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“The Fairytale Comes True”

Elizabeth Muñoz-Herrera proclaims, “Like Cesar Chavez said, ‘Si, se puede niños. Si, se puede.’ Just ‘tengan la passion,’ have passion and you can get out.” Herrera speaks about the children of migrant workers, who have little resources in achieving college. “Camp to Campus” documents these children’s lives, now adults, who struggled throughout their lives in order to achieve their college education. Many individuals, including me, can relate to the people being interviewed, for they achieved a higher education after high school, which seems as a fairytale for many Hispanics. Struggling parents try to find a way to provide for the family, which leads to the children trying to find a better life far from the fields. The social norm of a typical Mexican life is to find a job and create a family. On the other hand, many Hispanic have reached a higher education, such as getting their high school diploma, but achieving the dream of a college diploma still seems as a fairytale.

To begin with, school has been a challenge from the start. Being the eldest of six siblings and being the first to start school was difficult due to my mom knowing the minimum of English. At school, I had to pay close attention in order to figure out the matter of pronouncing a certain word or solving a certain math problem. Upon arriving home, I would tell my mom I learned how to pronounce the word, but then I would forget to pronounce other words. In the end, I memorized the book in order to be able to read it. My mother would just stare at me and sign my paper for reading 30 minutes. She could not help me much when it came to English. On the other hand, in math, she was a great help in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. As I got older, math developed into difficult skills that my mother never learned due to only gaining an elementary education. With not having that help in math, in elementary school I struggled with word problems and introduction to geometry. I had to stay after school every day for two hours in order to improve on my math skills. This tutoring helped me, but I realized that the only way I could do well in school is paying close attention and receiving help from teachers, for my parents were not going to be able to sit down and help due to their lack of higher education. Overall, I saw that I would have to become the tutor for my younger siblings because my parents only knew so much.

Furthermore, “Camp to Campus” demonstrated to me that even though my parents do not have a higher education, that does not mean I could not succeed. As Marissa Harrington states, “When I was in high school, I did want to pursue higher education because I would see the way my parents were struggling. It was difficult. Just the fact that my parents never got the opportunity, not even to go to kindergarten. And at the same time, I did not know how. I did not know where to go. I had no one to guide me, telling me, ‘Hey you need to go here to register. You need to do this.’ I had no guidelines.” Harrington’s worry appeals to me because as I entered high school the only plan I had was I wanted to go to college, but I had no clue in the actions I had to take in order to be accepted into a college. All I knew was that I needed to get excellent grades and take the challenging courses. Speaking to my parents about going to college, all they could say was that college is too expensive and if I wanted to get a higher

education, Bakersfield would be the place for me to go. Yes, I had support from them to attend college, but they did not support for me to leave.

Moreover, as time progressed, my parents saw me succeed in high school and they knew I wanted to attend a four-year university, but the challenge of letting me study away from home scared them. The counseling office was the greatest place to be in for me because my counselors, Mrs. Cardoso and Mrs. Garcia, instilled hope in me that I can go to college. I reached out to them in order for them to be able to convince my parents.

“They wanted me to graduate 8th grade and just go work in the fields, and not attend high school. So, I fought that. And actually the principal from my elementary school came and I cried to him and I told him what was happening. And so he came and talked to my family. And spoke to my mom and father, and told them you know how important high school was and that they needed to accept that I wanted to go to high school,” stated Laura Hasting. Her statement depicts the conversation I had with my parents about college. Mrs. Garcia introduced my parents to the UC scholars program. UC scholars program opened my parents’ eyes in seeing the difference in a state college and a university. This program greatly affected my life throughout high school because my dad started to support my decision more and wanted me to achieve after high school.

Indeed, “Camp to Campus” proclaims that the children of migrant workers can succeed and be able to gain a higher education. Working in the fields is not a destiny, but we have a choice to choose our path in life. Towards the end of the documentary, we learn that the interviewees overcame their struggles and achieved their goal in getting a career outside of the fields. Elizabeth Muñoz-Herrera states, “My college education gave me freedom and choice. It gave me options and it showed me that I could be anything I wanted to be.” College is not a fairytale, but rather a reality I can achieve.