

*Patrick Lopez:* I was born here in Albuquerque, roots are in New Mexico, uh, northern New Mexico, but uh, really raised in LA, so during the school year I was with gang members and in the summer I was here at my Tio's ranches, uh, helping out with the sheep and the cattle, and it was quite a mix of two worlds. My dad was a sheepherder, and he comes from generations of sheepherders, and I run Explora, which is a science center here in Albuquerque. There's so much science involved with agriculture, when I think about it, it's such a natural thing to think that I would be involved with science and what that's all about. And, uh, why don't you say a little bit about yourself, Miguel?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Ok, so I was born here too, and I was raised by my mom and dad. I like to, uh, go on my scooter, ride around old town, go to Explora.

*Patrick Lopez:* When you come to Explora, what do...what do you do?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Well, I like to go through the back so then I can see all the workers, talk to them, talk to my best friend Dwayne, um, then I go out into the exhibits and talk to all the workers on the floor. I like to hang out in the store because they always have new stuff there to look at and then to persuade my dad to buy for me.

*Patrick Lopez:* Yea, I know that's why you hang out at the store. You've been here since I've been involved, which is 8 years here at Explora, so you were in first grade. So, what...what's your favorite exhibit here?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Well, there's a few I like. There's one display where you can create a water wave for these small little floating balls to go through. It's like a river, you create like a little dam. When you flood it up and you let it go, all the water rushes out and the marbles have to find their way through the maze of water.

*Patrick Lopez:* So the stream table.

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Yea. One of my favorite activities at Explora was making elephant toothpaste. It's like a liquid and then you add something to it, it's a chemical reaction. You're not supposed to touch it, even though I accidentally touched it once. Nothing happened though, I was completely safe.

*Patrick Lopez:* I think you found a new creature that you never knew existed?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Right.

*Patrick Lopez:* You want to talk about that?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* It's an amphibian, it's kind of look...freaky looking. It's called an axolotl. They look like tadpoles, except for with legs. They're found in Mexico. Their gills are inside out so they breathe underwater, so they don't become air breathers like most amphibians.

*Patrick Lopez:* Man, they're pretty cool, sort of look like dragons, don't they?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Right.

*Patrick Lopez:* So, you think Explora's influenced you any?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Ha! A lot, it brought me more towards the idea of science and hands-on building. A few years ago I built a fan. I found a motor in my room so I decided to connect batteries to it and glue some plastic to it. Uh, this year I did a science fair project about cleaning water with sunlight. UV is powerful enough so it's kind of in a way boiling water. So that purifies it. My best friend Dwayne helped me with that, from Explora. And I went to science fair regionals with that and I walked away with 210 dollars.

*Patrick Lopez:* So have you put any thought into what you want to do for next year's science fair project?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Well, I want to stay with water because of how much money I've been able to get off of that. So, then I could do a lot of different things with rivers and cleaning them, but yea, I'd go for a continuation of a river cleanse.

*Patrick Lopez:* So, have you thought of what you want to become Miguel Angel?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Well, I want to become an engineer, like hands-on science. I can build whatever I want by being an engineer. I get to work with computers, computer sciences, technology. I want to become a neuroscientist so I can do, like, stem cell research and stuff like that, even though it's against the church.

*Patrick Lopez:* Why engineering? Why are so interested in engineering Miguel Angel?

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Cos it's hands on and fun stuff, you can build cars, you can build anything you want. You can build bionic arms for people that have lost their arms. Ok, I'll ask a question that I haven't been able to do this whole time.

*Patrick Lopez:* OK.

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Uh, why did you decide to work at Explora?

*Patrick Lopez:* Why did I...Well, science education's always been important to me. I saw this as an opportunity of impacting science education here in Albuquerque and the state, and who knows, maybe what we do here will catch on in the nation. Which is, uh, what we do with, uh, teaching science and how its materials is really doing the teaching.

*Miguel Angel Lopez:* Why have you stayed with Explora? What do you like most about it?

*Patrick Lopez:* I love the potential of what can happen here, um, we just got the national medal. We are being recognized as being innovative, uh, with science education. We now have some

land that we could develop, uh, which is north of Explora and we could develop an educational cultural park. I mean, I think the sky's the limit for innovation and excitement that, that can happen here.