



When **Jorge Gaviria graduated Palmetto High in 2005**, he never expected to be placed in Forbes Magazine's Annual 30 under 30 food and drink category.

After getting nominated from people in the industry, Gaviria was chosen by a panel of judges. He was overjoyed when he found his name on the list on the day it came out.

"It was a really great moment of validation for myself and for the

business I created," Gaviria said.

Making it into Forbes Magazine's 30 under 30 is an almost impossible feat with the acceptance rate being less than 4 percent, even harder than getting into Harvard or Stanford with Harvard's acceptance rate being 5.2 percent and Stanford being 4.8 percent. The judging panel was filled with top food and drink specialists along with past winners of this 30 under 30 category.

After high school, Gaviria attended the University of Florida in Tallahassee for one year, but transferred to New York University soon after. Here, he obtained a degree of communications studies. This helped lead him to the creation of his company. "I tried to piece together my interests and I wanted to go to a business of my own," Gaviria said.

Gaviria worked in restaurants in New York for two and a half years. He was always interested in food and seeing what chefs were doing at a whole level and seeing where cultural level of society and seeing how their work influenced society; he listened to what their cues were and wanted to build something meaningful that continued the information he learned at the restaurants.

Three years ago, after working in restaurants throughout New York, Gaviria founded the company known as, Masienda, an ingredient supplier working with small farmers in Mexico to import food to top chefs across the United States. The company blossomed into retail, now selling fresh tortillas and beans in Whole Foods. Masienda has become the go to provider of non GMO corn of high quality from Mexico for the top chefs in the United States. The company provides a consistent premium level of quality.

"We are rebuilding the latin kitchen by sourcing high quality ingredients and preparing high quality foods that support independent farmers," Gaviria said.

Today, Gaviria lives in Los Angeles California, where the company is based. Gaviria believes Palmetto High School to be a large factor in his success today. "Mentors and educators have such a role in shaping you," Gaviria said.

He attributes much of his success to Palmetto's college counselor, Harry Nerenberg. He thought Nerenberg to be supportive and encouraging to each student, guiding them to find their path.

"Who knows where I would be without him," Gaviria said. He believed it to be important to not go through high school and graduate with having a certain path of life be the only path to be taken.

"Be open-minded about where life takes you," Gaviria said. "Be open to what your passions are and listen to the things you like the most and be thoughtful about what you naturally like and love."