

Maria Vazquez
3/24/2024
SEF Essay
Embracing Dreams

In the quaint town of Everett, Washington, on a chilly February 4th, 2006, my journey began—a journey of sacrifice, love, and resilience that would shape the course of my life. As a proud Mexican-American, I was raised in a tight-knit community where family values ran deep and dreams were cherished. However, beneath the surface of our close bonds lay the harsh realities of financial struggle.

Growing up in a low-income family meant navigating a world where resources were scarce and opportunities seemed few and far between. Meals often consisted of humble fare like beans, a testament to our economic limitations. Yet, amidst these challenges, my family remained steadfast in their belief in the power of education and the promise of a brighter future.

However, as I embarked on the hard and confusing journey of adolescence, the weight of these challenges began to take its toll. Bullied for being "too skinny" and labeled as "poor" by classmates, I found solace in the warmth of my family's embrace but struggled to reconcile the harsh realities of our circumstances with the dreams that danced in my heart.

The turning point came in February 2016, when the burden of our financial struggles and the cruelty of others became too much to bear. In the depths of despair, I found myself grappling with thoughts of hopelessness, unsure of where to turn or how to find my way back to the light. Yet, even in my darkest moments, a flicker of resilience remained—a stubborn refusal to let circumstances define my destiny.

With the support of loved ones and the unwavering strength that lay within me, I began the journey of healing and self-discovery. Organizations like HOSA became beacons of hope, guiding me through the darkness and showing me that every struggle has the potential to become a source of strength.

Now, as I stand on the cusp of a new chapter, inspired by the resilience of my family and the challenges we've overcome together, I am driven to pursue a career in Nursing or Medical Assisting and Institutions like Pima Medical Institute, Bellevue College, Pacific Lutheran University, UW bothell, Washington state university, or Evergreen State University represent not just educational opportunities, but the promise of a future where compassion meets action and healing extends beyond the physical realm.

My journey is a testament to the power of perseverance and the enduring spirit of hope. As I step forward into the unknown, I carry with me the legacy of my family—a legacy of strength, resilience, and unwavering belief in the power of dreams. With each step, I am rewriting the narrative of my life, turning adversity into opportunity and embracing the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.