

The Sound of **Success**

By Kevin Fritz

Rolando Rivera loves music and giving back to the community.

He is the manager of the Avalon School of Music. He co-owns a music production company. He is the entertainment chair for his local American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. He is a DJ, a singer and has dabbled with the trumpet.

His name is **Rolando Rivera** of **Avalon Park**. And he is only 18 years old.

Rivera is what people would call a go-getter, an ambitious young man with high aspirations, yet grounded by his keen sense of family and the community in which he lives.

"For the past two years, I have donated about 200 hours to Relay for Life," Rivera says. "I like giving back." He also provides his services free of charge to the Avalon Park Group for its events each year as a way of marketing his talents.

April Carpenter, who worked with Rivera on the Avalon Park Relay for Life as a community representative for the American Cancer Society, says Rivera made quite an impression on her at how adept he was building the right connections to make her event such a success.

The entertainment business bug bit Rivera early, about age 5, and he started getting involved with plays and church functions. By 12, he realized he had an interest in the technical aspect of entertainment, such as sound, lighting and electronics.

His mother, **Rhonda**, introduced him to a client from the Avalon School of Music that landed him his first job helping with the school's events.

And it was his mom's friend who saw a future in Rivera's talents; **Jay Adametz** invested \$4,000 for equipment so Rivera, then only 16, could go off on his own. R&A Entertainment, a multi-service entertainment company, continues to thrive today. Rivera admits he owes a lot to his mother for his present successes.

"Every time I get a paycheck, I give it to my mom for all she has done for me," he adds. The middle child between two sisters, he says he understands today's economic times can be difficult for a single mother.

Rivera also has a mentor—27-year-old **Chris Maguire** of Avalon Park, CEO/founder of Vivid Funding and a partner in VMI Records, who helps him with business plans, looking over documents, and acts as a general sounding board.

"He is a go-getter and a leader," says Maguire. "He is very talented in the entertainment industry. I just try to help motivate him."

A senior at Timber Creek High School in Avalon Park, Rivera is indeed motivated, setting his sights on earning a bachelor's degree in show production at Full Sail University followed by a master's degree in entertainment business so he can be well-versed in both the creative and business sides of the entertainment industry. **L**



COURTESY OF ROLANDO RIVERA

Rolando Rivera serves as the entertainment chair for his local American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

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