



# Out of My Comfort Zone

## A Student Motivates Her Peers and Advocates for a New Program on Her Campus

*Agustina Sanchez*



*Graduates of the Sweat program receive their certificates. Sweat is a program that trains students to be fitness instructors.*

### **BEFORE YOU READ:**

1. Notice the title and the graphic on the next page. What does “comfort zone” mean? Is it a good idea to push yourself out of your comfort zone. Why or why not?
2. Read the headings in the article. What do you think this story will be about?

### **First, I Had to Convince Other Students**

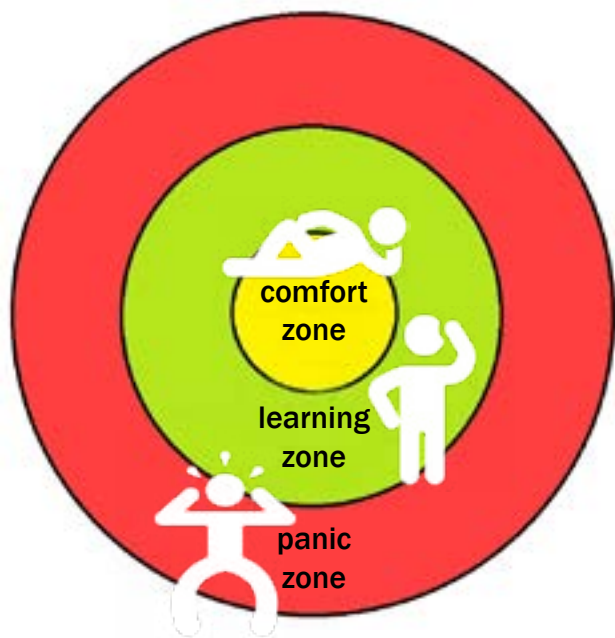
I have been the leader many times at work, home, and school, but one time that I surprised myself was a time that I brought the Sweat program to the St. Rose location of Highlands Community Charter School (HCCS). Sweat is a program that trains you to become a Group Fitness and Bootcamp instructor. It is important to me because it was my first certification at Highlands Community Charter school.

To take the lead on this effort, I really had to

get out of my comfort zone. I had to prove to the Sweat program that a lot of students at St. Rose were interested in participating. And I had to convince the students that they should go ahead and try it. I was nervous because I was afraid that if I was not successful in bringing the program to St. Rose, all of the students that I had motivated would be disappointed in me. On the other hand, the administrators of the program would be disappointed if they brought the program to St. Rose and no one joined. I had a lot of pressure on me, but I was determined to bring the Sweat program to the St. Rose location.

### **No Results**

It was a long process! The counselor at the school told me I should get at least 20 signatures from all the students interested in the program. If I did, I would have to submit a request to the



administration to see if they would approve the Sweat program coming to St. Rose. So, I got the signatures, sent them to the counselor, and submitted the request to the administration. Time went by and I didn't hear from anyone.

### An Accidental Meeting Provides Another Route

Then one day, there was a free dental cleaning event at another HCCS location, so I went. Unfortunately for me, I was not able to get my teeth cleaned, but I did meet (Doc) Murdock Smith the executive director of HCCS. I helped translate for the people who didn't understand English, and I stayed almost until it was over. I helped Mr. Smith bring the food and water for the dental workers.

He asked me how everything was going for me at St. Rose. I went ahead and told him about the Sweat program and how a lot of us wanted to join but it was not available at our location. I explained to him how I had collected signatures from all the students but had not yet heard anything from the administration. I think my conversation with him had an impact, because a month later we had the Sweat program available at the St. Rose location.

### Success!

All of the students were very excited! It was not easy, but we all participated and worked really hard. We got through the program and passed the test. We even received a certificate and had a celebration once we completed the program. It was very rewarding to know that we were all persistent.

This leadership opportunity was very special to me because I wasn't sure if I could do it or not. I got the signatures, submitted the request, and then when we got the program, I motivated people to join. I even took advantage of my conversation with Mr. Smith to advocate for the program! I felt proud of myself as a leader. A lot of people were interested in the program, but they were just afraid or embarrassed to try it. Once they tried it, they loved it and they completed it. It is good to feel like a leader. I was proud of myself and my classmates for all the hard work and dedication.

#### AFTER YOU READ:

1. What steps did Agustina take to bring the SWEAT program to her school? Be specific.
2. What happened on the day of the free dental cleaning? What qualities and skills did Agustina use during this chance meeting with the executive director of her school?
3. Look at the diagram above. What types of communication are in your comfort zone, learning zone, and panic zone?

*Agustina Sanchez is a student at HCCS in Sacramento, CA. She is the mother of four kids. She came to the U.S. when she was 10 years old. She has had ups and downs, but she says, "Every day, I wake up in the land of opportunity, and I try to work on bettering myself. If I can help a person or two on the way, I will do it without hesitation." She is thankful to coach Alvaro Venegas, the founder of SWEAT, and to coach Annyssa Velasquez, who pushed her to succeed. She also thanks Murdock Smith, for helping to bring the program to the school.*

