

Site designer aims high

By [BRIANNA LUSK](#), Staff Writer

It started as a project for a web development class, Omar Ramos said.

But as he completed his degree in information technology, Ramos found himself unemployed with a big idea on his mind.

That's how [www.ivsuperstore.com](#) was born.

"If people from a community could purchase something from a Web site and have some of that money come back, it could really be worthwhile," said Ramos, of El Centro.

Ramos said his superstore Web site acts as a storefront to a major online retailer, [www.amazon.com](#) and another leading online auction site.

By visiting Ramos' Web site first before purchasing on those other Web sites, tax incentives are funneled back into Ramos' account.

Money, he said, could lead to up to \$500,000 a year for a nonprofit organization he wants to set up with the help of the community.

"I want this to be my job," Ramos said. "I want to bring in the whole community and I want it to have a life of its own. I'd like it to take on its own vibrancy."

At 20 years old, Ramos admits it's been a tough pitch for his idea as he's contacted cities and organizations around the Valley to get on board.

If area schools and businesses purchased books and other items through the local Web site, Ramos estimates the Valley stands to divert more than \$1 million a year into nonprofit deeds.

"When you think of the entire population of Imperial Valley ... with all the stuff people are already buying on these sites, it can add up quickly," Ramos said.

Ramos calculated if 10,000 residents spend \$50 a month through the Web site, the nonprofit could rake in \$500,000 in a year.

Ramos has already set up the Web site along with the partner Web site, [www.ivsuperstore.org](#), where people can post and exchange ideas about what the funds should be used for.

All he needs now is the help to set up the nonprofit organization and create a board of directors to help determine where the money goes. The startup would be about \$2,000.

As a Valley native, Ramos said he's seen a vast need for more nonprofit funding.

And by leaving the decision of where the funding would go up to the residents that helped raise it, Ramos said [www.ivsuperstore.com](#) could be used in other areas as a model.

"I bought the domain names for 10 years. I want this to be something that lasts," Ramos said.

He hopes that others in the community will want to share in his dedication to a good cause.

The Web site lists any funds that have been made by past purchases and Ramos said he would continue that kind of transparency once the nonprofit is established.

Meanwhile, Ramos said he welcomes people to start posting ideas on the organization's Web site.

"Big things all started on a few bucks and a dream ... people need to have a beacon of light. This could be a good example," Ramos said.

On the Web: [www.ivsuperstore.com](#)

[www.ivsuperstore.org](#)

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[TODD KRAININ](#) PHOTO

Omar Ramos talks about the technology that underlies his online IVSuperstore on Friday.