

El Ritmo de la Cosecha

The difficulties my family faces are that both of my parents work in fields for ten hours or more every day and are paid \$8.25 per hour. They work weekends and holidays, and they don't get paid extra! Sometimes in summer people drink all of their water and start to feel bad because there is no more water, or some other workers bring them bad water and they get sick. Other times in winter when they cut the grapes it is so cold the workers can't feel their fingers. My dad moves around all year long following *las temporadas*, temporary work. I only see him once a month. He works planting tomatoes, cleaning fields, picking weeds, packing the cantaloupe, drying raisins after picking the grapes, and picking pomegranates.

On a typical day, we wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning. My mom begins to pack the lunches for herself, my sister, my brother, and me. Then my Mom drives us to a woman's house. Out of love, we called her Tia Pina. When my parents go to work, we stay with her. We sleep in the living room for a while, and at 5:30 she drives us to day care.

My little sister and my little brother stay at day care while a teacher walks me to the bus stop so I can go to school. When school is over, the bus takes me to day care again to sleep a little. Then my Tia Pina picks us up and drives us back to her house. When we get to her house, we eat what my Mom packed for us. Then we play in backyard. After that we watch TV until my Mom picks us up at 7:30 at night. When we get home, I take a shower, do my homework, brush my teeth, and go to sleep. Even if they come home tired, my parents still do their chores before going to sleep. So this is how they finished their day working in the San Joaquin Valley.

I decided to go to school for a better future, and my goal is to study in college and go to the university. I love animals and would like to work as an animal rescue officer. An education will help me have a better job so I can help my family.