

How will I pay for college? Some are lucky to have families help fund their college education and some are not. Some are fortunate to have financial aid to pay for college and some are not. The biggest challenge about college or considering if there is a possibility to go is simply knowing that my family cannot help me pay for college.

I realized that when I was 12 years old and one knock on my door changed my life forever. I didn't know what was happening. My mom grabbed my hand and quickly took my siblings and me to the bathroom, hiding us there. Who could it be on the other side of the door? I later walked out for school and saw a man waiting outside of my house. An ICE agent I was later told. Despite my reservations, I bravely kept walking until I arrived at school. I didn't know or even understood why a man would be at my house at 6:00 a.m. Most importantly, I didn't know that would be the last day I would see my dad as he was taken by that very man. I can't imagine how hard it was for my mom. After all that, to raise three kids by herself. But she did without even the slightest bit of trepidation. She continued working and taking care of us all by herself. It was incredibly demanding, but she did it. Knowing how hard it was, I knew I had to be a role model for my siblings so I grew to be more like a second parent than an older sister.

This may look like setbacks to any normal person, but to me they're the building blocks of my life and because of them I've become who I am. I rose to the occasion because my mom needed me, and I know that I can do anything because of it. I know that life is full of hard work, dreams, and aspirations. I know that I will work for my future and know that college is going to lay the foundation for the rest of my life.

As one of nearly 800,000 *DREAMers*, I plan to never give up and to never stop fighting. However, because I am not able to get financial aid from FAFSA, trying to achieve my dreams and goals isn't easy. But steadily I am working hard to make ends meet. After 65+ hours at two jobs, as well as my college classes, I continue to further stretch myself and my limits every day. I hope to be an example to any *DREAMer* out there to show them the American Dream is possible, and you can accomplish anything if you keep trying and NEVER give up.

Education opens the doors for all people, regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or even *citizenship*. Getting an education will help me by expanding my skills through experiences and challenges along the way. I would like nothing more than to continue to rise to any and all challenges thrown at me if given the chance and to prove to not just my family, but to anyone in doubt, that anything is possible if you keep your head up and keep on fighting.