

He's attracted 1,000-plus subscribers, more than 26,000 views, and he pulls in about \$100 a month. Jair Corral somehow juggles schoolwork and extracurricular activities with a job he loves.

AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME

by eliana jaimé

There it was. Buried in his inbox, the e-mail from YouTube finally showed up. He stared at the computer screen for a few seconds, exhaled, and clicked the message. In bold letters across the screen it read, "Congratulations. Your channel is now eligible for a YouTube partnership." Things were about to change for junior Jair Corral.

"I uploaded my first video to YouTube June 30, 2013," Corral said. "When I first joined, I just wanted something fun to do. Having a place to do commentary, reviews, capturing cool moments of me playing games, and just having fun with my friends sounded really cool. My username, 'Yairozick,' came to me when playing a game with some friends while I was ill. Yairozick sounded like 'jair sick', and I stuck with it. I didn't think my channel would grow very much, maybe 100 subscribers at the most. The last thing I thought would happen was to attract 1,000 and become the top gaming channel in El Paso."

In the early months of his new hobby, Corral looked for ways to improve video quality. With time, he deleted the first 40 videos he uploaded and bought new equipment to make his videos look more to his liking. After making better quality videos and participating in online game tournaments, Corral began making a name for himself in the YouTube gaming community. Even his mother, Marta Corral, was impressed.

"I remember the excitement on his face

when he was about eight years old," Marta Corral said. "He would unwrap Nintendo games he asked for. Since then, his love for video games grew along with his collection of games. He's got so many consoles and games now, PS4, X Box One, PC. I like that he's doing something he really enjoys and that it has to do with video games and not other things."

With a growing YouTube channel and about \$100 a month coming in from ads that pop up on the screen before his videos play, Jair said he likes being recognized by total strangers and being praised by friends.

"I was really interested to see what his channel was about," junior Christian Rodriguez said. "I started watching his videos in the summer. I was instantly impressed by how many good reviews and walkthroughs he gave for the games. After watching several more videos, I wanted to play some of the games and try out the new tips I had learned from him."

Jair admits to some disadvantages, like people who envy his increasing popularity. Regardless, he insists on staying true to himself.

"I'd like to become a game designer," Jair said. "No matter how old I am, I don't want to ever stop doing what I'm doing. I'd love to see my channel grow until it just doesn't want to grow anymore. This experience has just been indescribable. If I could give advice to anyone who may want to start their own channel, the best thing to gain subscribers is to just be yourself and don't let anyone change you."

