Alex Garcia

A worthwhile and rewarding challenge.

Alex Garcia is a second-semester junior at Brown University who joined the Capital Good Fund team in January 2014. While growing up in New York City, Alex saw firsthand how important financial knowledge is to the stability of families and communities alike. Her first experience working with the Providence community was tutoring the children of refugees through Dorcas International. Alex was drawn to the Financial Coaching fellowship because it synthesized her interest in business and her desire to continue immersing herself in Providence’s diverse community. “Capital Good Fund allowed me to step out of the College Hill bubble and really make an impact on families in the community,” she notes.

Due to her native fluency in Spanish, Alex has been a particular asset to our School Study Program, a study that Capital Good Fund is conducting in partnership with the Providence Public School Department (PPSD) and Brown University. Through this study, parents with children in a PPSD elementary school are compensated for completing our Financial Coaching program. A large majority of parents in this study live below the federal poverty line and many are native Spanish speakers. Alex’s first Financial Coaching client fit into both of these categories and proved to be a particularly challenging case.

Silvia was a single mother with an income of less than $1000 a month, with which she supported herself and her two children. Due to her undocumented status, Silvia was hesitant to get a bank account, build her credit, or file her taxes. Another complication was Silvia’s inability to read or write, which made following our curriculum difficult for her. Due to Silvia’s reluctance to participate in the formal financial system, Alex elected to focus on outcomes related to money management and health. Alex recalls, “I was extremely intimidated by my first Coaching session, but was so happy to see Silvia improve so much after it all.” To thank Alex, Silvia gave her homemade tamales, which Silvia hopes to sell in the future to supplement her income.

As Alex educates others in financial literacy, her own knowledge of the subject has expanded substantially. She is working on building her credit through a credit card and has even started thinking about retirement savings! Her Capital Good Fund fellowship has been important not only to her professional development, but her financial independence as well due to the monthly stipend that Alex receives for her work.

In the summer of 2015, Alex will continue to pursue her interest in business through an internship at the prestigious Pricewaterhouse Coopers consulting firm. A year from now, Alex is expected to graduate with a double concentration from Brown University in Economics and International Relations with a focus on Latin America. As a result of her fellowship, Alex has seen how macro concepts like economic development and health care systems can affect individuals. This was also a great opportunity for her to utilize and professionalize her Spanish language skills. Ultimately Alex hopes to work in a field that creates positive impacts on low income communities.