



Gonzalo Villafan

Baby Sister

Dark hair
Light skinned
Green eyes
Very cute
Cries, laughs
So.... funny
She's sweet

Gonzalo Villafan
Age 10, Walton School



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Cleveland Students EXPRESS THEIR SUCCESS at Fifth Annual AMERICA SCORES Cleveland Poetry slam!

Power of Words Proven for One CMSD Student — in many languages

Friday, November 13 in John Hay High School's Auditorium

CLEVELAND, OH –Language is life for Gonzalo Villafan.; you can tell by the way his eyes light up when he speaks about poetry. To many, this would seem like an unusual interest for a 10-year-old 5th grader from Ohio City's Walton K-8 School, but for Gonzalo and his America SCORES Cleveland (ASC) teammates poetry is an outlet for creative expression.

"I am excited to show what I feel inside of me. Poetry allows me to do that," Gonzalo shared when asked about his upcoming performance in America SCORES Cleveland's Poetry Slam!

He and his 15 classmates ranging in ages 8-12 performed an original team poem, titled "Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall" before 15 other America SCORES Cleveland teams and their families on Friday, November 13 in John Hay High School's Auditorium. Gonzalo also took the stage alone to perform his own poem.

Three years ago, the story would have been very different. Plagued by shyness, Gonzalo never would have stepped foot on stage. But after experiencing the freedom of speaking his mind at the 2007 Slam!, he could talk to anyone. Something about performing in front of 600 people helped him to get over his fears and it probably didn't hurt that his team walked home with the coveted Golden Mic Award. "I used to be afraid of speaking in front of people and my classmates, but the Poetry SLAM! helped me get over that," said Gonzalo, "I was proud to be in SCORES that night."

This freedom of expression has helped Gonzalo conquer his fears in the classroom, on stage and even in the doctor's office. Gonzalo translates for his parents, who speak little English. Although it is difficult for Gonzalo to translate medical terms he does not even understand, he does it because he loves to help his mother, Maria, at his 2-month-old sister's doctor appointments. SCORES has empowered Gonzalo to speak for those who sometimes cannot.

As one of the 16 individual poets performing at this year's SLAM!, Gonzalo has the opportunity to be selected as one of two ASC representatives to America SCORES National Poetry Slam in New York City, all expenses paid. While he was excited about the chance to visit the Big Apple and to share the news with his grandparents in Mexico, Gonzalo is more excited to share the stage with his teammates and hopefully regain their team title.

The America SCORES Cleveland Poetry Slam! was from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at John Hay High School Auditorium, 2075 Stokes Blvd. Cleveland, OH 44106. The Poetry Slam! was open to the public and over 350 parents, faculty members and community leaders attended the event honoring our 256 poet-athletes performing in boys and girls team and individual performances. Sharon McDonald, Ed. S., Deputy Chief of Special Projects with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and State Senator Nina Turner, 25th District, spoke during the event.

About America SCORES Cleveland

America SCORES Cleveland is an affiliate of America SCORES, a national model for sports-based youth development targeting girls and boys in urban neighborhoods. America SCORES Cleveland serves 256 students ages 8-12 in eight Cleveland Metropolitan Schools located within the Glenville, Hough, Fairfax, North Broadway/Slavic Village, Puritas-Longmead, and Ohio City neighborhoods. This five-day per week after-school program works to enrich the lives of inner-city youth through regular participation and skill building in soccer, creative writing, and service-learning. Teamwork – the key to success in both education and sports -- is the common denominator. For more information, visit www.AmericaSCORESCleveland.org.