

FRANCO CASTREJÓN

B.S. BIOLOGY '11

B.A. SPANISH '11

My dad worked in the fields, mainly picking lemons and grapes. When I was growing up, he put me to work doing hard labor and would ask me, quite frequently, if that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I would answer "NO," then he would say, "Ponte a estudiar," which translated means, "then go and study." – Franco Castrejón

Ponte a estudiar.

Those words resonated with Franco *Castrejón* at a very young age and have served as a tremendous motivator both to pursue his education and help underserved populations.

Shortly after this early life lesson, *Castrejón* also found his calling.

"My fourth grade teacher moved me from the front of class to the back and I couldn't see the board," he says. "I got my first eye exam in fifth grade, and the experience catapulted my curiosity in becoming an eye doctor. As I continued to get routine exams, my love for optometry grew."

Castrejón majored in biology to prepare for medical school and Spanish to improve his ability to communicate. After graduation from CI, he completed the Health Sciences Optometry Program at Western University.

Today, he is known as Dr. *Castrejón* to patients at Heritage Valley Eye Care in Santa Paula. Most of his clients are Spanish-speaking.

"My father was a farm worker when he came to this country," says *Castrejón*. "My mother a humble seamstress. They didn't know any English, but they taught me the value of hard work and determination. Thanks to them I'm now a Doctor of Optometry, helping farm workers just like my dad used to be."

NOTE: Castrejón is married to CI alum Anelieze (Zurcher) Castrejón ('08).

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