

I, Too, Am America: Untold Stories
Student Narratives Contest
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Theme - "Migration Stories"

NICO

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Am I America? I've asked myself that question many times. I may come from a different country, but I am the same as your every day American. In other people's eyes, I look different. Do people see me as one of them? Or do people look at me as an equal? Am I really America? This is my untold story.

My mother's origins first started in Hong Kong, China. But she was a hardworking person who was an only daughter of a family of 6. My mother was forced to drop out of school at the 7th grade. She had to drop out of school to work 2 jobs to take care of her family. My mother did not drop out of school by choice. She continued educating herself continuously hoping for the chance to return to school. Like many Americans now, she has the passion and the drive to take care of her family and to succeed in her education. Although she is not from America, would you classify her as America?

My father's life was not an easy road. His drive to the top was short lived. Like my mother, my father also had to immediately drop out of school at the 6th grade and take 2 jobs to take care of his family. He took a job as an assistant chef and a dish washer. My father came from a family of 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Their father wasn't always there because he continuously worked so many jobs to support the family. My father, being the oldest, took the role as the fatherly figure. He made sure that all his brothers and sisters stayed in school and got a decent education. Because of my father, all his siblings are successful. One of them owns an advertisement company, another a mechanic and one has even been featured on CNBC. To top it off, my father's job isn't too shabby either. He fulfilled his dream, by being an entrepreneur of his own restaurant. Through my

fathers will and perseverance, he and his family got through the rough times. Would you also call him America?

My mother and father met from working at a restaurant. My mother was a waitress and my father was an assistant chef. My father and mother got married at the age of 25 and my mother got pregnant with my sister at the age of 27. My parent's decided to move to Atlanta, Georgia, for a hope that their new child would have better opportunities than they did. Their transition was not an easy one. My mother and father did not know a "speck" of English, so you can know that it was not an easy road. My mother's passion to learn looked at this as just another challenge she needed to overcome. So, my mother taught herself continuously how to pronounce English. In the end, my mother learned as fluent English as she could and began to teach my father English. My mother and father had my sister, Lisa, and then realized Atlanta was not a safe place to raise their child. Opportunities were open, but they were more concerned for their safety of their child. They decided to move to Coffeyville, Kansas.

Coffeyville was the ideal place for my parents, a perfect educational opportunity, but safe none the less. When my mother was pregnant with me, we moved to China and stayed with my mother's brother until I was born. We then went back to Coffeyville, where my true story begins.

As I went to school, I was continuously looked as different, not an equal. Through my school years, I used my father's perseverance and my mother's passion and drive to continuously work at school to make them proud. My family now owns a successfully Chinese restaurant.

Although we are not American, we are America. We have all the characteristics of an American hero. My mother passion and drive makes her America. My fathers will and perseverance makes him America. In the end, it does not matter where you come from or who you are, it's what you do is what defines you. I am proud to be America.