

Topic: My family's struggle during the recession

Abstract: Being a low income family, it was difficult for my mother to support us. Things will be good but they always go wrong. My mother struggled with three jobs and it never got any easier. When we were doing better the recession hit and it was worse then ever.

Key Words: Recession, Single Mother, Rent, El Salvador, Family, Home

A Hard Life is Cheap

Living in a low income family is never easy. I grew up never knowing my father witch made life very difficult for me and my mother. We first lived with my grandmother in her house. We lived together as a family for four years. Sadly though my grandfather became an alcoholic and stopped working. My mother and grandmother were no longer able to pay the mortgage of the house, so we had to move. We ended up moving to a house in east side San Jose off of King Road and Viscane. My mother and I rented a small bedroom from a family. We only lived there for a month. This was because there was an incident where one of the occupants had threatened me with a knife.

My mother and I moved back with my grandparents and aunt. She was ten years older then me. The new place we moved to is the first home I really remember. It was a garage that had been converted to a small livable space. It had 2 bedrooms a kitchen and living room/ dining room. It was perfect for my small family. That is until they started to worry for my safety. The land owner's son was a schizophrenic and they were worried that he might become a danger to me sense he and I spent a lot of time outside. Not long after the neighborhood we lived in seemed to be getting more dangerous by the day. Shootings and gang oriented violence was getting worse. When it got to the point that there was a shooting two house down from us, that was when my mother had hade enough. To understand the severity of the situation you need to

understand that she grew up in El Salvador during a brutal civil war. She witnessed the violence and onslaught first hand. It deeply traumatized her.

It did not take long before my mother had come up with a plan to get us all out of that neighborhood. She decided to co-sign a house with another of my aunts. We ended up owning a very nice home on Lavonne Avenue. It was a five bedroom home. This was my first real house, it was beautiful.

Our family grew immensely when my mother married my new stepfather, who had brought with him his brother, sister in law and two kids to now live with us. They did not pay much for rent. That really affected my mother and aunt sense they were the heads of the household. To add to our already sinking family, my uncle had brought his wife and son from El Salvador to move in with us. Because of this mother was working three jobs at a time. She worked at a packaging plant from nine to five during the week. She then had an on call job as a house maid for a large cleaning company. Lastly she worked most weekends at the local Flea Market on Berryessa Road. Working all three jobs only brought in enough to barley scrap by. However we were all in good health, had a roof over our heads and had food to eat. We really had a very close family. Our house was the destination for any nearby relative to come over on weekends for a good time. We would watch football (soccer) or a couple of big time boxing matches.

As I have learned all good things must come to an end. This home and family definitely met its demise. We enjoyed the beautiful home for a total of two years, but then my aunt (the co-owner) had other plans. She had decided that her happiness with her new boy friend was much more important then the place that we all new as home. She made up her mind that the best

thing too do was to sell the house. Take her cut so she could start a new life and a new family with her soon to be husband. Although in the process of this she left all the bills and responsibility to my mother. Needless to say we lost the house and were only able to keep a small cut of the earnings. This was due to my mother's decision in refinancing the house. She only did that to try and give the remainder of our family time to find a new home.

My parents and two new little sisters ended up in a condominium on Mcquesten Street off of Tully Road. It was a nice cozy home for our new smaller family. I will admit it, it was nice having less people in the house. I started 6th grade at Santee elementary. This was now my going to be my fourth school in six years. By this time I had gotten comfortable with going to new schools.

I was only at school for four months when my mother told me behind teary eyes that she had lost her job and we could no longer afford this home. We had no choice but to move back in with my grandparents and aunt. Luckily she lived a couple of blocks over on Walnut Woods, so there was no need in me transferring between school years. The only difficulty was that her home was a small upstairs apartment. It had two bedrooms a very small kitchen and living room. We managed, I slept on the couch and my parents and sisters slept on a blow up mattress in the middle of the living room. We lived there for six months.

My mothers decided it was time leave San Jose and start a new life somewhere else. This was mostly due to the fact that the cost of living in San Jose was getting extremely high at that time. She decided on moving to a small town and she picked Hollister. Upon arriving here in Hollister both my parents started small businesses. My mothers a successful house cleaning service and my father fixes electronics. It got us by and we were soon able to own a very

impressive three bedroom home. We happily lived there for five years. Then the recession happened and both my parents lost a lot of work. If that isn't bad enough the land lord added an extra \$200 a month for rent.

Once again life was there to spit in our faces. And this time was the worst. We lost the house, and ended up moving with my aunt. The only upside is that she lived in Hollister. Now my parents and two sisters live in what used to be her office and I am sleeping in their RV that is parked on the side of the house.