

ANTI-BULLYING

# LOVE FOR OTHERS

**Message:** Video presentations to be displayed during Chihuahuas game Tuesday

**Lucid Love:** Local group has been promoting various events in the El Paso area



PHOTOS BY RUDY GUTIERREZ — EL PASO TIMES

Veronica Cabada talks about her son, Sebastian Cabada, who died in May 2013, while sitting in his room in her West Side home. With her are Alondra Lucio, far left, Sal Montelongo and Alondra and Sebastian's daughter, Anabelle Sebahna Cabada-Lucio, bottom. Cabada and Montelongo founded Lucid Love after Sebastian's death.

## Love

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whose professional name is Ara Celi — to speak at Eastwood High School.

"We've gone to a lot of places giving these presentations," said Sal Montelongo, the director of Lucid Love. "We've talked to what some people say are the worst kids in El Paso and they have responded favorably. We didn't know how many kids needed this type of program, but everywhere we go, our message seems to effect them. Who knows what they are going through. They're scared and have no one to turn to."

Cabada maintains her son was bullied throughout his school years and finally hit its peak on Oct. 22, 2011. That's when Sebastian, then a sophomore at Coronado High School, was seriously injured after a fellow student inside a car grabbed his arms and held on to him as the car sped off, dragging him at a high rate of speed.

Medical records show he suffered cuts and bruises on his legs, skin burns on his back, a broken collar bone and damage to the frontal lobe. He also suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Our mission statement is building the core of our existence through love and faith," Cabada said while sitting in her son's room. "I could have turned this horrific incident into something ugly. I could have been an angry, bitter mother and inflicted more harm and anger."

"But I didn't want to do that because there is enough of that in this world already," she said. "I wanted to turn it around and do something positive, to give people help and to let people know that there is someone out there they can totally empathize with."

Lucid Love originated in October 2014, after one of the defendants in the dragging case pleaded guilty to assault with bodily injury. He was given deferred adjudication, ordered to pay \$12,000 in restitution, and



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Photographs, guitars and skateboards sit inside Sebastian Cabada's room.

Left, personal items in Sebastian Cabada's room.

said. "That was the beginning of the process. Victims need true advocates who are going to stand behind them and give them the power (against) those who inflict the harm."

When Cabada speaks at Lucid Love functions, she speaks to three audiences—those who are being bullied, the bully and to the bystanders.

"My message to those who are being bullied is to speak up because if I would have known he was being bullied in the 5th grade, maybe he would still be here with me today," she said. "Because he carried

### GET HELP

**Who:** Lucid Love is a nonprofit organization that promotes self-love and respect for others.

**What:** El Paso boxer David Rodriguez and Kerri Kasem, the daughter Casey Kasem who heads the Kasem Cares Foundation, will have anti-bullying video presentations during the El Paso Chihuahuas game against Fresno Tuesday at Southwest University Park. The game starts at 11 a.m. They will also have a presentation at Henderson Middle School on Wednesday.

**Information:** lucidlove.org, lucidlove3@yahoo.com, 342-8907 or 875-2339.

that pain with himself for so long, he began to self-medicate to numb that pain.

"To the bullies. I challenge them to stop and to say sorry to the person they have bullied," Cabada said.

"To the bystanders, I ask them, 'Don't just stand there and video tape and put it on Facebook or YouTube, do something to stop it,'" she said. "Bullying is wrong, it hurts, it's traumatic and it stays with you forever."

She said telling Sebastian's story is therapeutic.

"It is my obligation," she said. "I always thought I was his teacher, but in reality, he was mine. He taught me so much. It is difficult to find another human being with his spirit. He even forgave those who bullied him."

Sebastian would now have been 19 years old, caring for his girlfriend Alondra Lucio and their two-year-old daughter Anabelle.

"He would be here happy with me, his baby and Alondra," Cabada said, pausing as she shed a tear. "He loved Alondra. She was his world. He would be helping me with this organization, continuing to be a humanitarian. I want to follow in my son's footsteps. I want to live and not just exist. All that I have learned while he was alive, I want to share with others."

placed under community supervision for two years.

"I was so upset, I cried in the parking lot," Cabada

said. "Because he carried

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