**Tell us about a person who has influenced you in a significant way.**

**Rev FINAL (G T)**

My first chemistry teacher, Juan, was one of the most influential people in my life. He saw potential in me at a time I was not very interested in science. A week after the first class of the year, he invited me to an after-class science club, I decided to give it a try.

The club brought together students interested in competing in the Junior Science Olympiads. The first day I attended, I was surprised by the members’ commitment and the level of complexity of the topics Juan explained. He made sure that I was able to keep up with the workload. He lent me a pile of books so that I could catch up on weekends. He was different from my other teachers. Not only did he make sure we understood each topic thoroughly, but he also cared for us on a personal level.

I grew close to him and continued attending the club, becoming more and more interested in science. With his mentorship I won round after round of competitions until I qualified for the International Junior Science Olympiad. After that I had to train away from my home town with the national team and dedicated trainers, so we sadly lost touch.

We were all away from home, and felt overwhelmed by the intensity of our training and the responsibility of having to represent our country and we became very close. The need to cope made us develop a strong team identity and the rigor of the training made us all develop endurance and persistence.

After a few months of this, we traveled to the Netherlands to compete and I came back with a bronze medal. The first person I wanted to tell was Juan, but I soon got the news that he had died of a heart attack. I was devastated. I would never be able to thank him for everything.

My relationship with Juan was one of the most meaningful of my life. I will always be grateful for the role he played in developing my character and my passion for science. It was in his honour that I restarted the science club by teaching physics, to provide other students the same opportunity he had given me.