



# New Mexico Activities Association Student Spotlight

## Bojorquez is Big Man on Campus at ATC

*By Jeff Jackson*

In more ways than one, Emmanuel Bojorquez is a big man on campus at his school.

The ninth-grader plays center for the basketball team at the Academy for Technology and the Classics and at 5 feet-9 inches, towers above others on the court.

But Emmanuel is also a leader around the campus academically because he takes his coursework seriously. He is among the charter school's tutors who make weekly visits to nearby Nina Elementary School to help and encourage younger students.

"I try hard in every class, but biology is my hardest class," Emmanuel says. "Biology, I take a little more seriously."

Dissecting frogs and other animals this semester and conducting water-diffusion experiments last semester with the guidance of science teacher Jennifer Ferguson instilled in Emmanuel the realization that success in the classroom is just as fulfilling as winning in sports.

"I like science. It's really interesting. We never waste time in class and there's always something to do. She's one of my favorite teachers. She's tough and she expects us to do well because she's preparing us for college, and I believe it," Emmanuel says.

Emmanuel entered the more-challenging ATC as a seventh grader just for that purpose – setting himself up for college and he feels the faculty there motivates the students.

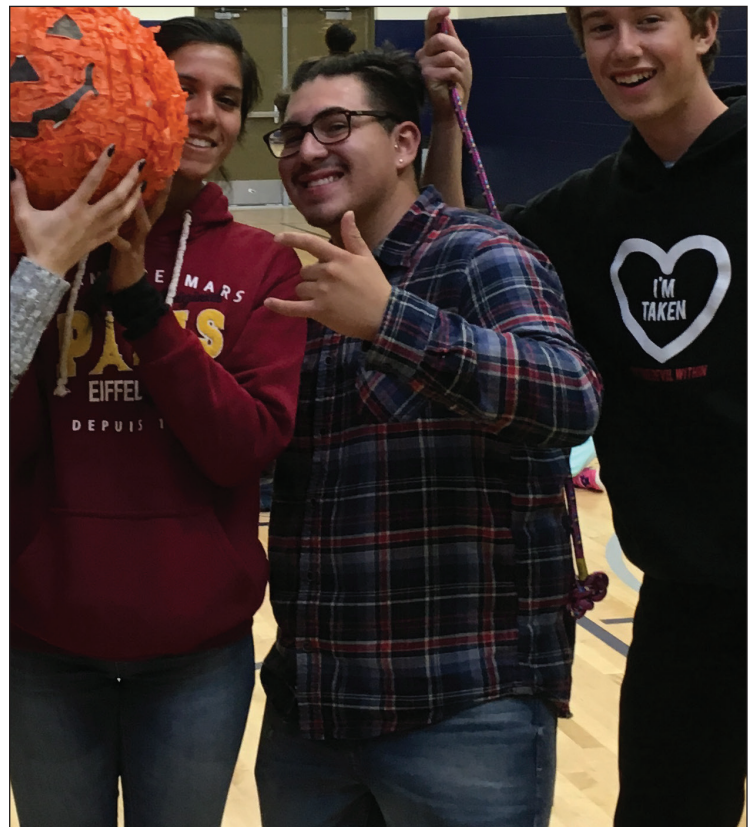
"At other schools, they let you slide if you don't do your homework. At ATC, they keep pushing you until you turn it in," Emmanuel says. "For me, it's a bigger challenge than the other schools. They really want you to do your best. There are kids that really care about school and their grades. At ATC, every teacher wants you to do your best, and they do a good job. The teachers are always explaining to us that they're getting us ready for college. The way I look at it, it's a really good way to get you prepared."

ATC does not have an indoor basketball court – only an outdoor court – so the three teams (varsity and junior varsity boys and one girls squad) trek over to Nina Elementary for practice and home games. But most games are played at the opponents' sites.

That situation also is convenient for Emmanuel and other students who tutor the elementary school students. He gets a big kick out of the help he has been providing since the beginning of the school year. He goes every Thursday for two-and-a-half-hour sessions with two separate students who need help.

He feels he is making a difference in their lives, he said.

"I help them with their homework or whatever else they



need. I like tutoring. It makes me feel good because they usually thank me after. It makes me feel appreciated. The first couple of days they didn't want to try, they didn't want to do anything. But after the first couple of days they actually focus on their work.

"When I'm not able to go, the coach will tell me they asked about me and that makes me feel good. A lot of the kids really enjoy me being around them. I really like being around them. I don't really do it for community service hours. I do it because I like it."

Now in his second year of playing basketball, Emmanuel has spent most of his time on the junior varsity but has seen time with the varsity team as well. He says coach Tim Host is considering making a permanent spot for him on the varsity.

"It's a bigger challenge. There are older guys with more experience in basketball, so I have to give it my all, my best shot," Emmanuel says.

At 14 years old, Emmanuel is not lacking in confidence as a basketball player.

"A lot of people think I'm 18. I look a lot older. It does help me a lot; my size helps me too."