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Striving for A Better Life

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Striving for a Better Life

America is known as the great “green land” of opportunity where thousands of persons decide to immigrate to every year, seeking improvement toward many factors in their life and enduring the difficulties they may come across. Leaving your native country is a sacrifice that is long to be returned in benefit of the future. I will present one of the millions of cases of an immigrant that came to United States, striving for a better life. Raul De La Vega was born on December 10, 1947 in Coahuila, Mexico. There he was raised by his two parents along with nine siblings in “Ciudad Acuña”. The living conditions were not always the best, poverty was seen and lived along every instance of life. Mr. De La Vega then decided to change his fortune and outreach for a broader horizon into a world of promises and riches, this would be achieved at a land he knew of as the United States. On July 4th, 1963 the opportunity to realize his so longed dream was taken. At early rise he decided to cross the border between Mexico and the United States; this was easily acquired do to the holiday free pass into the country. Mexicans where welcomed to come into this country and celebrate 4th of July with American customs, as long as they would return to their country. In this case Raul took this date to take part of the festivities at Laughlin U. S. Air force base, viewing their parade, fighter jets, and weapon exhibitions plus remaining in this land.

Raul continued east until he reached San Antonio, Texas, from this location he took rides with different people and families until reaching San Francisco, Texas. While only being 16 years old he was stranded in this new territory but luckily he was encountered by a police officer at one of the parks as he slept overnight. Officer Murphy intended to take little Raul into custody but Raul refused as he informed the officer he didn't have any documentation and wasn't of legal status in this country. Mr. Murphy reacted to state he was too young to be without his parents but

in defense Raul stated he was 17 years old and needed a job. The officer then came to propose something to young Raul; he could take shelter at his home for a week while he earned his first paycheck from the job he would help him obtain, making it possible for him to have his own shelter. Being hired as a dishwasher and adopted by an officer's family was a great opening for Raul. Earning fifty dollars a week at his small job, he was then able to live on his own. The Murphy's continued to take him home every weekend as if they knew him for a long time and treat him as a real son.

After establishing a settled life Raul decided to move to San Jose, California in 1965. Consecutively, he then found employment at a U.S. cannery until 1968. At the cannery various fruits and vegetables would be automatically feed into cans, here he maneuvered hard labor and long shifts. De La Vega then became aroused about the idea of moving to Chicago, Illinois after the various comments that many colleagues made referring to the abundance of jobs and great pay seen in this great city. Finally, his last destination came along in late 1968 when he moved to Chicago. Remembering this was the year of a great blizzard and experiencing the first sight of snow. Coming from a hot weather location Raul arrived at Chicago during the winter season wearing only a t-shirt and khaki pants, a big mistake for anyone who wanted to endure the freezing temperatures. Despite the cold weather Raul went out in search for a job, finding the occupation of packaging various items, ending his employment at this site until the company closed. Following, he then worked as a baker at Tip-Top Bread Co. for a couple of years until being laid off. In relevance he was then employed at Whittaker Metals where he started as a janitor, upon a year he was moved position to become order filler, later on becoming leadoff man of the department. During his employment with Whittaker Metals his boss/ plant manager, Mr. Frank Kilo helped Raul become a legal alien and he also married Leticia Amezcua. Raul alias

Oscar Gonzales had now obtained his residency and showed his true identity not of Oscar but himself, Raul De La Vega.

His employment at Whittaker Metals ended after 12 years when the company moved to California. During this time Raul had also started a family with Leticia with his first child being born in 1974 with the extension of 5 more for a total of 6 males during his lifetime. Interstate Steel Co. was Raul's next stop on his employed locations working in the same previous position for ten more years. He was then transferred to National Material Co. which is also a steel company, being offered the position of set-up man for about 10 years. The last stop was Corey Steel Co., there he began as an order filler, later on becoming a grinder/belt polisher operator for 25 years, finally retiring in 2010, the previous year he had also obtained his citizenship. Currently, Raul serves as a newspaper delivery man for Alpha News Agency and enjoys riding his motorcycle, playing golf, and spending time with his children. Four of his children are married and is a proud grandfather of seven. To all the generations he has instilled the preservation of their roots and the pride of their culture. Raul shares many of his memories with his family to relive the past and pass down many mementos regarding his parents, especially for his grandchildren to safe keep for many more generations to come.

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