

Profile: with help from Multicultural Institute, Jorge Lopez keeps on truckin'

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Photo courtesy of Multicultural Institute

Each morning at 2 a.m. Jorge Lopez gets out of bed to start his day.

His routine is to arrive at work by 3 a.m.; the rest of the day is spent driving a truck until 7 p.m., when he returns home.

Currently, Lopez drives an 18-wheel rig on a route usually confined to California, though he sometimes drives as far as Tacoma, Washington. Prior to truck driving, Lopez worked at Berkeley Toyota doing bodywork painting. With his affinity for vehicles he hopes to continue working with them in the future, from a different perspective.

Born in Tepic, Mexico, Lopez immigrated to the United States when he was 21 with his mother, brother and sister. The rest of his family was already here in the Bay Area, so they completed the group. He has lived in Berkeley for 23 years. While still in Mexico, he completed schooling, and got a certificate in mechanics. Upon arrival, he took English classes at Berke-



Jorge Lopez (second from right) is pursuing a GED-diploma with assistance from the Multicultural Institute.

ley Adult School, and then started working fulltime, which limited his studying time.

Lopez foresees better job opportunities in his future with a GED (General Educational Development) diploma in hand. For that reason, he recently requested that his manager assign him a shorter

route on Fridays so that he could attend the GED exam preparation course, delivered in Spanish, at the Multicultural Institute (MI) in West Berkeley. More specifically, Lopez plans to take the GED exam with the intent of going on to college, landing work in the technical field.

MI is unique in the East Bay; since 2002, it has been offering accessible courses preparing students to take the GED exam in Spanish. For eight weeks, students attend on Fridays from 6-8 p.m., and Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. until noon. The current course concludes on Saturday, May 2.

For more information about GED exam preparation, please call the Multicultural Institute at (510) 848-4075.