposed to different social and cultural issues from a young age. However, thanks to filmmaking, I was able to explore those issues, and even pursue my interest in college.

The first film class I took involved documenting Sunny War, a homeless musician struggling to make a living at the well-known Venice Beach. Our job was to shadow our subjects and portray their living situation, along with getting to know them as individuals. The end result was something greater than I had imagined, a work resulting in different people coming together and learning about the struggles Sunny War faced. From there on I was involved in other projects concerning our surrounding communities, and I became aware about issues such homelessness, education, gentrification, and one that I became very active in: autism. I became much more than a filmmaker, but also an activist and someone more open minded and empathetic than I had been before.

I had my first job interning at Venice Arts, a non-profit organization that offered multimedia classes for low-income students. I mentored in the film classes, helping students with camera equipment and teaching them how to use professional editing programs such as Final Cut Pro. I had never felt so useful and empowered after seeing the impact I had on many of the students and parents. Going from a very shy and introverted teenager, to a more articulate and conscious young adult is something that filmmaking and art was able to do for me. I look forward to using all these new skills I have learned not only from my classes, but from the people I've met, and turn them into something positive for the future.

Video: [Dear Jason](#)



Jason. B&W, 35mm



Ricky. Digital, Print

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