

Who tells your story?

My name is Rosalba Cardenas and I was born in 1954. I am from Guadalajara, Jalisco. I have 3 sisters and 1 brother. I am the youngest. My mom passed away when I was 2 years old. It was hard sometimes not having my mom when I was a kid. I would get sad when I would see other kids with their moms. I was very blessed to have a great father and sisters who raised me.

Living in Mexico was very nice. I felt free as a child because I would play outside all day on the farm. I would play in the fields all day. It smelled like dirt, like when it just rained. My neighbors were very friendly. We all took care of each other. I didn't really visit a lot of shops because we lived in a very small town. The only shop I would visit sometimes was when I would have to go buy tortillas for my father. Most of the time we ate beans and tortillas. My best friend was my oldest sister Maria. My job was to help around the house and I would sometimes go to the field to help my dad. It was hard when I would help my dad out in the field because it was hot and we were outside all day. I would help my dad plant pinto beans. It was hard work but I would enjoy spending all day with him. We used to sing while we worked. I did not get paid, I would only help my dad.

It was hard when my older sister Maria came to live in the United States. I missed her very much because she was like my mother. I wanted to come to America to be with my sister Maria. I decided to come to the United States because I wanted to see what it looked like. I came to Los Angeles, California. I felt happy when I made it to

America. It felt strange because I was used to living in my own country. It was difficult leaving my dad. I did not have any struggles crossing the border. It wasn't as difficult back then as it is now. There was a fence with a hole in it and I went through it. There was someone waiting for me in a car to take me to Los Angeles to where my sister lived. I was nervous because I didn't know how to speak English. It was hard to get around America because I didn't know where I was and I didn't know how to speak English. I felt bad and nervous about not being able to communicate with people. When I came to America I was looking forward to getting a job to help my family. My sister Maria and her husband helped me get around since I didn't drive or know my way around.

I met my husband in the apartments where my sister Maria lived. We got married in 1978. I became pregnant with my first child in 1979. I felt very happy when I held my first child. My husband got deported in 1983. I felt nervous and scared when he got deported because I was by myself and I was pregnant with my second child. I went to live with my sister Maria. She helped me until my husband was able to come back to the U.S.



I have been living in America for 44 years. I have enjoyed living here. There are more opportunities in America. I have enjoyed being able to provide my kids with a better life and opportunities than what I had. I have never felt unwelcome here in the U.S. People here in the U.S have treated me well and with respect. Life isn't always easy and you will go through good times and bad times. I have learned that never giving up and working hard will get you to where you want to be in life.

story told by: Alex Garcia