

How Having Incarcerated

Alizia Guzman, Events Director

When people see me, they think I'm a that loving girl with a big smile, caring for others over herself, she's never been through anything the world has not crushed her spirit yet. Which is true in most ways. No one really knows what I have been through, but I try to not let it take anything away from me.

My mother is currently incarcerated for drugs and a probation violation. This is kind of hard for me to write about, but I'm willing to share it because I want to convey that there is still hope. Your past does not define you, that your childhood does not define you.

My mother was my best friend growing up, doing her best to care for me with the circumstances that she was given, being that her mother passed away when she was young. She always worked for everything. She hated asking people for anything. She also had to raise my three cousins at some point in my childhood, that I considered my sisters.

She was the only one we could count on for as long as I could remember. But, as always, good things go downhill. Bouncing around house to house, from family to my mom's friend's house not having a stable place to live growing up. I had to grow up at young age and worry about my mother and do as much as I possibly could do to take care of her. I have witnessed a lot of things that kids were not exposed to at a young age.

A kid that young should not have to worry about if their mother is going to leave them again in an unknown place when they go to sleep or leave them at their cousin's house for three days when she said she would be back

for you. But I don't blame her, that's the thing. She got mixed in with the wrong crowd that were her supposed "friends". they could hard-

ly care less about her wellbeing or much less about me. When she knew she was going to get in trouble she would give me to someone to keep safe because she didn't want anything to happen to me.

5 people have had temporary custody of me, not having a choice of where to go. I never knew when my mother was going to pop up to visit and when she did, I always stuck to her never wanting her to leave me again, but then again, she would.

I hardly talked growing up, always having to bottle up emo-

tions, having to be strong because that's what I had been taught. I always made it my mission to not cry after visiting.

Because after one visit when one of my aunts had temporary custody over me she said to me when I couldn't stop crying and hyperventilating that "if you don't stop crying we're not going to visit your mom again.", I remember that day like it was yesterday. That day is when I learned I had to keep everything in and now it's still my bad habit.

School has always been my safe space growing up, I knew that I didn't have to worry about everything that's going to happen after school, I just lived in the moment. Even though I was always behind in something because I

switched to so many elementary schools, I still loved it. Even when I had to wait 2 hours after school until my mom or someone came to pick me up. I knew the administration felt bad for me, but I didn't want their pity. There were also days that my safe place was taken away from me, when my mother was gone before I even got myself ready for school and I called her until she answered. She told me to ask her friend to take me to school, and I would knock on her door, but she would not answer because she would still be high on pills from the night before. So, I would put my back pack down, get some breakfast, turn on my favorite cartoons and just sit on the bed by myself. But I would always strive to be my best in school because

I wanted to be different. I didn't want to get tempted by drugs. I wanted to do better for me and my family. I didn't want to fall into the cracks of society. The one time my mother knew she never had to worry about me was in school. I always wanted to make my family proud. I wanted to be the change in my family and honestly there some family members that I couldn't have done it without, even though

some of them are not blood they are my blood. I know my story could have turned out totally different. But, what I'm trying to convey is that being a child of an incarcerated parent changed me

in ways no one knows. My past does not define me, the things my mother has done does not define me, only the future and all I want to do is move on. I can't write my auto biography but now you know half my story. I'm a daughter of an incarcerated parent, a sister, a cheerleader, and successful high school student.



Parents Has Impacted Us

Delicia Oxenreider, Copy Editor

What do you think:

What was your first impression of me? Many say I appear to be a mean person. I tend to put up a guard, other times I'm just trying to get from one class to another and apparently seem mad. That is not me.



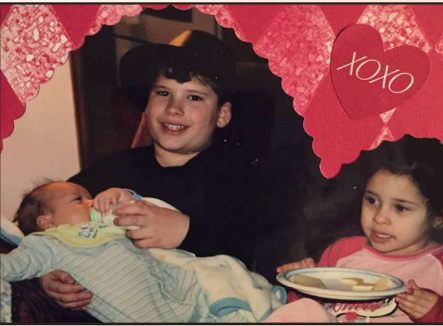
No matter how many people may agree upon a word to describe me, it'll never define me.

Growing up with incarcerated parents is very hard. Many people look at children with incarcerated parents and think hopeless. That is one thing I am not. Neither my parents, past, nor do words define me, only my story can.

False promises:

With my mom being a prostitute and drug addict, she was constantly in and out of jail. It's not any better when your dad is a drug dealer. Many children grew up looking forward to going to the park, which they should. However, I was stripped of a normal childhood, the only thing I anticipated was, visiting my mom in jail. She was

full of false promises; I'll be home soon I promise, I'll be home before you wake up I promise. My mom made many false promises, I started to wonder what



other promises she broke. I don't think she understood that a promise is something that is made but cannot be broken. She promised she loved me too, if that were true, why did she always choose sex, money, and drugs over her own kids?

Never a daughter nor sister:

She chose sex, drugs, and money, so basically, she chose jail. She knew the consequences of her extracurricular activities, she just didn't care. Many nights I would find myself tucking her into bed. I know that the roles reverse in life, that your parents take care of you as a

kid and then you take care of them when they are old, but she never took care of me. Since

she was always gone I had to take care of her kids, I could never be their sister or her daughter, I have always been the caretaker.

Broken:

Anytime my mom and dad were together he would be mad at her. Whenever my mom was in jail he would

and dad were together he would be mad at her. Whenever my mom was in jail he would tell me to stop crying. I feel like I'm broken when I don't cry when someone dies or anytime a normal person would cry. I feel broken and outcasted. I can't identify my feelings because I was taught they were a bad thing.



Now, it's the only thing that people keep telling me that I need to work on.

Second chances:

I constantly gave my mom second chances that she didn't deserve, but it was time I got a second chance

at life. When I was 7, on June 1st, 2011, I was taken away from my family and placed in foster care. On September 5th, 2012, I was adopted. I don't usually let anything get to me, but I'll resent anyone for comparing me to my mom. I strive to be her opposite. So far, I have steered clear of her path. She dropped out of school at 14 and I am still in school at 15. I have so many accomplishments that I would never have if I was still with my biological family.



How have i been impacted?

DHS (Department of Human Services) was constantly a part of my life. My mom never though how scared I'd be from being questioned by authorities. Since she was never around when she needed to be tested for drugs, they'd end up cutting some of my hair and testing it. Why do I have to be the one to be tested for her mistakes? I often wonder if I am destined for the same life as her. Last January I was arrested and immediately realized that was one more thing I had in common with my

biological mom, being cuffed in the backseat.

Writing my own story:

There was a point in life that my mom was too busy selling herself

that she made me live with the neighbors for a couple months.

Having parents that were always on the run or always getting into trouble messed me up. I grew up seeing my mom be hit and abused by everyone. I decided I was not going to let anyone do that to me. I'm not a mean person,

I've just gone through a lot. I cannot write my entire life story, but the point I'm making is that no matter what your past consists of, you cannot let it define you. I don't want to be seen as troubled.

Because I'm an excellent student and athlete. I try my best to be accomplished. I want to rise above my mother and go to college and make something of myself. I want to make up for what she did not dream to fulfill.

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