



Jorge Garza Vargas, The 2017-18 EWJ II Gateway Fellow at International House, UC Berkeley



Jorge was born in Mexico City, where he grew up as a single child. When he was five years old, his family moved to Washington state for two years. There, his parents, both Chemists, did their postdoc work in a national laboratory. Jorge states, “I guess that it was from them that I inherited the passion for science. But it wasn’t until I entered the Mexican Mathematical Olympiad at the age of fourteen, when I discovered my love for mathematics.”

Jorge represented Mexico in some international contests and knew from the beginning that this was a very valuable opportunity: He learned to be tenacious, started developing mathematical skills and received awards. But it took some time to understand the far-reaching importance of what he received from interacting with participants from other

countries. “I learned that no matter how different people are, there is always something connecting them. In my case, I have always been able to pleasantly share my hobbies (playing soccer, reading, dancing and playing card games) with people with very different backgrounds.”

When Jorge entered college at the National Autonomous University of Mexico to major as a mathematician, he decided to work as instructor in the Math Olympiad. Here, he found out that he’s equally passionate about learning as he is about communicating what he knows. “The interaction with young students bursts my energy and preserves my creativity.”

Mathematics have taken Jorge to many places. “I have been twice in California, one summer at UCLA and two quarters in UCSB. I have also lived in Brazil, studying in the Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics (IMPA) and I lived about a year in Guanajuato, a city in Mexico with an important research center, the Center for Research in Mathematics (CIMAT). Now, I’m eager to begin my Ph.D. studies at Berkeley and I’m sure that this experience will be very enriching in many aspects. I’m also certain that my time at I-House will allow me to get in touch with more people from around the world, and with different goals and backgrounds.” Jorge is a thoughtful student who recognizes the struggles his parents made to succeed and provide a good life to their family. He recognizes his privilege in his home country and works to give back to community and inspire young mathematicians.

“After finishing high school in Thailand, I came to the United States and spent a year as a post-graduate student at Phillips Exeter Academy before coming to Harvard. As an undergraduate student at Harvard, I have taken classes in different fields of mathematics and I also have worked on original research projects. I hope that, after I finish my graduate studies, not only will I become a mathematics researcher myself, but I will create positive impacts to Thai mathematics education for future generations of students in Thailand as well.”



The EWJ Gateway Fellowship was established in 2004 by donor who prefers to remain anonymous. This Fellowship supports incoming or continuing doctoral students, from around the world, pursuing studies in any academic field of study for up to two consecutive years.

