

UNDOCUMENTED DREAMS

THE REALITY THAT HUNDREDS OF UNDOCUMENTED TEENAGERS HAVE TO FACE AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL

Words and Design:
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Ambitious, strong, generous, sincere, kind and fun are just some adjectives that describe Emma.*

Emma came to the United States four years ago when she was only 15 years old and is about to make her dream come true, coming to the United States and graduating from high school to make her mom proud, even if she is hundreds of miles apart from her.

“I came to a new whole country four years ago when I was 15 years old because there was a lot of violence going on in El Salvador. My brother and I were so scared of coming to a new country by ourselves where they speak another language that we didn’t know anything about but we didn’t have any choice,” Emma said.

Her journey of coming to the United States from El Salvador wasn’t an easy thing either. She struggled to get to America, and she remembers every single detail about her journey. It took her seven days to get to the United States.

“I remember I spent seven days in Mexico with people I didn’t know. The last days were definitely the hardest because I was so tired, and I wanted to get here already. I had a really hard time in Mexico. When I got here to the United States, I was happy and sad at the same time because I was so far away from my mom, the most important person to me,” Emma said.

Becoming a flight attendant was her biggest dream when she came to the United States, but due to some circumstances, she is not going to be able to make it come true.

“My biggest dream after graduating from high school is to become a flight attendant, but sadly I don’t have the opportunity to continue studying. My legal status is one of the reasons, and now that I think about it, even if I was legal, I wouldn’t be able to afford that much money for college since I don’t live with my mom,” Emma said.

Her friends admire and have a lot of respect for her after all the things she has been through.

“She is a really strong woman. She always has a smile on her face, even if she is going through some hard times and I love it about her. It is really sad seeing that she can’t continue studying and making her dream of becoming flight attendant come true because of her legal status in the country,” one of her friends said.

After her dream of continuing studying was crashed, she plans on finding a job after graduating. She plans on becoming an independent person. Another long-term goal Emma has is to later in life try to fix her legal status in the country and travel to El Salvador to see her mom and loved ones again after all this time they been separated from each other.

“When I’m older and have the possibilities, I want to fix my legal status and once that happens, I want to go back to El Salvador and see my mom and all my family that I left there. That is my biggest goal in life,” Emma said.

Emma’s story is an example of millions of teenagers that don’t have the possibilities to go to college because of her legal status in the country and the only option they have is to find a job and help their families with their house expenses so they can have a better life than the ones they had in their birth country.

*Names have been changed to protect the identity of this student, but many of our students have experienced this situation.