

Ethan Martinez
Recipient of the Latino Leadership Scholarship

High School: Hammonton High School

College Acceptance: Rowan University

Extracurriculars:

National Honors Society, boys spring track and field, Boys Basketball, Chess club, Video game club, Live it be it club, Math club, Physics Olympics, Principals Honor roll, School Recognition Award, Rural and Small town recognition, AP scholar with distinction. Class rank 8th out of 294

Essay:

Growing up Hispanic has shaped my identity, values, and aspirations. As a Mexican American, I have always believed that education is one of the most powerful tools for overcoming adversity. In communities like ours, where many families face social and economic barriers, higher education represents the clearest path out of poverty. My upbringing has taught me that success is not only personal, it is something that can uplift entire families and communities. My parents have been my greatest influence and support system. My mother instilled in me pride for our Mexican heritage and the importance of serving others. In our hometown of Hammonton, she was one of the connectors involved in the Hammonton Health Coalition, an organization dedicated to celebrating Latino culture and expanding opportunities for underrepresented Hispanic families. Through her work, I learned the importance of community involvement and cultural advocacy.

My father taught me discipline, perseverance, and work ethic. From an early age, he emphasized the importance of hard work and accountability. When I was in elementary school and all I wanted was to play video games he set up our internet to shut off at 6 pm so that I could not play any more video games and focused on school work. While it felt unfair at the time, that lesson became one of my earliest experiences in discipline and self-improvement. My father also introduced me to LEGO's, a shared passion that became a defining part of my childhood and taught me the love for building and engineering. He also bought me my first Rubik's cube. Those moments connected me with my dad and inspired me to pursue a degree in Mechanical engineering.

As a Hispanic student, I have grown up balancing cultural pride with the desire to break barriers. Mexican culture has taught me the importance of family, resilience, and hard work. In my household, family always comes first. I have witnessed first hand my parent's struggles and hard work and their resilience and perseverance have motivated me to work harder, not only for myself but for future generations.

Our culture has also taught me to celebrate diversity. Mexican heritage is rich, complex, and often misunderstood. From our traditions and indigenous roots to our regional cuisines and values, I have learned that being Mexican American means embracing

both cultural history and modern ambition. This perspective has inspired me to advocate for greater representation of Mexican culture and traditions in schools and communities, ensuring others understand the depth and beauty of our heritage. It has also given me the opportunity to enjoy the delicious Mexican cuisine. I love tamales, quesabirrias, tacos, rice and beans and all the delicacies that our culture offers.

My personal struggles with flat feet and sports injuries have driven my ambition to pursue a degree in Mechanical engineering at Rowan University with the hopes of eventually obtaining a Master's degree in Biomechanics. My goal is to use technology and biomechanics to help athletes that deal with injuries while playing sports. My ultimate goal is to build a business that creates jobs and internships for young people interested in technology, sports medicine and biomechanics.

Growing up Hispanic has shaped me into someone who values education, family, and service. I strive not only to succeed for myself but also to honor my family's sacrifices, uplift my community, and contribute to a future where more Hispanic students can see education and their roots as pathways to success.