

**Metzere Cortez Remarks for “Guest Speaker” at the January 20th, 2015 “Seeing the Stars”
Annual Campaign Kick-Off for Camp Colman and Camp Orkila.**

Good evening, buenas noches! – My name is Metzere Cortez. First of all, I want to say Thank You. Thank you for the opportunity of sharing with all of you tonight. Thank you YMCA for the awesome and unforgettable experience last summer at Camp Colman.

Thank you Saint Vincent de Paul for partnering with the YMCA to offer an opportunity like the one I had to students who would have never had the chance to grow into the larger Y family. And Thank you to my mother for always been there for me.

Last summer, my mother, who works two jobs just to make ends meet, received a call from the Centro Rendu Latino Center of SVdP in Kent, with a message that she qualified for an opportunity to have her child attend YMCA’s week long experience at Camp Colman.

At the moment, my mother and I did not know what this opportunity would bring, but we trusted the St. Vincent de Paul Centro Rendu staff and signed up for camp.

Last summer’s experience as a camper changed my life. There I met a lot of awesome people and beautiful places, this experience taught me that I don’t live in an “ordinary world” – that there is more than the daily activities that keep us all busy moving ahead without reflecting in our interconnectedness.

The beauty of the nature that surrounds Camp Colman, the great camp leaders who are role models, the inclusiveness of the experience, all these has led me to aspire for more. For more than just surviving and getting ahead. Last summer Camp Colman awoke in me a desire to experience more, to do more, to be more, for the greater good.

TODAY I stand in front of you with a greater appreciation for what this wonderful world has to offer and with a growing desire of being part of the larger YMCA family.

I have goals, we all do, but today I add one more goal to that list, and that is... becoming a “Counselor at a YMCA camp”

That is just one of many goals, and with wonderful caring people like all of you here, I know now that I can make it. It’s a big world, and now I am part of it, thanks to all of you! Thanks again for the scholarship and for the experience.

Thanks again to everyone involved in this process for without you I and other like me, would never get to experience these types of activities that can be life changing. And last but not least, I thank God for each of you for you make it happen – you are in my prayers and always will be in my heart.