

Young entrepreneurs through to international competition

A high school friendship, a challenging Grade 12 assignment, and a secret recipe for medicinal tea have catapulted two local students into the limelight! After an intense national competition, local students José Saúl Palma Torres and Miguel Rivera Bustamente out-performed 60 other entries to claim first prize at the recent Colegios de Estudios Científicos y Tecnológicos (Science and Technology Expo). With this win, accompanied by third team-member Felipe de Jesús Acebes Delgado, they will represent Mexico at an international competition, going up against participants from Brazil, China, Chile, the United Arab Emirates and several other countries.

Saúl and Miguel, now in their first year of university as Jóvenes Adelante scholarship recipients, speak shyly -- but with unmistakable pride and excitement -- about their project. They describe how they worked with Saul's grandfather to replicate a traditional recipe he had used for years as a digestive aid and to support kidney function. Together, they gathered the five natural ingredients (or six... they were ambiguous about the actual number because the recipe is, after all, still a secret!) from the land near Saul's home in Rancho Viejo. Then they dehydrated and mixed them in perfect proportion and ground them into a water-soluble powder.

Developing a winning packaging and marketing strategy was the next step of the process. They selected a name, Tesna ("té saludable natural"), a logo and a tagline ("El té que te purifica"), then designed three levels of packaging -- single-serving biodegradable tea bags, and two sizes of paper bags for buying in bulk.

Entrepreneurship seems to have come naturally to these two young men. In anticipation of the March 2019 international competition, with help from their high school lab instructor and advisors from Via Orgánica, they have slightly altered the taste and added a sweetener. The sale of their product is prohibited until it has been presented at the upcoming competition but after that, the plan is to make it available commercially -- they hope to see it on the shelves here in San Miguel soon.

Now nearing the end of their first semester of university, Saúl and Miguel say they are settling into their new routines and gaining confidence around meeting the demands of student life. Miguel is pursuing Business Management while Saúl has chosen Financial Engineering. Miguel talks about how much he loves the learning and how he's becoming more disciplined, saying "I'm 100% engaged with my program. The skills I'm learning will serve me for the rest of my life." Saul shares how he's learned to breathe through the stress of deadlines, to avoid becoming



overwhelmed by breaking down his assignments into a series of prioritized tasks. Both are brimming with ideas for improving and expanding their various family businesses.

JA welcomes these two young entrepreneurs to the family – we look forward to watching where their energy and creativity take them next.