

SECOND PLACE

Essay Contest Winner, Ages 10-13

Evelyn Arroyo, 10

Livermore, CA

Translated from Spanish

I have challenges. I remember the time when I was 4 years old. My mom, Mamá Leonor and Papá Jose Luis would wake up very early. It seemed like it was night when they were preparing their food and their tools for work. My mom carried me in her arms, blanketing me and my head leaned on her shoulder. This is how she carried me to the car and fastened me to my seat. Later, she carried me with covers and did the same with my brother for us to go.

In the nursery, after lunch, we played with toys and did an activity with the teacher. On the patio the kids and my brothers were playing but I took care of the plants and watched the bugs walk. After we were given a meal to eat and went to sleep again. My aunt Pina picked us up because my mom was working. Among other things, my mom works in the melon harvest. She brought me my favorite fruit, the melon. My mom would pack the melons. Each box weighed up to 30 pounds and fit 9, 12 or 15 melons. At night my mom had cramps on her fingers and they hurt, they swelled in a way that her hand could not make a fist.

My mom tells me about the dangers of the field. One is the temperature. Sometimes it is up to 105 degrees. You can have heart attacks, headaches, or faint of dehydration. The fertilizers are chemicals that are also dangerous. The most used fertilizer is called "Sulfur". They help the plants to grow more and produce fruits, beans, and vegetables quicker, but they hurt the little bugs so that they don't eat the plants. The worst is also that it affects the health of the workers. It causes irritation in the eyes and skin and can get in the lungs.

We do not always go together to follow the seasons. Sometimes only my brothers, my mom and I stay. I cannot see my father when he goes for cotton, alfalfa, or for grapes. He works very hard. My parents inspire me to study hard at school and I know that I will achieve what I want to.

I will study and achieve my dream. I am going to be an engineer. For now I work making scarves with two needles and a hook to sell. I have saved some 200 dollars. My new project is to embroider blouses by cross stitching in order to sell them and this way to save more. With effort, I will realize my dreams.