

## ★ RANCHO PATIENT PROFILE ★

# Erik Sorto

“Eight years ago, I was driving home from telephone-repair training when I was ambushed at an East Los Angeles intersection. My passenger, a fellow gang member, was killed. I was shot between the shoulder and neck and was paralyzed from the neck down. I knew right away I couldn’t move, couldn’t speak. I underwent throat surgery and now I speak through the trachea with an electronic voicebox. I also knew I was done with gangs forever.

“After undergoing successful rehab at Rancho, I enrolled at Valley College in Van Nuys. I graduated last year with my A.A. degree, and now I’m studying for my Bachelors degree at Cal State Northridge with the goal of becoming a juvenile probation officer.

“I even wrote a book with Professor William Wallis, called *Payback: The Cost of Being a Gangster* about what happened to me and how I’m dealing with it. Now I’m a Rancho volunteer and I look forward to being part of the KnowBarriers Violence Prevention Outreach Program so I can help kids avoid making the mistakes I made.”

