

YSC Staff Spotlight

Name: Vanessa Vazquez

Title: Academic Tutor, Mentor

Education: Pursuing a B.A. in Chicano/a Studies & Spanish-language Journalism.

Hometown: Born in Santa Monica, raised in Arleta. I consider both places home.



Family: Mom, Dad (*R.I.P.*), 1 older brother and 1 older sister. I'm the youngest.

Hobbies: I love spending time with my family. Although we are always busy, we try to get together at least once a week for a home cooked meal. I love to read and I try to keep up with current events by reading the news. When I have free time, I enjoy riding my bike or walking my dogs. I also enjoy going to concerts or shows and updating music on my iPod.

How did you come to Youth Speak Collective?

I heard about Youth Speak through Sylmar High School. I saw students there participating in an activity where they were planting flowers around the campus. That sparked my interest, so I visited the website and learned about the unique opportunities like the community garden Project Youth Green that provides gardening and healthier programs for youth.

What is your role at Youth Speak Collective?

I tutor students in a variety of subjects including math, science, history and English. I also teach a CAHSEE English tutoring class where I help students who didn't pass the exam learn new strategies and techniques. I am also a mentor and I provide students advice and guidance on succeeding in school and pursuing a higher education.

What is the best part of your role?

The best part of my role is interacting with students, having the opportunity to be a mentor, sharing my experiences, and being a role model. Although I am the one teaching them, I manage to learn something new about my students everyday. Another awesome part of my role is empowering my students and telling them that they can achieve anything as long as they try.

What is your favorite TV Channel?

TBS. I love Conan! I also watch a lot of re-runs from the '90s (*Fresh Prince of Bel Air, Full House, Saved By The Bell*)

Favorite place you have been and why?

Mexico City because of the history that is embedded there and because my dad grew up there.

Where is the next place you would like to go?

I'd like to revisit Mexico City. I'd like to go to Washington D.C. and tour the many components of the Smithsonian Museum. Finally, I want to travel throughout South America and Europe.

What makes you laugh/cry?

Seeing people cry because of loss makes me cry. I laugh when my students say or do something funny, when my brother and sister act silly, or when my younger cousins ask funny questions.