



SPOTLIGHT: Jazmin Anguiano & Ian Dunn

From the hallways to the park – with selfies in between

“We take a lot of selfies,” says Ian Dunn, laughing. “It helps with memories.”

“He is in my senior memory book a lot,” says Jazmin Anguiano as she leans over to high-five Ian.

Ian and Jazmin both go to Heights high school and are in the Circle of Friends program offered through The Arc of Sedgwick County. The Circle of Friends is a mentoring program, funded by United Way, for kids by kids. It matches special education students with regular education peers. Ian and Jazmin joined the program for different reasons, but it couldn’t have worked out better.

“My mom is a special education teacher at Earhart Elementary school,” says Jazmin. “She is a huge impact on the kids she works with. I wanted to make an impact and I love people.”

“I was looking for friends and I finally found one,” says Ian.

Ian, junior, is in the special education program. Jazmin, senior, is in the regular education program. Ian and Jazmin have been buddies for the past two years.

“Once in the program, you become really close to your buddy,” says Jazmin. “The atmosphere is really great, so upbeat

and fun. The teachers are all so giving and positive.”

Jazmin and Ian hang out twice a week during advocacy (study hour) at Heights. Jazmin will get a pass to go see Ian, generally on Tuesdays and Fridays. They are unable to eat lunch together because they have different lunch hours.

Through Circle of Friends, they are able to go on field trips with other buddy pairings and spend time together outside of school. By participating in the group outings, Jazmin and Ian are able to make even more friends in the same program. Tanganyika Wildlife Park has been their favorite field trip so far. They took lots of selfies with and without the animals.

“We play kickball a lot and near holidays we watch movies,” says Jazmin. “Last Christmas, we watched “Elf” and for



Circle of Friends has created a wonderful environment for Jazmin and Ian to nurture a friendship for the ages.

Thanksgiving, we watched “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving.”

Jazmin graduated this May and will be going to Butler Community College in El Dorado. She plans on writing letters and Skyping Ian. They are both excited to become pen pals.

“Everyone should consider joining (Circle of Friends) because you get lifelong friends and a positive environment,” says Jazmin. “It is definitely somewhere you should be.”