

Meet Fredy

Age: 19 years old



Fredy has 3 brothers. Francisco is 20 years old, Felipe is 17 years old, and Daniel is 10 years old. All of them live with their parents. They have lived in the community since Fredy was 8 years old. They don't own the house where they live they guard the house for someone who migrated to find work.

Their father, Gerardo Diego Tomas, works in a *maquila*, (a garment factory or sweatshop).

Their mother, Maria Rosa Diego, takes care of the family and also cleans houses and has a babysitting job.

Fredy is a 10th grader at a local public high school, Instituto Primero de Julio. The classes have been virtual this year. The work is really hard. It is not the same as having a classroom with teachers there in-person to answer any questions. The interaction and exchange of ideas with his classmates is also very limited. The work load is very heavy and they have to be creative on their own.

The pandemic has been difficult in the community. When the pandemic started people were more careful. People used to wear masks. Now, people have become careless and many do not use masks anymore. Fredy always uses his mask because he wants to keep himself healthy and his family healthy as well. Fredy's family has been healthy, thanks be to God, but there have been two neighbors diagnosed with COVID.

The vaccine is not widely available in Guatemala. They started vaccinating health workers and people over 70 first, now people over 50 can get vaccinated, if there are vaccines available in the area. Most people do not have access yet.

Fredy doesn't have a lot of free time at the moment, so he spends most of his time doing homework, and joining classes virtually. He does all the work on his phone, so it takes him a lot of time to send finished assignments to his teachers. He also helps at home because his parents and older brother have to go out to work.

Fredy's brother is a nurses' aid, so he has had a lot of work and lived with a lot of stress all this time.

Fredy's favorite food is Chow Mein with chicken. He says he enjoys the dish a lot and he always hopes to get seconds when his mom's prepares it.

Fredy wants to express his gratitude to the brothers and sister of St Joan of Arc, because the support has been very important for him and his family. The scholarship has allowed him to keep studying. Internet expenses are high and he has to buy a lot of phone data to access his homework and the online classes as well. He wants to finish high school, then he will look for a job to help his parents financially.

Maybe after a couple of years, he might be able to go to university.