

DREAM Student Profiles

MARCH 2009

The testimonials included here relate the daily challenges and inspirational life experiences of undocumented youth. They were collected from actual students by Dreamactivist.org and are available at <http://dreamactivist.org/our-stories>.

STEPHANIE

Philippines

Prior to my discovery about our status, I spent my life “changing the channel” when it came to immigrants’ rights issues, and I dismissed the cause as something that didn’t concern me. Ironically, it was only when I discovered that I was undocumented myself that I truly understood that immigration reform was something that concerns Americans as a whole. As I entered adulthood, in essence, without adulthood—unable to drive, prove my age, vote, travel, or get a normal job—I suddenly understood that immigration reform was not simply a political issue or even, at its core, an immigration issue at all, but rather a civil rights issue. I have lived in this country for twenty years; it is literally all I know, and all that I understand. I hope that all other Americans can realize what I did about immigrants, albeit slowly: that we are everyone, we are anyone, and we could be you.

CARLOS

Venezuela

My name is Carlos and I am an undocumented “DREAM Act” student hopeful born in Venezuela. I am 21 years old and I have lived here undocumented for 19 years. I want to legalize my status in order to fulfill my desire and ambition to become a young professional in the field of engineering. I received a high school diploma in 2005 with honors.

BLANKA

Croatia

My name is Blanka. I’m 23 years old and I was born in Croatia and currently live in Illinois. I came here when I was ten on a tourist visa and overstayed it without my knowledge. I have a bachelor of science in finance and am applying to graduate school to study applied statistics. I love sports, running (I just ran my first marathon), volunteering, piano, and many other things. I feel the U.S. is my home and I want to give back to a country that has given so much to me.

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MAURICIO

Mexico

There is not one day I wake up without frustration and sadness within my heart. There is not one morning that I do not ask myself how different my life would be if I were legal. There is not one night I go to bed without thinking of the uncertainty of my tomorrow. There is not one night I go to bed without comparing my disadvantages with the many opportunities my fellow peers have had. There is not one day where I do not dream of really enjoying freedom, liberty, of living the American Dream, for I know that America is the land of opportunities, yet these seem to have been closed shut for me.

MARIO

Guatemala

My name is Mario and I am a sophomore studying mathematics and economics at UCLA. I moved to the U.S. from Guatemala at the age of nine to reunite with my mother after two years of not seeing her, only to once again be apart from her due to her job as a full-time nanny for another family. Even as a single mother, she has dedicated all of her time and effort to trying to make my life easier and better than how we lived in Guatemala. Since I cannot legally work in order to support us financially, I've contributed to our struggle by empowering myself with an education in order to support both of us when she no longer can work. I was valedictorian in my high school and the first one in my family to go to a university, but as an undocumented student, these accomplishments are somewhat meaningless to me as I know I have to fight harder in order to accomplish my long-term goals. In the future, I plan to become an economist or a math teacher as well as a strong supporter and advocate for equal rights and economic prosperity for everyone in the world.

JOHN

Korea

I arrived here at the age of 12 with my sister and mom in hope of receiving a better education. Throughout high school, I received good grades and made many friends. America was now my home. However, during my junior year, I realized that my dream had no chance against the American immigration laws. Except for the local community college, there were no other schools that I could go to. Many universities and colleges rejected my application, requesting documents proving my legal status. I had no such documents, so I gave up my dream of higher education and becoming a computer programmer. My only option was to work. It was not always easy finding a job because of my status. Thanks to my family and friends, I have been able to continuously find employment. It has already been 14 years since I immigrated here. There is no future for me but to live hopelessly. Through the "DREAM Act," I will be able to continue my education and fulfill my dream of becoming a computer programmer. I need the "DREAM Act" for my dream become reality.