

This program has impacted me by the simple fact that I get to make a child smile through the love, support, mentoring, structure and by simply caring enough to help someone in a bit of need going through hard times. It's not easy for the youths of today in their crisis they face. Some of the children I've mentored have no one to help them with whatever problems they face such as school, home, their friends, or poverty. These are just a few examples of what I have been blessed to work with. It makes me feel good as a person knowing I can help them in some way to support them through some of the hardships they face, because I simply tell them I've been there (in their shoes). It makes me want to give back because of (what I have gone through) to help these children for a short spell.

I always tell them their situation is "only temporary", and as you "get older", you can change the course of the situation by staying focused on school, family, or even a "higher power". Life's situations change all the time, and it's their choice as becoming young adults in this society to make it right for themselves and their families. (Like I did). I also take them to eat or to parks, movies, and shopping, and the program provides special events set for the children. I can't stress enough how much this make them happy, to be out and about doing the things teenagers love to do.

I'm very blessed to be a part of the wonderful VIP program. I have been with this program for a little over 5 years and have been able to also serve in as a council member as well. I have to say I work with the most caring and loving individuals, Peggy Cano as well as Melissa Villarreal and Gloria Casillas. My plan is to continue to be here for all the children I will meet and work with; there are so many children that need help so that we may help them have happy endings, success, and build up children's self esteems to make their way through life. This is how the VIP program has impacted me, working for the children and a wonderful team here at the Juvenile Probation Department's Volunteer (VIP) Program.

Sincerely
Herlinda Ramos