



## Computer Clubhouse Case Histories Speak for Themselves: Francisco S.

**F**rancisco or "Cisco" as his friends call him moved between the Dominican Republic, New Jersey and Boston seven times before finally settling in Boston and discovering the Clubhouse. He continues to live with his father who he says "doesn't know much about computers." Cisco is a young man who has grown up, and flourished, at the Clubhouse. He is now 22 years of age and a mentor to those who are younger.

*"When I first came to the Clubhouse, I thought, oh wow, all these really smart people. Then I found out, I fit in with these people. Kind of cool. My advice for a first timer is 'come back'. Most kids do. They get impressed by the stuff, and the people here to help. There's no teacher behind your back. Like*

*with me, I didn't go to school to learn all this. I learned it myself. I remember when I first came. A friend said, 'I'm going to this clubhouse.' We got here and I saw all these computers! In school, there was no color, only typing. Since then, I've gotten hooked on graphics. My first project was putting my face on a guy flying on a bike in a hurricane. It was pretty good for my first project. Now I'm working on a web page and burning a CD, not really a big deal, but I'm thinking about what my next project will be. I'm in my second year at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and I'm studying computer science. After graduation, I want to combine graphics with programming and expand all that. I don't have a computer at home so I use one here and at school. The kids at*

*school think I'm pretty good. They're always calling out 'Where's Cisco?' when they need help. It makes me feel good. If I hadn't come to the Clubhouse, I'd still want to do something with my life, but I probably wouldn't be going to college right now. I probably would have a job I didn't like doing. This has opened up a whole world of computers for me. It's made me happy. I like being happy. Time is precious."*

With what he has learned at the Clubhouse, and from a mentor who impressed upon him that there is always a way to overcome barriers, Cisco is now not only attending college, but working part-time at the MIT Media Lab. At the Media Lab, he creates web pages, icons for programs and other graphics.