**Topic:** My father’s escape from Iran to America.

**Abstract:** As a Christian child in Iran, my father was persecuted for his race and religion. Eventually becoming tired of his situation, he moved to England and was instilled with Western ideals and beliefs. Unfortunately, a revolution was beginning in Iran and he had to find a way to get his family out. He brought them to America and found himself happy for many years. Unfortunately, on September 11th, 2001, an act of terrorism in New York brought back all of those feelings of fear and persecution that he felt in Iran as a child.

**Key Words:** Iran, oppression, immigration, family, revolution, fear, persecution

**Narrative Essay**

My father often speaks to me about his journey to this country. The journey was one of peril and hope. But the journey began when he was born. He was born in a very Christian, Armenian family in a very Muslim Iran. If you know anything about Iran, you know that being Armenian or Christian alone is bad enough, but to be both was basically suicide. So, throughout his whole life he wanted to leave, but it took him a while to gather the necessary funds and ideas to do so.

When he was growing up in Iran, my father told me that he was treated very poorly by some and very well by others. He said that this stemmed from mixed feelings about his family. Some people hated him for his culture, but others liked him because his family had a lot of money. Unfortunately though, things only got worse when he got older. As his teenage years were passing, the harassment that he endured became worse and worse. He decided at this time that he could not stay in Iran. He began to think of places to go. Places that made him think of acceptance and prosperity. He thought of every Western country and landed on the thought of going to England. After finishing school in Tehran, he decided to go to college in London.
At this time, he decided to go to Imperial College London. While there, he learned a lot about Western Culture and ideals. He studied architecture and business and was rewarded master’s degrees in both. His eyes were opened and at this time he decided to make this Western lifestyle his permanent lifestyle. He settled in London and managed a hotel. This hotel became very successful and he began to become more integrated into English life. He met his first wife and, naturally, married her. His life in England seemed to be going very well. His first child was born there and he was truly happy. Little did he know, a phone call would begin the darkest chapter of his life.

He received a phone call from his mother one day. She was in tears. Two of her brothers had been killed in a fire set by Islamic protestors in Iran. Revolution was coming and Christians would no longer be welcome in the new Iran. My father had no idea what to do. He had grown so accustomed to his happy life in London that he couldn’t imagine giving it up. At the same time, he couldn’t simply leave his family in Iran to suffer and potentially be killed by the Islamic fundamentalists. He made the decision that ended his life as he knew it, he decided to rescue his family. He left his life in London and went back to Tehran. Immediately he began preparations to get his family out. He couldn’t take them back to London. He didn’t have the means to accommodate them there. He decided to cross the Atlantic. He decided to come to America.

Preparing them to come here wasn’t easy though. Wrapping there minds around joining a Western society was hard enough, but there was a revolution going on which added a sense of panic to everything he did. Being in this situation wasn’t very pleasant. Demonstrations took place every day and people were growing more scared and
frightened every day. The process only took about a month, but it felt like a lifetime for him. Every day he grew closer and closer to having all of his efforts ruined.

Leaving for America from Iran wasn’t an option for my father. The United States wasn’t too accepting of people immigrating from there at the time, so he had to temporarily take everyone to London. They lived in a hotel for a few months while papers were arranged for everyone to be able to go. London wasn’t a pleasant place to be for him though. If his family got settled there, making them leave for America would be impossible. After a few months though, he was able to award them documents needed to bring them to America. They moved to New York. New York seemed at first to be a great place to live. In the big city, it seemed that they simply blended in and nobody really noticed them. After a while though, he decided to have a change of scenery. He decided to have his own piece of the American dream. He decided to come out to California.

He moved to San Francisco. San Francisco made him and his family feel much more at home than in New York. He worked managing a Carl’s Jr. and raised his daughter. After getting a divorce he decided to move and take his daughter with him. At this point he moved to San Jose and became a higher-up with Jack in the Box. Making the best money of his life so far, he was very happy and felt like this would be the best course for his life. He then met his 2nd wife and my mother who also worked at Jack in the Box. From there they moved in together, had children, and relocated to Hollister. Something would happen though, in September 2001, that would bring the fear and panic back into his life. A few planes crashed in the eastern part of the United States. When the
race of the people responsible was revealed, people never looked at him the same way again.

He thought he would never have to feel any type of alienation again. He thought that he would be accepted here. Too old to leave the country and escape the persecution, he simply had to grit his teeth and just go through it. To this day he has to deal with it. America, the country that he ran to in order to save his family and escape persecution, would be the same country to bring all of the negative emotions back to him. There was an instance in which one of my teachers made a comment regarding my race and I didn’t seem too shaken by it. My father went into a depression when the event took place. It was a horrible instance in his life. He told me that he saw himself in me, but stronger. He ran from the persecution and I simply took it as a part of my life. He regrets every day that we live with our race branding us the way that it does. I never thought I would say this, but my father was truly scared when all of this hatred came about. He was scared that all of the bad things that he had to go through would happen to us too.

Today my father lives in Sacramento and owns his own business. He, for the most part, is able to live without any racism affecting his life and seems to be happy. Many people have called him weak for running away to London the first time that the persecution had become too much, but returning and saving his entire family from that makes him so much stronger than almost any person that I know.