

This interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of the Washington County Museum and Century High School. The interviewee is Ana Alonso. The interviewer is Megan Criss. The interview took place at Century High School on Tuesday, May 25th at 3:15 PM.

M: Were you or your family born in the United States or did you migrate here from another country?

A: Actually, my parents were born in Mexico City and yeah...

M: What was your family situation before migrating to the United States?

A: Well, our situation was pretty good. Now that we came here in the United States got so much better because here we have more things to learn, things that we couldn't get in Mexico.

M: So basically that's why you moved to the United States, for economic opportunities and educational ones as well?

A: That's one of the reasons, but yeah, I came here because my dad was here already. He was been...he was going to Mexico and the United States like many times. And so he decided to take us here to see what...what's...what was next for... Just take a step...one more step...to...I don't know...to a new life.

M: Out of all the places you could of gone to, why did you choose to live in Hillsboro?

A: Well actually because of more job opportunities, actually it was because of my dad, he wanted to live here because he didn't want...well he was living in California before, but he decided to move here because he saw more opportunities and he thought that...and actually because we have more family here, and actually I have family in other places like New York and, and Georgia, but because we have more family we have like...here in Oregon, we have more connections and yeah...

M: Speaking of family, how does your family emphasize education? Do they support it?

A: Well yeah, actually my...my family is like really proud that I am in school and actually yeah, they're seem like that I improve a lot from when I was in Mexico I...I...well I was like I used to go to school, but the problem was here with my sisters that when they got into high school they used to skip and one of my sisters failed and yeah and... Actually when we came here, we saw more opportunities and we decided to educate ourselves like better than what we did in Mexico, it was like so much better.

M: So you feel like the educational system here is better?

A: In a way the actually the technology is better, but in Mexico we...the education is somehow better because it's like they try to concentrate like a lot in the...what you're

trying to study like actually here in the US it's like more liberal and like when I used to go to school in Mexico they... they don't want you to talk and they want you to be like really quiet they...just like...they're like more conservatives in Mexico and you can't skip that easily, it's...it's hard. And you have to go to school and you...like for example, if you...you get...you're...if you're late to class they don't let you get in anymore and you have to go to...to...to your house again, I mean and it was hard because if you...if you just miss one class, then you miss a whole day. So yeah...that was hard.

M: Do you feel like it's easier to make friends here?

A: Actually...it's...it's kind of hard, but not...not at all because even though people are like I said, they're like more liberal here, they have another...how do I say it?...another way of thinking. They just don't realize how problems can be like really serious and well, they think different than what I...than what...than what people in Mexico used to think cause like...like I said they're more conservatives and they choose like more religious people and here like peoples more liberal and choose...try to change whatever they can...they can just yeah...

M: Can you describe your first experiences with school in the United States and the ESL program?

A: Well actually I never thought I was gonna get like the ESL program but it was...it helped me a lot, it actually because of when I used to go to, I used to go to Brown Middle School, and I came here during the seventh grade and it was like really different and I saw the difference when everyone was speaking English and they were like different...not my same skin color, ya know? And it was like kind of...it was kind of hard at the beginning cause I was like okay, who are they? I'm like okay cause I just came here because of my parents, like I said, and...and actually I was like okay, it's not gonna hurt me to learn another...another...ya know language and another culture, it's not gonna hurt. And then after that I start to find people from my own culture and like people that are from my same country and all that and it was good because like we have different opinions and different thoughts, but we're still the same. It was...it was...it was...it was good.

M: How long were you part of the ESL program?

A: I stayed there for like...during seventh and eighth grade...during two years. But...well actually when I was in seventh grade I was in ESL one, of course, and when I got in...when I was in eighth grade, I got to...I got into ESL three and then when I start my freshman year, here at Century, I just had like regular English class. So it was...it was like a short time for me in ESL...in the ESL program, but I thought it was like really helpful and really interesting of how people were helping...ya know...students.

M: How comfortable do you feel with school?

A: Well I never saw a lot of programs for Hispanic people though, but the thing I...I...I think there has to be more opportunities for them like.... Well I feel comfortable with the school though; it's just that like Hispanics are not many this year cause they all went to a different school. And actually the ones that are left like...seems like they don't really care about school and like I think it's...more programs for them will make...will make them get involved more in like...in the school programs...yeah...

M: What do you think Century could do to improve your experience here?

A: Actually I think, like I said, I think it will be like more programs for example...I don't know...like fun stuff like talent shows cause they used to do talent shows for Hispanic people before at Century, but now there's like...there's not that many things like that Hispanic people like can get involved like and actually I wanna see like more things...I don't know, just it's like more things for Hispanics, yes...

M: Do you feel like you have the same opportunities as other non-Hispanic students?

A: Actually I think I do, it's just that for example, Hispanics think that we don't have the same opportunity, but it's...they're wrong because if someone wants to do something and like they go for it, and that's what Hispanic people like...they don't...they don't...the just want to do it but they just...they can't find the like...that role model that will...will help them to...to be whatever they want, just we have the same opportunities, it's just that Hispanic people don't...don't really search for it just...they just dream and like they don't just go for it, and that's the problem that we have. And for example, I'm on dance team and well I...I was trying...I was trying to reach my dream like alone, like many of my friends were quitting at the half of the try-outs and then I was the only one left and I just had to go for it, I mean like just didn't care...I just...I just wanted to reach like my goal and yeah....

M: Did you ever feel discriminated against seeing as how you were the only Hispanic on dance team?

A: Actually no, I never felt like that cause actually I felt like everyone was like oh wow, she's on dance team and everyone was looking at me like a role...role model and actually I think I had many of the teachers try to help me in this because I was on dance team and like some other Hispanic girls have been to dance team but they have...they quit at the half of the year but I think I am the first one, first Hispanic that's completing like the whole season. And actually I have been having...like all the teachers are like telling me to...if I need help or...I've been getting like a lot of help from everyone I just...and it feels good like...like to have like a lot of help from...from all of your teachers...because...because...just because I am on dance team and yeah...I'm Hispanic...it...it feels good...

M: What about outside of dance team, do you face any racism around the halls of school or anywhere in Century?

A: Well actually...well some like comments that like people do, but I don't really care...just...just that's their way of thinking and actually they're just comments but I haven't been like through some bad experiences that no, actually I haven't...I haven't been like involved in like any kind of racism problem or things like that no, it's just common stuff, past...yeah that's all.

M: What programs do you think have had the most beneficial impact on the Hispanic students?

A: I think...I think ESL, that's the first one of course because I think that's the first one that helped me on it and I think another program is the Migrant program cause like it gives a lot of help for Hispanic students and it gives a lot of help another program that I think, well it's not only for Hispanics but it's for everyone, is Project Plus that...it's been giving me a lot of help and support cause...cause everyone like...like for example they give you like...I don't know...just well help on what I want to do after I graduated...they...they just help me to get in colleges and get scholarships that some other programs don't do and like for me, Project Plus it's...it's helping me...it's been helping me a lot and yeah...

M: What if anything would you like to see changed about these programs?

A: I think...I think it would be volunteering cause I think that helps Hispanics a lot like to unify and to at the same time work together and I don't know...just I think volunteering that would...that would probably be better.

M: So overall, you think that CHS actively supports you and is providing enough help for you?

A: Yeah, Century has been helping me a lot and actually I wouldn't like to go to another school cause I mean, I've been here for like now three years and well next year I am going to graduate. And I receive a lot of help and I mean in things that I...that I'm interested on like dance team, drama department it's been helping me a lot and like art, I mean things like that and I just really like it and I've been getting a lot of help and support from...from all those activities.

M: Do you think that being so involved in school has helped to...I guess kind of initiate you into English and make better friends?

A: Actually yeah cause I've been involved in like so many things like every and...like for example...like it made me...it made me popular between like the Hispanics and because they seem me like, like I said a role model for them cause they look at me and they're like oh wow, she's doing this and she's on dance team and she's...last year I was in the Jag TV and I was doing the Spanish News and actually they're like wow...you're amazing...you're amazing...you're amazing me cause like you're involved in like so many things, I don't know how you...you can like...you can do all those things and I mean, I don't know how...how...how...how you have like time for every single thing

and I'm like well...well I just love to do all those things and if you really wanna do something just go for it and ask...search for help, I mean you can get everything you like want, you just have to go for it and I mean yeah...

M: How was working in the Spanish News? Can you talk a little about that?

A: Actually my sister was involved in it before but then I look at her and I'm like well I can do and I...it wouldn't be bad to...to try it and then I...I took broadcast journalism first and then after that I decided to be on...on the Spanish News. Actually I learned a lot from it and actually it was like a different way to see like...to search for...for more information for Hispanics and how...how...how to get this information and give it to all the Hispanics and this...and people that speak Spanish like and actually you want to give them good information so they can see how...how many programs there are like in Century and yeah, it helped me a lot in how to communicate with them. And it was, it was a good experience. Next year...this year I couldn't be in it cause I had to do some other things but for next year I am...I will...I will...I'm gonna be in the Spanish News next year so...

M: Are you in any clubs besides the ones you've mentioned?

A: Actually not this year, but last year I was the president for the Latinos Sin Fronteras club and actually it gave me like wow, like a different way of thinking and how to be a leader by trying to help all the Hispanic community and actually for next year, I'm gonna try to be like the president again of that club. It's...I did a lot of things last year and next year it will be better.

M: As president, what were some of your duties?

A: Well actually it was like to look for ways to...how to...how to improve like the Hispanic community and how to help them and create new things, like progress for them and like for example, more things so they can get involved in it for example we did like carwashes and we did a...a dance for the...for the...for the Hillsboro School District for...for like Hispanics and actually we got involved in like many activities and at the end...at the end of the year everyone was like wow, we can't believe that we did all this because...because of the club and like thing like...things like the could never do without the club and yeah...

M: So would you say that your biggest key to success was your involvement in school?

A: In a way, yeah cause...because of the different experiences...because of the different experiences helped me a lot in how to help the Hispanic community in...in the different activities yeah...

M: Thank you!