



The Shepherd Glen Hamden Heroes student of 2021 is a young man who has developed fantastic character traits since he first came to the United States when he was three-years-old. Moving from Costa Rica at this very early age, Cedro Greist-Salazar has developed into a respectful and trustworthy culturally-mindful young man who is nothing short of motivated and perseverant in everything he sets his mind to.

As early as kindergarten, Cedro has always been a champion and protector of his fellow classmates. Whether it was popular or not, Cedro has always had a moral compass that has been the method by which he has always chosen right over wrong. From that time, Cedro has been unwavering in his empathy toward others and a resilient student willing to tackle all challenges that come his way. He has always stood up for others and for causes that he feels are so important. During this past year, there has been no exception. Cedro, with the help of his supportive family, has mustered all his talents and a certain desire to help others by bringing joy and light into others' lives. While his father is a minister at the Universalist Unitarian Church, in-person services were not an option for the safety of everyone. Cedro spent each weekend making sure to lend his technical expertise to the filming of his father's sermons every week. At the same time, he was making sure to correctly and often times improvisationally provide the announcements to the students of Shepherd Glen each morning. Further, he spent large amounts of time helping in the community to collect food and goods for the homeless and continues to do so.

What is also so wonderful about Cedro, beyond his amazing and selfless works for others, is the fact that Cedro is a "very out-of-the-box" thinker. Again using his talents to help others, Cedro is a member of a very elite group of musicians called, "The Harpeggios." Since the age of nine, Cedro has been taking harp lessons, which was encouraged by his mother, and has continued to play in this group; noting that one of his favorite places to play is at Smilow Cancer Center. While COVID make it impossible to play in public, he and his group have continued to record and play virtually for those most in need of beautiful music during this time. He also has dabbled in "Capoeria," a Brazilian form of martial arts and continues to be a responsible chicken and duck owner, making sure that his friends continue to lay eggs for the family and feel comforted from time to time.

While Cedro is getting ready to move on from Shepherd Glen in a few months, he will be missed by all of his past teachers and all of the younger students he has had an impact on as well. Most important however, is the fact that Cedro has taken all his amazing gifts of compassion, kindness and an enthusiasm for unity to develop a strong passion for changemaking and social justice. He is becoming a strong advocate for ending climate change, developing efficient and sustainable energy sources and convincing everyone that COVID vaccines are safe, necessary and not to be feared. He also feels strongly about adding his voice to such causes as gun control and less restrictions on immigration as well as more protection for immigrants overall. And of course, most importantly, at the school level, Cedro feels very strongly that perhaps Mondays should be added to the weekend for a "four-day" school schedule – Food for Thought! Cedro is an awesome, creative, intelligent and incredibly thoughtful young man who also has a strong desire to make a career as a psychiatrist one day, as feels strongly that people could benefit most from mental health support, as the worse harm is mental harm.

If ever there was a need for heroes in our world, it is today...and quite honestly, the Shepherd Glen Family feels that there is no better embodiment of the "hero" than Cedro Greist-Salazar. Always noble in his acts and steadfast in his courageousness including his strong convictions towards family, friends and the community at large are a living example of the Shepherd Glen Hamden Hero for 2021. Congratulations Cedro!