

Interview

Thank you for taking part in this very important research. My name is Ivette Chavez. I am a CI student. As a class project, I and my classmates are collecting the oral histories of those in Ventura County who are affected by the current economic recession. By signing the consent form that I have provided you with earlier, you have agreed to participate in this research and/or you have agreed the audio-recording of this interview to be archived at the CI Broome Library. I would like to assure you that whenever you feel uncomfortable with the interview, you can take a break or you can decide to withdraw your participation in this interview.

First, I'm going to start with a few basic questions. So just tell me about yourself. Where were you born? When did you move to Ventura County and what do you do right now?

A: Well, I'm an 18-year old female. I'm originally from Inglewood, CA which is basically near LAX for those who don't know. I just graduated last year. I came here to CI because it was best option schools here. Since I'm from LA, from Inglewood, I decided to move all the way out here during August when I participated in a summer program.

Was it always your childhood dream to go to college?

A: Not really. I didn't pay much attention about college. I went to a private school. They said a few things about college here and there but not really. They just told you to go to high school is your main thing, your main goal and high school is everything. I didn't really pay attention until I started being serious in junior year. That's when I started to look at colleges.

What made you start getting interested in college?

A: Well, my parents always asked me or people would ask me what I want to do in life. I would just say, "Oh, a doctor, whatever, an M.E." I didn't really think much of it until I took a class in high school, SAT prep where that made me want to join college.

Where's your family now and do you have any siblings? Or what's your family situation like?

A: My family's still back at home in Inglewood. I don't have any family out here. I have no siblings so I'm basically here alone.

How do you think being a single child has affected your life?

A: It was pretty difficult because yeah you had your parents there but they were always working. I didn't really have anybody there to support you but not to support you on personal goals and just being there for an ear, not judging you and not being so religious sometimes.

So how can you describe your experience in private school versus being in public school? How are they different?

A: Private school was interesting-not in a fun way. Private school was really strict. You had to grow up with the same people you did every year, grade after grade. You really never met new

people. You think everybody else is the same concept as you are until I went to public school. It was totally different. It was a drastic change for me which was really hard even though it was a good thing. I got to meet new people, got to feel new experiences, see new experiences and just open my eyes way more instead of private school.

What caused you to make the switch over to public school?

A: The main reason was moneywise. I know when I was in grade school and middle school the tuition was pretty high. It was like \$3,000 a year and then if I were to go to high school, it was about \$10,000 a year. It was like practically paying for college.

Do you think that the area you like in and the area your school is in affected your education?

A: Yeah. I think it did because I'm originally from Inglewood. I went to high school in Lawndale- two totally different environments. In Inglewood High, Morningside, it was a bad rap. There were always police cars there, trouble causing over there while in Lawndale it was more of a chill environment. I could actually think about school. It wasn't as bad.

How has your college experience been so far and what has been the most surprising part of college for you?

A: So far my college experience has been super great aside from all the stress and work that I have. Meeting new people that you didn't think you would find. You get to be yourself more I should say. While in home you're always stuck at home. Your parents really don't let you do stuff. When I moved out here by myself I was my own person. I could go home whenever I want but still be responsible.

Have there been any difficult or painful experiences that have come with going to college?

A: A few experiences, yeah. I lost a lot of friends, but gained new ones. It was pretty difficult leaving my family behind. Not seeing my baby girls, my boyfriend, and my parents sometimes even though they're a pain in the butt. It's painful but for a good purpose.

What is your housing situation right now? Where do you live? How do afford living in this housing?

A: Right now my situation is pretty complicated. It used to be a house where it was just pure CI students but some complications made it so where most of my roommates left and I was in the house with the owners. It's been difficult since the rent is pretty high I just rent a room. It should be lower but I have nothing to do about it since I have no other ways. I can't move to school because the rent is too high and if I move by myself the rent is also too high. So it's pretty difficult especially finding roommates.

Do you have a job right now?

A: No. Right now I don't really have a job maybe because I have lack of transportation and lack of experience. Since I have no job my mom right now is supporting me. I try to have her not support me so much. Hopefully next semester when I move more inland to the city of Oxnard, I can have more opportunities of getting a job.

You said that it was hard to pay tuition when you were going to a private school. How is college tuition affecting your financial life?

A: Back when my mom was paying my private school tuition we were more secure with money. Even though it's kind of difficult paying tuition every year we were more secure and then my break from private school to public school kind of helped with tuition for college this year. But it's still pretty hard. I have to budget my money to see what I'll eat for the day or next day. Sometimes I have one meal a day or two meals or three meals, hopefully, a day and it's pretty tough.

What are your plans for next semester of school?

A: My plan is to move out of the living situation I'm in to more affordable price. Try to find a place where it's more near school. Hopefully find a job where it's reasonable for me and where I can gain more experience in the job field and try to take less classes than I am now.

Do you consider the situation you're in a hardship or is it something that you can deal with? Is it something that's difficult for you?

A: For the most part it is difficult. I'm not going to lie. It's been really hard trying to keep up, have a smile on my face all the time but I know it's for the good part and it's going to be worth it at the end. That's what keeps me going all the time and having support behind my back even though they're not here with me.

Is there somebody or something that you blame for this?

A: I would want to say yes but this was my decision to come out here. It was my decision to apply to schools outside of my home. I would say most of it would be mine but there are also things that I can be like, "If it wasn't for this person or for this thing it would be a little bit more easier," but it's what I have to deal with.

Who has helped you throughout this college process and helped you emotionally cope with everything?

A: I would like to say my parents but they make everything much more complicated even though they are making this possible for me. Emotionally it would be my friends mainly that help me go through this because they are going through the same thing also and there's people who I've met here who have gone through the same thing before.

What made you chose Channel Islands as the college you wanted to come to?

A: At first in high school I didn't really pay attention to college. In the beginning my grades weren't as good but I recuperated during junior and senior year. I was looking at different colleges. I was first thinking of Humboldt because it was away from home and it was near nature but then I started thinking why not someplace where it's smaller. The class ratios are much more small and more convenient for me since I'm used to having small classes in elementary, middle school and high school. I didn't really here much about Channel Islands. It made me curious of how the school is and then when I came here I just fell in love with it.

Is it difficult going to school knowing that you don't drive a car? You have to rely sometimes on other people. The financial part of it you also have to rely on other people. How does that make you feel?

A: I'm not going to lie it makes me feel useless most of the time. Not having a car or license, having to rely on my parents but it just makes me feel useless. Most of the time I just have school and that's it. I want to do something but I really can't. People say, "Man you're a toughie. You go three busses every day." Going through all that shit- sorry for my language but it really is. I just have to try to deal with school. See if I can do better in school but it's been really hard.

Have your views on our society, our country or life in general changed because of this experience?

A: The thing from this experience that I've learned is that people tend to present themselves one way and then in reality their true self is totally different. What I learned a long time ago and it still applies to me now that you can't really judge people by their cover. You never know what's going to happen. If you just open your mind and your heart you'll find new experiences, new people, which helped me a lot cope with this change because I usually at school play pool table and that's where I met a lot of people.

So is there something that you want others to take away from your experiences? What would you advise other people in the same situation?

A: I say don't give up even though it's the most cliché thing you would say but it's true. You think it's really hard now but it's going to be past soon. When I teach kids in my church they think high school is the pinnacle of their life but it's not. Thinking here I'm in a hardship like how high school kids think they're in a hardship. Everything with time is going to improve and it's going to pass. If you just go through with it and try to have a positive attitude. I'm not saying you're going to have a positive attitude all the time but at least try. It will make your life a lot better and you'll get through it much more easier.

Do you think the government is giving enough attention to education? Do you think they should be helping out more? Do you think it'd be easier if they helped you out financially?

A: Yea, it would be a load out of my parents and me if the government were to help more. We're considered when I filed for financial aid too rich to get free money but in reality we just barely make it to paying the house, barely make it paying the loans. We are middle class but we are the middle class that's barely making it. It's not fair because we are struggling so hard to get to school, have an education, while the government's just not helping us out thinking that, "Oh, you're fine. You're okay. You don't need any help."

What would you like the government to know?

A: Even though some people are middle class, they're not as good as you may think. I consider me and my family middle class because we try to put food on the table, we try to make it to pay the house, to pay all the cars, my tuition- it's really difficult. Really the person who has the job in my family is my mom. She's taking care of me; she's taking care of everything for me. My dad's in the picture also but not as much as my mom and it's really hard for her. Basically she's a single mom.

What life lessons can you say that you've learned through all of this?

A: Be grateful for what you have and the people who are there through thick and thin because they will be there for you always even though when they're not family they are there for you. The true people who are there for you will always be there even if you're not they're special love and you will get through hardships with time and it will make you just that much stronger.

Do you think it will be easier in the future for you?

A: I say yeah. As I further more in college, I'll probably become more independent, able to stand on my own two feet, though I probably won't be able to drive because I personally don't think I'm going to enjoy driving. Most definitely in the future it will get better as time goes by and as I get used to this routine of college.

What do you want to accomplish by the time you finish college? But not just educationally, in all aspects of your life. Where do you want to be?

A: I want to be at the point where I don't have to rely on my parents and I don't have to come home every single weekend. Where I can be my own person, I can go on vacation and not have guilt whether I go home or not, that I can provide for myself being in an apartment or with a roommate. Basically just being independent and being confident in who I am, what I do.

That's all of the questions I have so is there anything else that you would like to add that you haven't said already?

A: I don't believe so. I think that's all I've said.

Thank you for letting me interview you and I wish you luck with everything and I hope everything goes well for you and that's it.