

*My name is Yahaira Carrillo, and I am an undocumented immigrant.*



I didn't know what were doing, where we were going or why I had to crawl under a fence, but I did.. It was southern California, 1993, and I was eight years old; my mother and I were going to reunite with my father.

I was born in 1985 to a barely-turned 16 year-old who had been kicked out of her house while she was pregnant for being a disgrace to the family. I lived with my mother in an abandoned house in Guerrero, Mexico. She struggled to find work, but was either harassed or asked for sexual favors. She said no. She was 17 in 1986 when the 8.1 magnitude earthquake hit Mexico. She decided to take me to the US, but we didn't stay that long. At my grandmother's request, we returned to Mexico. The hits kept coming: my mother ended an abusive relationship with a military man and feared for her life.

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Country of Origin: Mexico  
Current City: Kansas City  
Age:

Then, my father called- after abandoning my mother while she was pregnant and being MIA for most of my early years, decided he wanted us to join him in California. My options have always been limited. When I was 14, my 18-year-old boyfriend wanted to marry me. I said no. When I graduated from the top of my high school class, I thought I couldn't go anywhere. My parents were migrant farm workers- college wasn't likely. But years later, I found a private college in Kansas that would accept me. I worked myself to the bone, and obtained an Associate's Degree. Today, I am working towards my Bachelor's degree. According to my calculations, it will take me eight years.

I've had people tell me that it's not a big deal, that I should keep on waiting for the DREAM Act to pass. My life has been on pause, rewind or replay for years. Waiting is not an option. Join us.

- Graduate of Donnelly College, Associate's Degree
- Currently attending Rockhurst University
- Founder of the Kansas Missouri Dream Alliance

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