

**Topic:** Immigrant parents searching for a better life for their families.

**Abstract:** After both parents grew up in different classes of society, they ended up coming across the same trials and tribulations. Both saw life as something to strive and work hard for. They taught their children that education is extremely important, and to never give up on your dreams and goals in life. In the end they achieved their own meaning of “the American dream”, for they never gave up on their dreams and goals.

**Key Words:** dreams, education, family, hard work, and immigration.

I am a Mexican American woman, who is born and raised in Hollister California. I live in the lower income of San Benito County, known by the locals as VH. There is a lot of violence, gangs, and drugs surrounding this era. To make a clearer picture, there has been a most wanted guy who lived across the street from me, and a drug dealer on my left. You would think that I and my three older siblings would become caught into this world as well. We didn't, none of us ever did. My oldest brother became a correctional officer, my sister a social worker, and my second oldest brother is at San Jose state getting his degree in sociology. As for me this is currently my last year at Gavilan, and I am going to be applying to colleges in October. I am hoping to get into San Jose State and receive my masters in sociology. As you can see we all understand the importance of hard work and education. It didn't just appear in our minds one day. We learned this from our parents. Who are both two of the strongest individuals I know. There struggle and hardships that got them where they are today really inspires me to become the best I can be. They truly did receive the “American Dream”, and they did not achieve that easily. Being raised by two immigrant parents gives me inspiration.

My father was born and raised in Valparaiso, Zacatecas. There he actually lived a very well off life. He came from a family who had money. His father owned a local convince store that brought in a huge amount of income. They lived on a big piece of land and had a huge

house. They even had servants and maids. Yet this all came crashing down when a tragic accident accrued. My dad's father got into a terrible car accident that put him into shock. He passed away due to the shock from the accident. With his death my dad's mother was left with all the bills, and money. Unfortunately she did not take care of the money, and couldn't run the store properly either. This in return caused the store to go under, leaving the family with no money. Soon everything came crashing down and they were now poor. Struggling for basic needs now, like food. This is why my father, being the oldest, had to leave for the United States. He went to receive a better life for his family. For United States offers better jobs, more opportunities, and a better life. He had the duties to take care of his family, at the age of 14 years old.

My father's journey to Hollister was not easy at all. His first attempt to cross the border was alone. However it was short lived for he got captured by the border control. He was sent to jail and served slight time. The second time was a couple months after his release. He and his younger brother went together. They went on foot, and walked for three days only at night fall. They meet up with a coyote who took them across the border. There they came to Hollister, due to a family member who was already here. Once in Hollister my father wasted no time, he went straight to work. He worked in the fields picking apricots. He expressed to me that he would come home with bloody hands, and bad blisters. He worked extremely long hours, and worked under harsh conditions. All the money that he received went straight to his mother in Mexico. Eventually it helped to bring his other siblings, and mother to cross the border legally. His whole family was now reunited in Hollister. However my father still had to support the family so he continued to work. He worked in multiple fields, which is really intense labor. Land owners know they don't have papers, and most take full advantage of that. With my father's hard work

he gave his family the basic needs to survive, like food and shelter. It made it more comfortable than living in Mexico.

My mother was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico. My mother's family didn't have very much money. They lived in rough conditions, their floor was actually made up of dirt. They even had water leaks. They had little money and could barely put food on the table. It was very bad and most Americans wouldn't be able to survive in these conditions. Her father had enough and decided he wanted a better life for his family. He too was in pursuit of the American dream. He crossed the border illegally and started working in the fields. My grandfather actually worked with Cesar Chavez, and marched with him as well. He saved up his money and got his papers. He then would travel back and forth from Tijuana. Bringing his well earned money to his family, and making sure everything was okay. He finally saved enough money to bring his whole family across the border legally. My mom was only five years old when this occurred.

Even though my mother was young it was still rough on her. She moved around a whole lot, causing her to move to different schools. She first stayed with family in San Diego, then in Los Angeles, and finally to Hollister. She expressed to me that she was always an outsider. Going to school many did not accept her. She was poor and didn't have nice clothing, and she knew very little English. She was teased by other class mates for that reason. However when they finally settled in Hollister, my mom then started to gain friends. They were still poor but they now had their own home, food, and slight spending money. Throughout this time my grandfather worked hard in the fields with horrible working conditions. He worked so hard to give his family only the basic necessities.

My mother and father continued to live separate lives until they meet each other at church. They were both Jehovah witnesses, and seen each other quiet often on Sundays. They began to date and soon were married at ages eighteen and twenty-one. My father than got a better job than the fields, and starting working on ranch in Tress Pines. He took care of the landowner's personal ranch, doing the mandatory labor to obtain a land that huge. The land owner gave my father a house to leave in that was on the ranch. In reality it was a former barn house transformed into a home. That is where my three siblings grew up for a short time. Until, San Benito County was offering low income homes, to families of low income. That is when my parents received there first actual real house. This was a huge accomplishment for them.

For many years after my father continued to work on the ranch and my mother at the tomato canary. These both required hard labor and long exhausting hours. They brought money in, more than they had growing up. However they did not have enough money for lavish items. They couldn't buy nice clothes, cars, or even vacation. Clothes were brought from Salvation Army, and food came from food stamps. For vacations, they were very few trips to the beach. They struggled, but they never stopped working hard.

Finally a great offer was presented to my father. He had found out that they were truck drivers needed for Waste Management. My father was unsure he didn't have a truckers licensed, and knew very little English. My mom pushed him and he applied. He thankfully got the job and life turned around for the better. My father now had a stable well paying job. He know received an actually pay check, great health insurances, and great retirement benefits. My mom no longer had to work at the canary; my dad was now able to support his whole family. So she became a stay at home mother. This in return was perfect, because this is the time where I was one years

old. My family now had more money to spend. Enough to go on vacations like Yosemite. Life became easier for my family.

Even though life was easier, my dad never stopped working hard. Yes it is a better job, but it is still hard labor. My father ever since I was born, and still to this day wakes up at four to be at work at five, and does not come back home until five at night. He has Saturday and Sunday off. With these two days he created a side job, and works on landscaping lawns. He never has a day off. My mother makes sure everything at the home is in place. Constantly washing, cooking, and cleaning. As well as she manages all bills. They saved money and continued to work hard, they constantly reminded us children to take full advantage of all the opportunities that the United States gives us. Major one being education.

Life now is very comfortable. I wouldn't say I am rich, but I am well off. I fortunately didn't have to grow up in poverty like my siblings. I was blessed to have the nice clothes, and unnecessary items. The low income home that I live in does not look the same as when purchased. My parents have completely transformed our house over the years. We have a massive porch, tile flooring, new cabinets, new cement and the list goes on. I am very fortunate to have gone on vacations like Cancun, multiple border countries, and Las Vegas. However the item that I am most grateful of is education. My parents pay for my education and my books as well. It's a costly expensive that they could of ignored. However they didn't have education growing up, and they want me to have it. Failing and not receiving a diploma to me would be a slap to their face.

In conclusion I am proud to say that I am a Mexican American. I know where my roots came from. I know the hardships that my parents went through, and that most Mexican

immigrants go through. Even though I grew up as an American, my parents never let me forget that I was Mexican. Showing me and teaching me my culture. Sure I don't speak fluent Spanish, but I am fluent in understanding. Even though I don't speak fluent Spanish, I don't feel disconnected to my culture. Reason is because I know enough Spanish to get me by, and in reality it is something that I still have time to learn and master. However, I am even more proud to say that I come from two Mexican immigrant parents. Who gave me everything I ever wanted and more. I know that all I have comes from blood, sweat, and tears. With everything I have I know to be grateful for. In the end I know to never give up on my goals and dreams. For my parents never gave up on their dream in achieving their meaning of "The American Dream".