

## Meet Former Head Start Parents Teresa and Jose and Teresa and Their Son Pablo

Teresa Saleta is from Oaxaca, Mexico and Jose is from Madrid, Spain. They met as students and after marrying, moved to Spain, where their son Pablo was born.



The family came back to the U.S. in 1999, settling in Santa Maria where Teresa's parents lived. Jose found a job, although it didn't pay much. Teresa was working on her Ph.D. When Pablo turned 3, Teresa heard about Head Start because several of her nephews were enrolled. The family qualified for the program and Pablo entered the Alvin Center in Santa Maria. "We really needed the help," Teresa says.

They were thrilled to find that the Head Start center offered a high-quality early childhood education experience. Teresa found that Head Start had excellent curricula, and she knew Pablo was in a healthy and safe environment. She says she learned a lot about parenting from the Head Start program.

The Saletas feel that Head Start had a big influence on Pablo because it helped him to be ready for school from the start. They are deeply appreciative of the fact that although they were low-income, all the children at Head Start were treated with dignity and respect.

Teresa is now a Lecturer in Chicano Studies at UCSB. Jose is Student Programs Manager for the Geography Department. They believe that "Head Start helped make Pablo the sociable person and successful student he is today".



Pablo just turned 15 and is about to finish 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Dos Pueblos High School, where he is in honors classes with a G.P.A. of over 4.0. He plays classical viola and is a member of the school orchestra. He loves pop music, too – especially Lady Gaga.

He is a member of the Youth Council, an advisory group to the Santa Barbara City Council. He is fluent in Spanish and hopes to study Italian at Santa Barbara City College this summer. He also loves to read. His favorite book is a sci-fi fantasy called *The Dome*, by Emily Robinson – a classmate! When asked about his closest friends, he says, "All my friends are my best friends."

Pablo Saleta is smart and sociable and interesting – and we know his Head Start experience contributed positively to who he is today.