



JANUARY 2026

THE GOOD NEWS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF SAVE OUR YOUTH



IN LOVING MEMORY OF (MENTEE) JULIO IVAN VASQUEZ GONZALEZ

In early December '25, our city was shaken by a tragic accident that captured public attention: a bus carrying high school wrestlers collided with an SUV. While much of the news focused on the van, there was another story unfolding more quietly, one deeply connected to our Save Our Youth family.

Julio was a Save Our Youth mentee and a passenger in the SUV. Despite best efforts at the hospital, unfortunately Julio passed away a few days after the accident. His younger brother and sister remain in critical condition. Julio was a senior in high school, the oldest of five children, and would have been a first-generation college student. He dreamed boldly of becoming an astronaut or joining the military—desiring to help people and share his light with the world. Anyone who knew Julio was blessed by his calm, innocent, steady presence.

For five years, Julio was matched with his mentor, Trevor. Their relationship was real, steady, and deeply rooted. Together they had fun and navigated life's milestones. Julio was an active member of JROTC for three years and participated in our Senior Experience program last year, stepping into adulthood with courage and curiosity. Those of us at Save Our Youth often saw Julio and Trevor together laughing at events, creating art, competing in watermelon-eating contests, simply showing up side by side. What we witnessed was not a program requirement, but a genuine bond.

During Julio's hospitalization, his mother, Suleyma, invited Trevor and one of our staff members into critical medical meetings. We were able to witness the deep care this family had: supporting each other in what felt like an impossible tragedy. Suleyma called Trevor a brother to Julio. Trevor later served as a pallbearer at Julio's funeral, held on Christmas Eve. This is not what we prepare mentors for, but what a blessing for Trevor and Julio to have enriched each other's lives these last five years, not knowing we would also be needing to say goodbye too soon.

Through the generosity of our donors, Save Our Youth was able to cover Julio's funeral expenses: an act of care and dignity offered during a season of profound grief.

When praying with Julio's mother, one word was spoken: hope. After the prayer, she lifted her head and said, "That was his favorite word. Hope." Mentorship does not remove hardship. But, it anchors young people to hope and sometimes, it carries that hope forward when words fall short. Please continue to keep Julio's siblings, family, and Trevor, in your prayers as they walk through this new year.

2025 Was Possible Because of You!

Because of your support, Save Our Youth delivered **meaningful, measurable impact** for young people across our community in 2025.

We served **296 youth** through consistent, caring mentoring relationships, and made **96 new mentor-mentee matches**, expanding access to support when it matters most.

Mentor matches averaged **29 months**, providing stability during critical developmental years. Even more encouraging, our one-year **continuation rate reached 68%**, improving from 65% in prior years and moving us closer to our 75% goal. **This means more mentors and mentees chose to stay connected, deepening trust and long-term impact.**

The results extended beyond the matches themselves. Among seniors in the program, **92% graduated on time**, demonstrating the power of consistent mentorship paired with accountability and encouragement. To start this year, we already have 25 mentors still in process.

Behind every statistic is a personal story and a supporter who made these matches possible. Your investment helps build **relationships that last**, and **outcomes that change futures.**

We recently held our 2026 staff kickoff (pictured right) and are ready to continue elevating hope and being the hands and feet of Jesus in Denver and our partner cities. **We look forward to sharing all that God is going to do in 2026!**



Match Christmas Party

In December, Save Our Youth brought mentors and mentees together for one of our most **joyful traditions** of the year: the Annual Match Christmas Party, themed “Christmas Around the World.”

More than 200 people attended, including **91 mentor-mentee matches**, filling the space with laughter, connection, and celebration. Mentees traveled “around the world” through hands-on activities inspired by different cultures, while interactive stations like bingo, cornhole, and a global holiday flight of kid-friendly drinks encouraged **conversation** and **shared experiences** between pairs. Matches also received a “passport photo” and keepsake, creating a tangible memory mentors and mentees could take home together.

We are deeply grateful to **St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church**, whose generosity made the season brighter by providing over 120 personalized gifts, each thoughtfully selected from mentee wish lists and valued at approximately \$50 per child. We also extend sincere thanks to **Altitude Church** for graciously hosting the event and creating a welcoming space for our community. And a huge thank you to David Perez for sharing the gospel with our attendees.

Because of you, the holidays were filled with **connection, dignity, and joy**—reminding every young person they are seen, celebrated, and supported.



Increase Hope, Promote Hope, Expand Hope



FIRST 5
MATCHES MADE
IN NEW
MEXICO!

In 2025, Save Our Youth took a faithful step forward and piloted our expansion plan. After nearly 30 years of mentoring young people in Colorado, we began asking a bigger question: **What if hope could travel?** Our expansion model is simple and relational. We partner with like-minded nonprofit organizations, equipping them with our proven mentoring framework while walking alongside them with **training, coaching, and support**. Instead of starting from scratch, we build together, multiplying impact and sharing decades of mentoring experience for the sake of young people.

We began close to home in the spring, partnering with The Pearl in Longmont, a ministry serving single mothers. **Together, we launched our first five mentor-mentee matches**, strengthening families already rooted in community.

In Q4, hope crossed state lines. We partnered with Juntos, a Christian youth leader organization in Albuquerque, New Mexico, deeply invested in their city's youth. **In December, we celebrated our very first five matches in New Mexico**—a milestone moment for Save Our Youth and a glimpse of what's possible.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're continuing with thoughtful growth. We plan to **launch one more pilot group in Springfield, Missouri**, refine and strengthen our expansion model, and then take on our **first two official partner organizations over the summer and winter**.

This is what expansion looks like: **trusted relationships, shared mission, and hope taking shape, one match at a time.** Because of your generosity, hope is being elevated in Colorado, and beyond. As you look at the photos to the left of our first five matches in New Mexico, **we invite you to pray for these youth, their mentors, and the communities surrounding them.**

Your giving doesn't just support a program. It multiplies hope.

6 Years at Save Our Youth: Darcy Burge, Mentoring Specialist

Hello Save Our Youth!

As of December, I have accepted a role with a local nonprofit, North Littleton Promise as their Marketing Specialist. An organization that works with Littleton immigrant families!

Making this decision and sharing it with you comes with much emotion, but above all, a **peace that passes understanding through the Holy Spirit.**

My six years with Save Our Youth have been filled with **joy, learning, and growth**, and it has truly been an honor and privilege to serve you. Whether we connected because you were on my caseload, talked through a ticket request in the app, had questions about the newsletter, or shared excitement and praise around the Back to School or Christmas parties I planned this past year, **I am deeply grateful for each of you.** For without you and your heart to mentor, Save Our Youth wouldn't exist!

In my time at Save Our Youth, my life experienced numerous seasons. Many of you partnered in prayer over me through the early passing of my mom in 2020, to having my first son in 2021, to career changes of my husband last year which came with church transition, to now the coming of a second son in March!

I will look back on my time here with **joy and thankfulness.** I hope to connect again whether that be at a ministry, church event, or our celebration in Heaven when that beautiful day comes.

Until then, may the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Darcy Burge

