



Jorge Ivan Gomez Wei
Youth Leadership Award Recipient

Jorge Ivan Gomez Wei introduces himself as a Chinese-Hispanic Jew and engages meaningfully with these cultures: Latinos through family, community and political activities; with his Chinese school's Lion and Dragon Dance troupe he performed for Pres. Obama; he appreciates the wisdom of the Jewish religion. He was born in New York City in 1991 and presently resides in Fair Lawn with his mother and younger brother, Luís Ariel Lopez Wei.

Jorge Ivan is one of a dozen students – out of 34,000 – who bikes to Bergen Community College every day. He is passionate about healthy living, exercise, home-cooked meals, growing edibles and wants, “to be a farmer.” Ivan earned an A.S. degree in business administration from BCC and is completing an AAS in horticulture there as well.

Ivan is committed to saving the environment for future generations through sustainable practices. He is a Rutgers trained New Jersey Environmental Steward, heads the Bike/Walk committee of Fair Lawn's Green Team; is a founding member of Fair Lawn's community garden and he is a NJ Learns Fellow. This program, administered by the internationally acclaimed Cloud Institute for Sustainability, trains community stakeholders and educators on techniques for conveying sustainability practices through school and community activities.

The importance of social justice and equality may be hard wired into Jorge Ivan's personal concerns. Before Jorge was even born and as a direct consequence of the social inequities of his father's native country of Colombia where he was visiting, Jorge's dad was lost to him through an act of violence. The impact of this event, plus growing up surrounded by family and friends who share his grandmother and mother's life-long commitment to create positive and enduring social change, inspired Jorge to undertake the journey to recharter the NAACP chapter at Bergen Community College following almost two decades of dormancy. He is pleased that chapter members elected him president in August, and looks forward to leading them in making positive change happen at Bergen Community College – and in each of their communities.

Jorge Ivan would like to thank his mother, Kimi Wei, Bergen County NAACP members and President Anthony Cureton, New Jersey State NAACP President James E. Harris, Dr. Ursula Parrish Daniels, Bergen Community College NAACP Chapter Advisor Dr. Ronald Milon and NAACP State Youth Advisor Carolyn Ann Powell, for their support and guidance in helping him ring in a new era of social justice at New Jersey state's second largest college.

“I would now like to ask all who are reading along, to please take a moment of thoughtful reflection to honor the memory of my nephew, Andrew Ramirez, who tragically lost his life last August at age two years, because urban communities are not the safe havens for children that they should be. Please join me in praying that we together will find ways to provide a safe childhood and a healthy future to all of our world's children.” ~ Jorge Ivan