



# Growing My Dreams

My parents and siblings stood beside me. The blazing summer sun was shining down on us as I looked out across the rows and rows of growing cotton plants. I took a deep breath, wiped sweat off my forehead, and began my day of hoeing weeds that were taller than I was.

I have a younger brother, an older brother who hopes to start college soon, and an older sister. I am the third of four children, and we all still live at home with my mother. She is the main breadwinner for our family, and she works as a hairstylist to support us. Unfortunately, my parents divorced not long ago. Until then, we were a Hispanic, migratory family. When I was younger, we would travel from Harlingen to Arkansas in the summer to work in the cotton fields. When I was older, we moved to Pearsall to work in the peanuts.

The work in the fields was hot and dirty. My older brother, sister and I worked with my parents to remove the weeds from the rows of cotton. It was rough work, but we had to do it to help with our family budget. I am not ashamed of my parents, nor of being called a migrant. I am proud of my family for venturing out for work. They saw an opportunity and seized it. Watching my parents working hard helped me gain respect for them. Fieldwork shaped me into the independent person I am today and also taught me to attack my struggles head on and not avoid them.

I have always been a little shy at first (due to moving often), and it takes some time for me to get comfortable before joining in. Despite this, I have had the opportunity to work with my local police and participate in Cops for Kids and National Night Out. Through these volunteer events, I helped wrap Christmas gifts for low-income children, took pictures with children, and shared important information about safety tips. I liked helping our local police and being part of something that benefits my community.

This May I will complete my high school diploma after only three years, and then I plan to attend college this fall to pursue a doctorate degree. I would be the first among my family to attend college. I want to become an OB/GYN because I feel I can encourage women to not be afraid of their health needs, and I feel I can increase sex education awareness among my community. This subject is often not discussed, but it is a critical conversation.

Because of my family circumstances and my parents' divorce, we do not have the money to afford my college education. Also, since my brother plans to start college as well, this puts more of a financial burden on us. That is why I am applying for scholarships to help with college expenses. I know that one way or another, I will find a way to graduate.

