



# CRISTIAN SALAZAR

## EL VALOR

Mr. Salazar is a graduate of Gage Park High School and has been with El Valor since 2010. One of the first big trips Cristian signed up for was the annual weeklong trip to Camp Confidence in Brainard, Minnesota in August 2011. He went camping with a group of friends and Coach Cruz in which he was able to truly experience wilderness activities.

Since coming to El Valor Cristian has made many new friends and has been exposed to many new opportunities. He has joined the Special Olympics Team and participated in his first Winter Sports in 2011 and won a gold medal in the snow shoeing event. He is involved at this time with the Cubs Care baseball league. He is part of the Eagles team. Cristian is also participating in 100 meter relay team and swimming. He will be participating this June for the Summer Special Olympics games to compete as a gold medal winner.

Some of the other program activities Cristian has signed up for include cooking, safety, sign language classes and Relationship Building research project in which he is training to be a peer mentor. In my interview with Cristian during high school he was pretty quiet and focused on home work. During his time at El Valor Cristian continues to share his peer mentoring skills which have allowed him to become a team leader. He enjoys taking on challenges and volunteers in many of the activities.

In the cooking class he has learned to prepare meals that he can do on his own to take care of himself when he gets a job. He is also taking on a leadership role in the sign language class. The reason he joined was to help him communicate with others that are non-verbal. He enjoys this new experience and assisted in the Winter Celebration by sitting in the front and supported the group as they signed and sang their Elvis song.

Cristian is a leader with many talents. With him learning sign language he didn't realize that he is trilingual, English, Spanish and now signing which not too many individuals can do. These skills will assist him in his role as ComEd Ambassador.