

- TOPIC:** My parents struggle coming to the United States from Mexico.
- ABSTRACT:** My parents came to America for a better life. My father came to San Jose, California after my parents had got married. My mother stayed in Mexico because she thought she wouldn't like it and she would miss her family. She ended up coming to America with my dad. They struggled to find jobs but the soon found jobs. They saw how there was more opportunities here and had my sisters and I. Learning of my parents struggles, just motivates to pursue my education and get a career so I can have a better life and not struggle like my parents did.
- KEY WORDS:** California, Migrating, better life, family, struggles, new start, motivation

A New Beginning

I come from a Mexican family. Both my parents are from San Luis Potosi, San Luis Potosi. This is in Mexico. The city and the state have the same name. My parents both migrated to California when they were really young. My dad was 22 and when my mom came she was 20. They decided to come to the United States because they wanted a better life for themselves. They have told me stories from when they lived in Mexico and how hard it was to make good money. My mom had many jobs when she was young; she worked at a gum factory and a cigarette store. She tells me she would get free gum and cigarettes which she would give to her dad because he was a smoker. My dad was a trouble maker, he was going to college, but he never finished. My mom and dad met through my uncle which is my mom's brother. My uncle and dad were friends and always hung out. They started dating and got married. After two years my dad decided to come to California.

My dad wasn't the first in his family to come to California. His three sisters and brother in law were already over here. They let my dad know about the job opportunities and how beautiful it was. They all had got to California by crossing the border. This was what my dad was going to have to do as well if he wanted to come. So he decided he would do it. My dad had to

do a lot of walking to get here. He was also putting himself in danger because he had to make he would not get caught by the “migra”. My dad finally made it to San Jose, California. This is where his family was at. When he got here he started looking for a job. He wanted to bring my mom over as well. She had stayed back in Mexico because she was young and scared to leave home at the time. Although my dad didn't have his papers he managed to get a job. It wasn't the best job, but it was a supermarket. This was in 1987. My dad saw how much better life was over here; although there were some struggles to start with he knew that eventually things would be better than what they were when he was in Mexico. My dad spent five years in California without my mom. He would go and visit her once in a while. But he wanted her to come back with him, but she wasn't ready. He told her she didn't have to worry about money and where they would live in because they had already settled that. My dad had a job, a car and a place to stay. My mom said she would think about it and maybe on his next trip she would join him.

It was 1991 when my mother decided to come to the United States. Her husband was in California and her brother had recently joined him. At first she didn't want to come because she was so use to her home, where she grew up, where all her family was, all her memories happened in Mexico. How could she just up and move? Especially to a place that she knew nothing about, not the law, the places, the people and the language. It's like starting your life over from scratch. But she had enough of being married without being able to see him and not being able to start their life together. My mother had to cross the border as well. She described it as long and tiring plus scary, not knowing whether you're going to get caught or not. She said that they had someone leading them to where they had to go which these people are usually known as “coyotes”. People who help illegal immigrants cross to the other side. My mother told me about a place that they had slept in one night; everyone was tired so they decided to stop for

the night. She said there were about 20 people packed into a room. It smelled very bad obviously they hadn't been able to shower and they had been walking for days. She felt very uncomfortable and didn't get much sleep. My mother said this was the hardest thing she had ever had to go through but she was doing to have a better life than what she had. When my mom got to San Jose she fell in love with it. Although she missed her family back home she had my dad's family to talk to and they could relate because they were all from the same place in Mexico. When my mother got here all the family was living in one house there were a total of eight adults and four children. This house was a three bedroom and two bathrooms which meant some people stayed on the couches and they made the garage into another room. When my parents tell me these stories from their childhood it makes me realize how hard it must have been to leave the place that they had lived for so many years and that they were accustomed to.

The following year that my mom arrived she got pregnant with me. I was born on May 20, 1992.

By this time, my parents were living in my aunt's house. There were three bedrooms and one bathroom. This time it was only my mom, dad, uncle, aunt, and her three daughters. So it was much better because it was not as crowded as the other house. The following year after I was born my mom got pregnant with my sister, she was born in November 19, 1993. My dad was the one who was working and my mom was staying with my sister and me. She then started looking for a job. She wanted to have more money so that we would be able to have a place of our own. It was a struggle for my mother to get a job because she had no papers and she didn't speak English. She wasn't able to find a job but she never gave up and kept on trying. Finally, my uncle told her about a lady who needed someone to clean her house. My uncle had asked her if she would clean it for, since my mom was a good cleaner and she always kept the house clean. My mom agreed. She didn't know how to drive at the time so she had to use the bus as

transportation. She didn't mind as long as she some kind of money coming in. my mom struggled to get her new start here in the U.S. When she started cleaning that house, the lady recommended her to her other friends. They were seeking a housekeeper. My mom took the other jobs and that's when she started cleaning people's houses. It benefited her in many ways because she was working for herself with no boss and didn't have to pay others because she would clean all the houses by herself. While both my parents were working my sister and I stayed with my aunt, we considered and still consider her our second mom.

My dad on the other had adapted well. He had learned how to speak English and he had a job. He had got the job so easy because my aunts, his sisters, where working at the same place, so they helped him out. He had now got moved to the bakery department and he was really good at baking cakes. This was not the first job that he got when he got here. My dad like many other immigrants worked in the fields. He of course didn't like it that is why he was seeking other positions with better pay and benefits. He worked at the same supermarket for 16 years until the store unfortunately closed down. He managed to find another job at another supermarket and became assistant manager of the bakery in his store. When this happened he started to get better pay and that's when my mom was also cleaning more houses.

My parents now had more money to rent an apartment. My mom since then had already had my other little sister who was born on January 23, 1998. My three sisters and parents all stayed in one room and it was really crowded now because in the room there was a queen bed and bunk beds. We had no space. It was time to move and get a space of our own. My parents decided to rent an apartment right behind where my aunt lived. Where we were living at before we moved. My parents were happy because although it wasn't a big house we had our own place. We lived in the apartment for almost 6 years. Later on when I was ten my parents wanted

a house. They decided to start looking and found Hollister. They liked it because it was a small town that seemed pretty calm and quiet compared to San Jose. It took a long time for them to find the perfect house but they finally found it and we have been living in it for almost eight years.

My parents have gone through a lot to get where they are today. They had to make decisions for them to be able to have a better life. Coming to California gave them opportunities to better them and make a better living than what they had when they were younger. Although they were limited some because of their situation they made the best of it and never gave up no matter what problems arose. Through all the struggles they managed to make a living provide food and shelter to their family and make the best life for us kids to have. They had the chance to start a new beginning, in a new place and learn new things that they might not have known before. Now my parents are doing good they have jobs and we still have our house. My mom still struggles with speaking English but she is now taking classes so she can learn the language better. I am proud of my parents because they made the hardest decision of coming over here and risked their lives all for a new and better life.

I appreciate them more every day because they struggled and worked hard so that my sister and I could have a better life than they did. My mom always tells me that we have it too good and easy here compared to the way that she grew up. My parents encourage me to keep getting my education and get a career . They say that they had wished they could have had the opportunities that we have school. My parents could not continue with their education when they were young because university cost a lot and their family didn't have enough to put them in. instead they started working. My parents story motivates me to do something good with my life. Seeing how they struggled for what they really wanted and in the end they got it just gives that motivation

that if they could go through what they went through than I can make it as well. I am the first in my family to be attending college. This makes my parents very happy because now they know that I am taking advantage of all the opportunities that I have here in America .