# Audio file

[2023-10-14-0024.mp3](https://indiana-my.sharepoint.com/personal/madciss_iu_edu/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/2023-10-14-0024.mp3)

# Transcript

Interviewer

My name is Alexia, and I'm interviewing the Community member Zelideh who contributed object ID number 2023-10-14-0024. So, my first question for you, is which memory would you like to share with us today.

Zelideh

Yeah, so the memory I'd like to share is that of my graduation, which is the photo that I have um, submitted and that's me uh, with my son in front of Sample Gates. Um, and it's a special memory because um, not only was getting a PhD a huge feat, but being a first generation high school and um, college student that was hard as well. And my dad's American dream, like so many immigrants um, was yes, to have a better life. Um, he didn't have more than a 6th grade education, but he valued education. And so his dream was to see me graduate from undergrad. Um, during my sophomore year in undergrad, he passed away suddenly at the age of 40, his heart just stopped and so he didn't see me graduate um, from my bachelor's degree or my Master’s degree. Um, but there was something special about seeing my son, the next generation. And it was, yes, a joyous uh, moment of graduation, but also um, to, even though my dad wasn't there, that in a way my son was there.

Interviewer

Yeah. You know, and even if he wasn't there physically, you know he was there in your heart, so.

Zelideh

Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer

Okay. And so, since, like the graduation that relates to you as an IU alum and is there any more like to share about how it relates to your experience at IU, like is there anything you'd like to talk about?

Zelideh

Yeah, absolutely, um, I don't have a lot of pictures from my undergrad years uh, specifically here at La Casa, but La Casa had so much uh, contributed to part of that journey as well because I felt so guilty uh, for staying even after my dad passed. And I had all the reasons to go back home and back home was Fort Wayne um, and it was just that guilt stayed with me for a long time because um, there was a part of me that said I should quit and get a job and help my mother, who had up to that point, only worked part-time and hourly jobs. And so I knew they were struggling and I made the decision to stay at IU. In hindsight it was the best decision I could have made, but it was fraught with also a lot of challenges and La Casa and specifically, Lillian provided that support and community. So that's something that's really special. That I will always be grateful for um, and La Casa is also where I got my first uh, oh my gosh, what are those jobs called, uh? Yes, they have the hourly student, but it's your work study. Your work study. So, my work study was here at La Casa that was my first job and I was so excited to obviously do my best um, and then later on I worked as a graduate assistant, which also was a whole ‘nother level of being able to see um, La Casa as a graduate and to experience some of the administrative challenges that Lillian faced um, in doing programming, um, not getting enough funding, not having all the support, seeing her, you know, cry over her desk. Some of the things that you know, she dealt with, some of the student crises that um, um, I would try to be as a support, but at the end of the day, she found ways of always making it work, um and so that was a huge inspiration for me and up to this day how she handles things. So, La Casa, I would say it's one of my-- if not, the one of the highlights of my time here at IU because it was a constant source of support at multiple levels for me.

Interviewer

I just have a few more questions. So how does this memory relate to your identity?

Zelideh

It's community. Um, I mentioned being an immigrant and you know you don't come to a new place with family and a network of support waiting for you. So, to some extent, like I said, La Casa was that for me. I was a Groups 2000, they call it G2K, Groups 2000 student, and that was a source of community. So going back to the identity piece, um, there's a lot of things that I could say I did by myself, but really it's community that kept me here pushed and supported me in, in moving along. So, it's very much part of my identity. I try to do that as much as possible: to reach out, to be there for someone, or at least provide a resource that can be there for them. Because I know it can make such a huge difference. So, for me community is uh, again something that was very much cemented in me in my time here at La Casa specifically.

Interviewer

Okay, so this is one final question. Uh, is there anything I didn't ask you that you would like to talk about?

Zelideh

I've always said that, you know, I, I, I proudly wear my IU gear and um, and I have so much love for, for this, this institution, the programs that it um, funds to increase um, underrepresented students um, and multiple levels from undergrad to grad um, and the professional schools. But at the end of the day, really, it's the people, the people that are here, that um, that have such a huge impact. Yeah, like I said, will forever be grateful.

Interviewer

Okay, thank you. Let me go ahead and end the recording then.