

Alejandro De La Peña Jr.

George I. Sánchez Memorial Award

Alejandro De La Peña Jr., is a special education teacher in El Paso, Texas, who tirelessly works to ensure that all students have access to equitable educational opportunities. His dedication to securing grants and donations for low-income students has not only transformed the lives of thousands of Hispanic children but has also set a standard for giving back and supporting those in need.



From his humble beginnings in a challenging environment, Mr. De La Peña understands firsthand the importance of breaking the cycle of poverty and violence. Growing up in poverty and facing a criminal record, he decided to break this cycle and become the first person in his extended family to graduate from high school. He then continued to work to break the cycle of poverty for his family, and for the community at large. Determined to make a difference, he pursued a career in education, where he serves as a teacher for students with severe disabilities. It is through his work at Parkland Pre-Engineering Middle School that he has truly made his mark, raising over \$152,000 in grant money for the school and earning the title of the No. 1 All-Time Teacher in El Paso on DonorsChoose.org.

His innovative approach to securing funding has not only benefited his own school, but it has also inspired a wave of generosity in the community. By organizing events such as NspirED@thePark and SEL@thePark Awards, Mr. De La Peña has created a culture of giving and celebration, where stories of perseverance and triumph are shared, and positive behavior is recognized and rewarded. He works to celebrate social-emotional learning in his community so that other children can also work hard to fulfill their dreams.

Mr. De La Peña's impact extends far beyond the walls of his school. Through his work with homeless families, Special Olympians, at-risk students, and underprivileged youth, he has touched the lives of countless individuals, providing them with the resources and support they need to succeed. His commitment to improving literacy, combating period poverty, and promoting health and well-being has made him a beloved figure in the community, revered for his selfless dedication to others.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the El Paso community, Alejandro De La Peña Jr., is a deserving recipient of the George I. Sánchez Memorial Award. His impact on the lives of Hispanic students, families, and educators is immeasurable, and his legacy of compassion and generosity will continue to inspire others for years to come.