

**OUR EXPERIENCES was written by the parents in the Summer  
ESL class at Cesar Chavez Elementary School**

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## **This is my story by Aide Bojorquez**

When I came to the United States, I crossed the border in a car from Ciudad Juarez to El Paso. I flew from El Paso to San Francisco. It was my first time in an airplane. I was nervous and scared. My first day in the United States I went shopping for new clothes with my husband. Then we went to eat Chinese food. I do not know how to use chop sticks. I used a fork instead. I was homesick because I felt alone.

### **Esta es mi historia por Amalia Caballero** **This is my story by Amalia Caballero**

Cuando yo vine a a Los Estados Unidos cruce caminando de Tijuana a San Diego. De San Diego me fui a San Francisco en avion. Cuando llegue a San Francisco tenia miedo porque casi no conocia a nadie. Tambien yo no sabia ingles. Cuando me hablaban no sabia que dician y tampoco no sabia hablar ingles. Me sentia triste y queria regresar a Mexico.



When I came to the U.S, I went to Tijuana and crossed over by walking to San Diego. The next day I took a plane to San Francisco. When I arrived in San Francisco I felt scared because I didn't know anyone. I also didn't know English. When people talked to me, I didn't understand and didn't know how to speak in English. I felt sad and wanted to return to Mexico.

### **A story about my first day in the U.S.A by Antonia Flores**

My name is Antonia, I'm from El Salvador. My first day in this country, I felt so sad because I missed everything from my country – work, church and friends. But I felt happy because all my family was with me. Now I'm an old woman living with my husband. Sometimes my children come to my house, but when they leave me I feel alone. But I know that it's normal, it's life. Some days we have a family reunion and I see all my family and I feel happy and grateful to God for them.



## **My first day in San Francisco by Beatriz Bautista**

When I arrived in San Francisco, it was night, almost 1 am. So I just took a shower, drank a cup of milk, and I gave a big hug to my husband. I was tired and just wanted to sleep. I came with my older son. I was happy. All my family was together again after 2 years.

## **Mi historia por Blanca Santuario My story by Blanca Santuario**

El primer dia aqui en Calexico EU, yo y mi hija teniamos un dia entero sin comer. Cuando llegamos aqui eran exactamente 7:00 PM. Teniamos mucha hambre y vi a una muchacha que hablaba español y le dije - ¿Oye me puedes comprar una hamburguesa por favor? No hablo ingles - y ella me dijo que si y le di mis 8 dolares que traia y se fue la muchacha con mis 8 dolares.



This first day in Calexico CA USA my daughter and I had gone the whole day without eating. The time that we arrived was 7:00 PM. We were very hungry and I saw a lady that spoke Spanish. I asked her – Can you buy me a hamburger please? Because I don't speak English – and she said yes. And I gave her my 8 dollars that I had. She pretended to buy the hamburgers but she left with my money.



## **This is my story by Carmen Flores**

When I came to the U.S. my experience was very dramatic. When I got to Tijuana the coyote decided that me and my children would cross the border together, but then he separated us half way. I felt nervous and scared of not knowing where my children were. As I saw them leave I felt very bad.

A week passed before I saw my children again. When we got to San Francisco it was very difficult because I had to put my children in school. Well I didn't know how to go on the bus, not being from the city. I got lost and the bus took me all the way to downtown. I didn't know how to speak English to ask people how to go back. It's really difficult not speaking English and being in a different country,

## **My story by Carolina Mendez**

My first day in Los Angeles I arrived in San Francisco. I felt sad and happy because I wanted to see my brothers and my family because I had not seen them for fifteen years. They were so happy to see me and be together. The next day we went to buy some clothes and shoes for me. Then we went to eat at a restaurant. When we went back home I felt sad because I missed my mom and my children and my husband. For me it was too difficult because my own family was in El Salvador. Two weeks later I started to work hard because I wanted to bring my family with me. Four months later I began to reach my goal. My husband arrived in San Francisco. Then nine months later our children came to us. Now we are a happy family.



## **Mi historia por Cristina Martinez** **My story by Cristina Martinez**

Cuando llege a U.S.A al dia siguiente fui al restaurant taqueria La Alteña y pedi un burrito pero no me gusto porque en Mexico solo le ponen carne y queso y aqui le ponen muchas cosas.

When I came to the U.S.A. the next day I went to the taqueria La Alteña and ordered a burrito. But I didn't like it because in Mexico the burrito has meat and cheese and here the burrito has a lot of things.

## **Mi historia por Israel Garcia** **My story by Israel Garcia**

Cuando vine a este pais los primeros dias estaba asustado, que no salia porque tenia miedo todos los carros que veia verdes pensaba que era la migra. Los veia y me escondia. Un primo supo que yo les tenia miedo a los carros verdes. Entonces despues de una semana mi primo, cuando veia un carro verde, me decia - Ay viene la migra! Yo pues corria a esconderme y asi pasaron 2 semanas y entonces mi hermano me dijo - No tengas miedo, aqui casi no hay migra y los carros de la migra son diferentes. Entonces yo me senti mucho mejor.

When I came to this country I was scared at first. I didn't go out because I thought that every green car that I saw was la migra. I would see one and then I would hide. My cousin learned that I was afraid of the green cars and every time he saw a green car, he would say - Here comes la migra! Then I would run and hide and that's how 2 weeks passed. Then my brother told me that la migra almost never comes around and that their cars are different. After that I felt much better.

**Mi premero dia en Los E.U. por Juana A. Esparza A.**  
**My first day in the U.S.A by Juana A. Esparza A.**

Cuando yo vine a Estados Unidos, yo estaba embarazada. Tenia 6 meses cuando pase Tijuana y San Diego. Yo me sentia nerviosa porque yo tenia miedo cuando cruze la linia, pero me sentia muy mal porque mis dos hijos pasaron separados de mi y mi esposo. Cuando llegamos a San Francisco yo me sentia muy feliz porque todos estabamos juntos con mi familia. Me sentia muy pero muy contenta.

When I came to the United States, I was 6 months pregnant and I crossed from Tijuana to San Diego. I felt nervous because I was scared when I crossed over. But I felt bad because my other two kids were separated from me and my husband. Then when I came to San Francisco I felt very happy because everyone in my family was together and were very happy.

**My story by Karen Franco**

When I came to the U.S. I felt strange because here the people speak other languages and they use different transportation. I came two weeks ago. The first time I boarded the BART. I couldn't get the ticket. My mother's friend helped me. Now I feel better. I will get used to this country.

**Mi historia por Lourdes Atecas**  
**My story by Lourdes Atecas**

Cuando yo llegue aqui a San Francisco hace nueve años yo me sentia bien diferente - sobre todo en la comida, especialmente en las tortillas. Es diferente el sabor a las de Mexico. Ahora me gustan estas tortillas.

When I came here in San Francisco nine years ago I felt very different about the food. I was used to the food of Mexico, especially the tortillas. The flavor of the tortillas here is different than Mexico's. I didn't like them before. Now I like these tortillas.

**Mi historia por Margarita Hernandez**  
**My story by Margarita Hernandez**

Mi historia comienza una tarde del mes de Septiembre de 1998 cuando tuve la intencion de un viaje hacia una tierra lejana y extraña. Y con un dolor grande por dejar mi familia, mi tierra, mis costumbres, comenzo una gran aventura. Fue muy dificil el llegar a este pais pero lo hice. Fue un cambio dificil porque la cultura de la gente es diferente aqui pero poco a poco fui adaptandome a ella. Y aqui estoy aprendiendo mas de este pais como el English.



My story begins one afternoon in the month of September in 1998 when I decided to travel to a distant and strange land. And with great sadness at leaving my family, my land, my customs, I started off on a great adventure. It was very difficult when I came to this country. It was a difficult change because the culture of the people is different here, but little by little I started adapting. And here I am learning more about this country such as English.



### **My first day in the U.S. by Maria**

My name is Maria. I crossed through Tijuana. I crossed the border in a car, but the immigration grabbed me. The room was very cold and they gave me a sheet. The person wasn't friendly and I felt scared. When they put me out, I called my husband and I told him I wanted to return home.

He told me to try again and I tried and I did it.

I came to San Diego. I arrived in San Francisco by car. I felt scared because some people said the immigration was here. The most funny thing was when my sister-in-law said we should wash my clothes. But it was late and I told her the clothes wouldn't dry. Then everybody laughed at me. Then I asked – What did I say? Why are you laughing at me? Are you crazy? But now I'm very happy to be here in the U.S. Now this is my country. I have my children and husband and we are a united family.

### **This is my story by Maria**

Hi, my name is Maria. When my family and I came to the United States the first year was difficult but exciting. The difficulty was when my daughter was 18 months and she was diagnosed with deafness. She began to use hearing aids and everybody learned sign language. Some months later the doctor found another option, a Cochlear Implant and we did it.



Now my husband and I are very happy. She assists a special class of Total Communication and she receives speech therapy. Marifer is a smart girl. I feel proud of her.

### **Mis primeros dias en San Francisco por Maria Félix Altamirano** **My first days in San Francisco by Maria Félix Altamirano**

Cuando yo vine a Estados Unidos, yo me sentia triste y feliz porque yo queria ver a mi familia y amigos. Un dia despues llegue a San Francisco via camion y mis amigos me estaban esperancdo. Despues mos fuimos a su casa. Yo estaba muy cansada y todo lo que queria er dormir. Al siguiente dia ellos me mostraron la ciudad.

When I came to the US. I felt sad and happy because I wanted to see my family and friends. One day later I arrived in San Francisco by bus. My friends were waiting for me. Then we went to their house and I was tired. All I wanted was to sleep. The next day they showed me San Francisco.

### **My story by Martha Arciga**

When I came to the US I came by airplane to Tijuana with my husband and then through Tecate, Baja California. Then we went to San Diego. We stayed one day there. Then we went to San Jose and finally we came to San Francisco. I was 7 months pregnant and I felt very tired. When we went to sleep I felt very sad because we slept in a very small and dark closet. I cried. My husband asked me – Why are you crying? I answered that I didn't like the dark. He told me everything was ok but we slept with the door open. Now I feel happy because we live in a big and bright house. I have 3 beautiful girls and a wonderful husband.



### **Esta es mi historia por Marta Cardenas This is my story by Marta Cardenas**

Yo me vine de Morelia a Ciudad Juarez en avion. Alli espere a mi esposo. Alli en Ciudad Juarez estuvimos por 4 dias hasta que nos dieran carta de residencia a mi y a mi hija. Despues nos venimos manejando a Los Angeles y estabamos muy contentos porque ya eramos residentes. Despues nos venimos a San Francisco y llegamos a la casa de mi suegra. Pero yo estuve a la vez contenta pero tambien triste porque ya me sentia sola aun que estuve con mi esposo y hija. Extrañaba a mi familia en Mexico.

I came from Morelia to Ciudad Juarez in plane. There I waited for my husband. We were there for 4 days until they gave us a residence card for me and my daughter. Then we drove to Los Angeles. We were very happy because now we were residents. Then we came to San Francisco and arrived at my sister-in-law's house. I was both happy but also sad because I felt lonely even



though I was with my husband and daughter. I missed my family in Mexico.

### **My story by Noemi Barajas**

When I left home from Ururapan, Michoacan in Mexico, it was an unforgettable experience because it was the first time I had ever left my country for the U.S. I left with my husband. We had gotten married one month ago. We first arrived in Tijuana, Baja California. To enter the U.S. we stayed in Tijuana for one month and I felt bad about this drastic change. I missed the outdoors and the beautiful views of my land, and I missed my family. But I felt confident with my husband. He encouraged me and took care of me.

When we arrived in the U.S. we went to Los Angeles and I felt happy because we were in the U.S. One day later I came to San Francisco and started another life, learning a new language and customs. Now I feel happy with my children and husband. I hope to be successful and to come back to our country.

### **This is my story by Sandra García**

When I came to the U.S. I crossed the line from Tijuana to San Isidro. I took the bus from San Isidro to L.A. with my husband's aunt. I stayed for 2 weeks. I felt ashamed to stay in a strange house. I felt homesick and missed my family and friends. Later more I went to eat with my husband's family. In the night I called my family in Mexico. I told my mom I felt happy and curious to know the city of San Francisco California. Finally I went to SF in September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1993. Now I feel happy to have my daughters in this country thanks to God.



Mexico, I miss you!

USA, I am happy

### **My story by Socorro González**

When I came to the U.S. I crossed the border in a car to Phoenix. Then my husband came for me. Then we went to buy some clothes for me. I felt so happy to see my husband. Then we flew to San

Francisco. About one week later I felt homesick because my husband had to work and I didn't. I was alone. I cried all day, everyday. When I told my husband, he said - You have to do something, go to school. But I was scared and I didn't. I met my husband's friends and then I felt comfortable with them. One year later my daughter was born. My whole life changed. I felt very happy but my husband was afraid. He thought I couldn't take care of my baby because I was only 18 years old. But he was wrong. My babies were and are my whole life and I'm so proud of them.



### **My first day in the U.S. by Silvia Luna**

This first day, when I came to this country, something calamitous happened to me. I was waiting a long time in the airport of Los Angeles. I needed to take a flight. But my flight changed the terminal. My problem was that I didn't speak or understand English. I was upset, angry, frustrated. I had many feelings in this moment. I asked many people but they didn't speak Spanish. I was crying, but in that moment, one man came to me and he asked me. "Are you OK? Everything all right?", and I told him everything. He told me "Don't worry. I'll help you." And yes, he did help me. He talked with the manager and all was resolved for me. I stopped crying and I felt better. I learned a lesson. In this country it's really important and necessary to speak the language and not give up.



### **My first day in the U.S. by Teresa Morando**

When I came to the U.S. I crossed through Tijuana and then to San Francisco. It was very hard because all my family lived in Mexico. When I came here I didn't have any friends, any family – only my husband. Now, I feel happy because I have my own family.

### **Esta es mi historia por Yeni Tepepa This is my story by Yeni Tepepa**

Mi primer día en los Estados Unidos fue muy gracioso. Tenía una entrevista de trabajo. Mi amiga me dijo que tomara el Bart. Pero

yo no sabia que era eso pero ella me explico que es el tren al que nosotros llamamos metro. De cualquier manera yo estaba asustada, porque yo no sabia ingles. Yo pense eso no me va a detener y yo misma encuentre el lugar porque mucha gente habla español. Y ahora recuerdo esa experiencia y me hace reir.

MY first day in the United States was very funny. I had an interview about my job and my friend told me to ride the BART. I didn't know what BART means but she explained it's the train we call the metro in Mexico. I was scared because I didn't speak English. I though to myself that's not going to stop me and I did it. I found the place by myself because many people speak Spanish. And now I remember that experience and it makes me laugh.

### **Mi Experiencia, Alba Espinoza** **My Experience, Alba Espinoza**

Cuando yo vine a los Estados Unidos recuerdo que nos paramos en Los Angeles . Yo tenia mucha hambre. Fue un camino largo y no habíamos comido mi cunado y yo por 3 días. Estábamos todos sucios porque habíamos venido en el tren. Nuestra tropa estaba llena de aceite. Cuando comí un burrito me sentí mal porque como no había comido. Finalmente llegamos a San Francisco y me sentí feliz.

When I came to the United States I remember we arrived to Los Angeles. My brother in law and I, our clothes were very dirty because we arrived in the train. We had too much hunger. When I ate a burrito I felt nauseous because I didn't eat nothing for 3 days. Finally we arrived to San Francisco. I felt happy. It was a very dangerous experience, but everything is good.

### **This is My Story by Dolores**

Hello! My name is Dolores Garcia. I'm from Mexico. When I came to the U.S. I crossed the border in car from Tijuana to San Diego. I arrived to San Jose. I felt sad and homesick because my family was in Mexico.

The next day my husband and I went shopping. I felt nervous and ashamed because the salesperson talked to me and I didn't understand. I felt scared. Then we went to eat at a restaurant. The

food was terrible! I thought, what am I doing here? But today I feel better.

### **This is My Experience in the USA by Mary Gonzalez**

Hi! I'm Mary and I want to talk to you about my experience in the USA. Everything began when I knew my husband in Mexico. I never imagined that I would come to the USA but the situation in Mexico it was not good. We began with economic problems and we decided to try a new life here. But everything so difficult, we been having problems when he lost his job. He can't find other job, and so is frustrated.

We thought our life would be better here, but I don't know what to think. Sometimes I feel homesick because I don't have nothing here. I miss my family a lot. My family and I are very united. Although my husband has family here, it's not the same.

I have two beautiful babies and for them my life is more simple. I have for who to obtain a better life. My daughter and my son are my world. And I think that here in the USA we have more opportunities in the future. I like the USA but I will never forget my homeland. Never!

I have faith in God and He will help me promptly. I trust in God! Now you know about my experiences in the USA.

### **This is My Story, by Nora Sanchez**

When I came to this country we flew from Guadalajara to Ciudad Juarez. They approved our visas of my son and I. We crossed the border in a car from Ciudad Juarez to San Francisco.

After 2 days in this town I got a call from my father that his mother died. We couldn't go to my grandmother's funeral because our savings was gone.

In summer vacation we returned back to Mexico. After 15 days in my own town, my grandfather died.

God gave us my grandparents for many years, then in 5 months God took them back. Today July 1<sup>st</sup> is second anniversary when my grandfather died.