

Topic: Proud of where I am now

Abstract: Growing up in a bad neighborhood as a little girl effected the family. Family is very traditional. Mom would stay home while dad would go and work. Struggles as a young Mexican was hard. Leaned not to go through life, but to grow through life.

Key Words: Mexican, struggles, death, Chicanos, acculturation, education, Mexican doing hard labor, gangs.

My Mexican American Life

Life has been described by many people in different ways ranging from, life is short make it sweet to more serious ones like, life is like a dream, even before we realize it vanishes and so on. The various perspectives of life depend upon the beholder and how they enjoy it. But as a whole this mankind is a precious gift offered to us that can be used either way. Life is full of experiments and we all learn by mistakes.

I grew up in East Side San Jose until I was about 17. Growing up with Chicanos, And Mexicans was all I would see. I had a group of friends and we all had something in common our parents were born in Mexico. My parents were from Guadalajara, Jalisco and left Mexico to come to California for a better life. Like every other immigrants they had struggles and had to do some crazy stuff to get across and come to California. After a few years passed by they settled in to San Jose and had my 4 older brother and In the baby and only girl. My dad was the only one working back then and supporting my family and I so my mother can stay home and care for us. My father was a typical Mexican to people, dark skin, kind of chubby and not dressed well. He tells me people like the Americans would always judge him when he was out working on their yards or when he would walk into an American place they would refer to him as a “Mexicano” but he was more than that.

Going to school in a neighborhood where all you is negative things was really hard. I attended a local school by where I grew up at, Miller Elementary School. It was not a great school, but hey I was living in the east side. I saw so many things growing up in the hood

like robbery, killings, shooting and gangs, I swear there wasn't one day or one night where I did not hear sirens. When I started middle school that's when I found out about people being racist and people would judge by the way you looked. Knowing all those negative things put stuff in my head and made me think that other people did not like me because I was a different skin color and remembering my father's talk would make me think negative too. Soon after that one of my brothers joined a gang from the hood I really didn't know much about it but from what I knew my brother and his boys had lots of problems with the Asian people from the other hood. He would always get rushed by them and come home and tell my other brothers and of course they had his back so they would go out there and start fighting. I hated all that when I was young and seeing that killed me inside, seeing my brothers get hurt and get beat.

My junior year is when I started not to care about anything. I hung out with the wrong people and I was attending Independence High School which is one of the biggest high schools in San Jose. My teachers did not care if I went to school or not and my brothers were caught up in their own life as for my parents my father was working and my mother was helping with what she could so I had nobody but myself. I saw students and people my race always struggling with school so I didn't want to be one of them so I started ditching and started doing what I could to get money when I was 16 I made enough money for me and enough to give and help my parents out, I know my heart is good and I probably was not living exactly how I probably should. At that time I started to realize I was finally doing me and doing what I'm supposed to as a young Mexican. I always had that in the back of my head that we Mexicans had to work and we couldn't have a well education because I never saw a Mexican with a good job, why? I have no idea it was just in me. It is just how I was living loving all the wrong people and wishing all the wrong things, but all I have is a good memory and the bad one's I created.

By the end of my junior year I was a mess and things were not going right. As I thought things couldn't get worse they did. I was out one day with a friend when I get a phone call from

my mother yelling and crying not being able to tell me what was going on. I figured something was wrong because her tears would hit me so hard, I got the worst news in my life that my brother had gotten killed at a 7-11 store on King and Makee just a few blocks from where we were living. At that point I felt like dam someone took a piece of me I wish I could explain how is it that I felt right at that moment but I can't unless you know what it's like to lose someone close in your family. He was my best friend and brother all in one. I would have given up anything just to make him happy, and there is no doubt that if I could take his place in heaven I would die for him. I think of him every day, but that is nothing new. All I have is memories and his picture in a frame. God has him in arms, I have him in my heart.

After all of that happened I thought to myself and come to conclusion that there is no point in killing each other over a skin color or race. When senior year came my family and I moved out here to Gilroy to get away from that negative environment . I was afraid of moving because I did not know what it would be like here in Gilroy or if I would make friends, if they would like me? or if I was going to get caught up in wanting money and doing what I was doing. So many things were running through my mind. I was behind credits so I had to attend school at Mt. Madonna Continuation School. I figured it was going to be a school full of Americans, but I was wrong. I did see American people and I also saw every other race there so I thought to myself we were all the same in some kind of way and had the same hopes and dreams. So many things were running through my mind, but moving was the best thing for me and for my brothers. Once settled I started to forget about gangs and the whole negative environment, then I started to like the good brands such as Coach, Hollister, Uggs, True Religion and many more. There I realized I was starting to accept I more Mexican American because I still had my Mexican inside me but then I knew I was born here and liked the good stuff too. Some changes bring progress while some do not but there is not power that can stop the process of changing. To me change is part of life and if you fail to change yourself and remain

stubborn in the past you will not be part of future.

Leaving behind away from my family and friends and moving far can be tough. One is adjusting to deal to a new life. That was an experiment that changed my life as a person. It taught me to deal with change and how to adjust. It developed me from a young girl to a young women. I feel as the longer I live the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than the past, the education, the money, the circumstances, the failure, the success and what other people think, say or do. The thing is I have a choice everyday regarding the attitude I'll have that day. We cannot change the past the only thing we can do is play on the one string we have. Life to me is 10% of what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it.