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### “Adversaries Are Our Fuel”

Being Latina, it is easy to become part of the stereotypical statistics that show how many of us do not pursue a higher education. Most of my family is in Guatemala but my dad has a few distant relatives in the United States. Our close family friends about my age have dropped out of college. I respect my family but I know that I need to achieve success for my future economic stability, and self-satisfaction. Although our parents came to the U.S. striving for a better quality of life not many people in my family in the U.S. have accomplished a career.

Watching the “Camp to Campus” movie was like making a connection with people that had been through similar experiences to what I have lived through. When I was up at two in the morning crying in frustration and feeling hopeless with my FAFSA application I could have never imagined that I was not alone. In my world it always seemed like even the other first-generation college students, my friends, had someone to help guide them through their educational careers but I could never seem to find help. However, after watching “Camp to Campus” I was motivated to seek help. For me, it was comforting to know that people with a similar culture and similar challenges are now successful. I had never truly had a hero to write down on the line on the papers titled “describe yourself” in elementary school, and although watching other Hispanics earn the careers that they want may seem like a simple reason to call someone a hero, para mi esto es una novedad.

One of the interviewees that I felt the strongest connection with was Marisa Harrington. The moment when she became emotional and cried as she remembered how stressed and confused she was during the college application process I sympathized with her because I felt those same emotions when I was applying for college. Before hearing about her past experiences and seeing her catharsis I did not have the courage to ask my counselor for help during the process of applying for financial aid because I was embarrassed and unaware of how much other people struggled with the applications as well. I am thankful that she was able to share a moment of her vulnerability with the audience because she inspired me. I also agree with her when she says that we were told to go to college but at the same time it was not something that was not pushed on us. However, for me, yes, it was not always pushed either. I was given alternatives, but it was more of an issue of lack of guidance.

For example, my parents cannot support me with guidance, straight forward answers and the thousands of dollars I need for UC Irvine. Instead my mom gives me vague suggestions like, ask George Ramos from Univision for scholarships. Furthermore, in the video Ms. Harrington also says that seeing her parents struggle motivated her to pursue a higher education. About four years ago during my summer break, my mom took me to her work place thinking that I would have fun exploring the store that she works at. However, my mom is a janitor, and seeing her clean the restrooms and showers at a truck stop was depressing but life-changing. Like Ms. Harrington, being aware of the hard labor and difficult lifestyle my parents have has motivated to seek a different career choice and life for myself.

Ricardo Morales expressed a crucial theme that motivates our immigrant parents to come to the United States. For our parents part of the American Dream is for us, their children, to study so that we can attend a college and have the job that we want to have, not the one that we have to have. Knowing that my parents regret not having a higher education has helped me value quality of life more. I have seen and been affected by the lifestyle that is the alternative to a life with a college degree. For now I can only image that a life with a degree and a career can be more comfortable and safer.

Mr. Morales also briefly talked about his brother and the different choices that his brother made. As a younger sibling, I too have witnessed and been impacted by the lifestyle choices that my older sister has made. During her adolescence she struggled to focus on school and to respect our family. She was in a rebellious stage of selfishness that involved many negative relationships and caused numerous family problems. The family problems she ignited were a distraction to my school work; after all it is difficult to study when you hear your sister yelling at your parents or her boyfriend at night. I always wanted to look towards my sister for guidance but instead I was only able to see her mistakes, so I was forced to be mature and then I was able to choose to make different decisions. I am not proud to admit the shame that I had for my sister but knowing that other people like Mr. Morales had struggling siblings has helped me release my grudges with my sibling.

Every day I hope that I can be a leader like Connie Perez, a role model like Beatrice Aguilar, and with an education in the medical field like Carlos Mendoza, I also hope to help other Latinos. So, I am thankful to say that I now have eleven role models. Even with counselors, I have had to struggle and stress to find answers, be involved, know which classes to take, and apply for financial aid; it may seem like a simple list but the details and deadlines used to add up into a pile of lonely adulthood. However, now I have a different perspective on life, which will motivate me to be successful as I attend UC Irvine.