



VISIONAR Scholarships is proud to present:

Letters from a firefighter: Matias' story.

In this report, I invite you to get to know a bit more about one of our VISIONAR students. Matias embodies the spirit of VISIONAR. He is goal-oriented, ambitious, hard-working student, and more: when Matias is not busy studying or helping in his uncle's clothing business, Matias is a volunteer firefighter. He is an inspiration for us all.

Nota Bene: I obtained Matias' permission to share excerpts of his email messages.

Feb 17, 2014

I am MATIAS, and I receive a VISIONAR scholarship. First of all, I want to thank VISIONAR for this great help; I don't have words to thank you enough.

I am 22 years old and am in the 3rd year of college with a major in international business. I come from a very hard-working family. My father is a factory worker for a company that manufactures sewing machines and kitchen stoves. My mom is a housewife and works as a seamstress. I have two older sisters, Vanesa and Noelia.



Besides working hard to get my degree in international business, I am truly passionate about my service as a firefighter. Unlike in the United States, the majority of firefighters in Argentina are volunteers. No pay means that we have to find other careers in parallel to firefighting. But our training is just as rigorous and our involvement in the community is just as professional as if it was a full-time job. The best pay as a firefighter is a hug and a "thank you" from the people we get to help. Sometimes I get to save lives, sometimes I get to save property, but I do it all with a lot of passion. And after an incident that might require long hours and dangerous situations, I and my team get to go back to our "day jobs" and occupations.

For now I will stop here, because I could write pages and pages about my experiences as a firefighter and what that means to me.

June 15, 2014

Dear Gaby, How are you? Thankfully, all is well here. Thankfully, there was no major activity on the firefighting front in the month of May. But I am always ready (mentally) for that moment when the siren goes off and I am on duty getting ready for a mission.

All goes well in school, too. I am getting ready for mid-terms, so next month I will have some updates on that.

Greetings from here.

July 17, 2014

Dear Gaby, How is your week going?

Sorry I was late to reply to your email. It's been a very long week, even more so because of the Soccer World Cup. If I didn't get a heart attack from watching the match, up to the final minutes during penalty kicks, then I think I will live a long long time! ☺

I want to let you know I passed all my mid-terms with good grades (GPA is 7.80/10), and now I am preparing for final exams.

As far as community service, this past month I had to intervene in 11 incidents, besides working at the firefighters' headquarters, doing maintenance work on the building and on the trucks.

I send you a big hug,
Matias



Aug 13, 2014

Hi Gaby, How are you? I hope all is well. I am fine.

About my community work, now that winter is here, there is a lot more work to do. The drought is causing fires out in the countryside and around town, and that has kept me busy. It is hard when the wind makes the fire more difficult to contain. After putting out the fires, I work back at headquarters, to make sure the equipment and trucks are

in top condition for the next incident.

On the school front, I am happy to report that I passed all 5 courses with the following grades:

TAX ADMINISTRATION... 5
INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING... 7
ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY... 9
CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION... 9
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT... 9

My Grade point average to date is still 7.80 / 10. I intend to keep all my courses up to date, and not delay any of them, so I can obtain my diploma within the shortest timeline possible (4 years).

Warm greeting from this, your hometown.

Sep 22, 2014

Hi Gaby, How are you?

I know I said it before, but I want to reiterate my gratitude to you and to VISIONAR for supporting me and other students like me. Thank you for believing in us and supporting us.

Last month we continued with the fires in the outskirts of town. Some fires required many hours of work. I was exhausted.

I want to say that, when I hear your words of encouragement, I feel even stronger and more motivated. Some days are not easy, and sometimes I think I am trying to do too much, but then I am moved by people like you and all VISIONAR donors who support me despite the distance. Thank you, thank you so much. I want to keep fighting the good fight and get to all my goals in life!

I send you a big hug.
Matias.



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