

What challenges do undocumented people and their families experience when they come to the United States?

Witness Statement:

My name is Genesis. I came to this country because I have a son with asthma. He needs two shots twice a week, and each shot costs \$80.00. I could hardly provide for food and clothing let alone extra medicine in Mexico. Unable to provide for his medicine in Mexico I saw the necessity to cross into the United States in order to keep him alive. At the time I did not know the challenges I was going to face.

The first challenge I faced when coming to the U.S was crossing the border without losing my life. I faced a lot of challenges on my way to Postville such as the risk of sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse from the human traffickers and from the employers once I arrived. I will never forget the time when the human smuggler locked me in a restroom for a whole day without food or water. He did not let me communicate with my family for three days because I was unable to pay the \$2,000.00 he charged me to cross me into the U.S. How could I forget when he made me walk in through sewer water up to my neck in order to cross the border! I ended up acquiring rashes on top of bruises as the result of being exposed to chemicals and sewage water.

My second challenge was not being able to find employment due to my legal status. I looked for a job in CVG in Monona and in Wapsie Produce in Decorah, but both places turned me down. I heard from all my friends that it was easy to obtain a job at

Agriprocessors because they did not require legal documents to work there, but the job was poor pay and physically demanding. It was not uncommon for me to have to work 17 hour shifts while being exposed to different types of chemicals making \$7.75/hr as a Quality Assurance Technician. I knew I had to endure whatever I could in order to provide medicine and food for my precious two year old son, Emiliano, who I miss so much. I miss not being with him on a daily basis, his hugs, and words of love.

I also had to face discrimination, not only because I am Hispanic, but also because I am a woman. I was discriminated because they knew I was undocumented, the accent I have when I speak English and the color of my skin. Also, it was embarrassing and denigrating to me when one of the supervisors approached me telling me that he was going to give me money so that I could buy tight pants and low cut blouses so that I could wear them for him to see me.

I had risked my life, left my precious son to come to the United States to help save his life and at the same time help my parents with their financial problems. I thought that if I worked hard I was going to be able to support my family. I was not able to do this in Mexico.

And now here I am in Postville, unable to work, I'm not with my son and I'm just hoping that with the help of God and friends in Postville that I will be able to help my precious son. I also hope that President Obama will see that the laws are changed and we'll be able to see comprehensive immigration reform.