## Tell us about yourself.

I'm an international student from Argentina. One of my favorite things to do in my free time is visit new food joints with friends and try the different plates they offer. I go to the gym a few times a week and I occasionally play videogames on my PC with friends.

In Escuela Técnica ORT, where I followed the Information and Communications Technologies track, I was introduced to the concepts of project management and entrepreneurship.

Throughout high school I participated in several competitions, including programming ones, but I discovered that it was much more fulfilling to create something I could call my own (or the team's), and see the impact it had on others. From then on I focused my energies both inside and outside of school on building apps, services and platforms that would provide value to society.

## Why are you interested in participating in the Change Maker Summit?

I want to make new friends, meet people interested in entrepreneurship, and familiarize myself with the entrepreneurship environment and resources at Rice.

## Tell us about a time where you saw a need and what you did to address it.

Inti is blind and works at an NGO devoted to improving the welfare of the blind community. We met socially over a year ago and he illustrated to me the daily challenges faced by blind people by describing the difficulties and risks of visiting his grandmother. It was not that she lived too far or that he did not know the streets, but the famously undisciplined Buenos Aires drivers made intersections unsafe, scaffolding and unmarked trenches left by public works crews popped up everywhere, delivery trucks blocked sidewalks, and so on. As usual, my mind switched into problem-solving mode. I felt confident I could create an app to offer Inti and the rest of the blind community optimal routes and to keep track of transitory obstacles. After all, I had access to very powerful tools and I had solved other complicated problems before. A few days later I persuaded a couple of friends to give it a try.

The problem, however, appeared to become increasingly complicated as the days went by. Technology was not the issue, our lack of awareness of the experience of a blind person and our built-in biases were. For example, we took for granted that users would find it natural to interact with the app using the phone’s touchscreen interface. We were wrong, so we launched into designing audio features to provide them with feedback.

The weeks went by and we worked around one obstacle after another, but what we had underestimated were the non-technical issues. For example, the public works department bureaucrats did not think our project was worth their time, so they did not give us access to work schedules. We were not prepared to let that stop us though, and our frustration spawned an experiment in crowdsourcing with students at our school. Many of our schoolmates agreed to watch and report obstacles as they walked to and from school. Their input helped us validate crowdsourcing as a viable and effective approach.

With the help of the student body, we had built a voice-controlled app that recommended the best routes to take for a blind person, balancing time, obstacles and distance. It would also alert them of the presence of nearby dangers, their location and type.

We showed it to Inti and his colleagues. They were incredulous at first, then excited, then emotional. Watching Inti master the app’s interface made me feel fulfilled as I had never felt before. I realized I want to dedicate myself to socially-minded work in the future.

Note: This text is partly based on Common App essay. I chose to write about it because it was one of the experiences that impacted me the most and led me to other socially oriented projects.

## Are there any big problems that you are wanting to find a solution to or problems you want to work on? (\*Not necessary for admission to the program)

I have been recently researching a possible (relatively inexpensive to implement) solution to the problem of population control in a post-covid world.

Two things led me to become interested. The first was thinking about a way to make sure the measures taken by Rice for the Fall semester were being effective and followed. The second was an article by Business Insider that explained that a few companies are using expensive computer vision cameras to track how the space is used inside buildings to improve social distancing measures.

I believe that applying the wireless technology used by Waitz could be used in these circumstances to provide a space and people tracking service more cheaply.

## If this summit has been successful, I will have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

...made new friends and met a couple of people with the same interests and ideals I have.