

My family roots begin in Mexico and El Salvador, but my grandparents journey led them to Scranton Pennsylvania. Although my parents were born in New York and I was born in Scranton, PA, I have been privileged to learn about my grandparents' roots and travel to their home land to see where they grew up. I never really knew how the U.S. Immigration policy impacted my family and friends until President Trump came into office this year. Immediately after he took office I began hearing on the news, social media, and family members say that people were getting detained by I.C.E. I started to notice that people in my community and people I know started to become afraid because of these new policy changes that president Trump made. I started to feel that these changes seemed unfair and discriminating against Hispanic/Latino people. I personally experienced discrimination during school by one of my peers right after President Trump started working at the White House. One day I went to school and a peer started telling me that she hoped I.C.E went to my house. This showed me that this peer most likely assumed that I should be scared of I.C.E because of what I look like and my spanish sounding name. If this happened to me I can't even imagine how it would make youth, who do have immigrant parents or are immigrants themselves, feel. Unfortunately, my family knows two families that have been recently impacted by I.C.E detentions and deportations. I feel sad and upset that their children have to be separated from their parents because of immigration policies that seem discriminatory.

Since President Trump has come into office, the fear of deportation has 42% of Hispanic/Latino adults worried that they or someone close to them could be deported. President Trump's administration officials now say that they are prioritizing the arrests and deportations but I.C.E was making slow progress on arresting the "Worst of the worst". However, detention data shows that an increasing share of immigrants that are being detained right now are not all criminals. Recent data also shows that the more border crossings there are, the double I.C.E arrests that are happening. Research also indicates that 30% of Americans say that Hispanic/Latino's get "a lot" of discrimination due to their skin color and their appearance. Unfortunately, the children that are experiencing their parents or family members getting deported by I.C.E have become at risk of experiencing mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and severe psychological distress. Doctors and service providers have reported that children exhibiting stress and anxiety related behavioral changes, including symptoms of "toxic-stress," is caused by the fear that a family member will be deported.

Due to immigration arrests happening in the United States and in Northeast, PA (NEPA), many immigrant families fear going to work, going to the grocery store, and leaving their house. I confirmed these fears through my interview with an adult and two minors who live within NEPA and are involved in the immigrant community. I will name

the interviewees by their initials: the adult interviewee, S.E., minor interviewee #1 AJ and minor interviewee #2, CP (both rising 9th graders). One of the children I interviewed is a United States citizen and her parents are Mexican citizens. The second child I interviewed is an Ecuadorian citizen and so are her parents. The adult that I interviewed works with immigrant clients applying for immigration relief. I was able to ask AJ and CP questions related to their immigration knowledge and experience. The first question was ***“Do you know anything about the new immigration policies?”*** ***“ Yes I have heard about these immigration policies,”*** AJ replied. ***CP replied: “Yes, a lot and hearing what families are going through makes me feel sad and at the same time scared because one day it could happen to me.”*** Question two: ***“How have these new immigration policies impacted you as a child of Hispanic/Latino parents?”*** AJ replied with ***“Well I have been a bit scared of Immigration like coming for my parents because I have heard that they have been targeting undocumented immigrants and aggressively taking them away. I have also heard that they have been taking immigrants and sending them to countries that they aren’t even from.”*** CP responded to the 2nd question with ***“For me...it scares me for my mom who would be coming home from work because she works a little bit far from here and me and my brother are at the house and they would get my mom, and me and my brother... we wouldn’t know where to stay ”.*** Question three: ***“In your life have you ever experienced a time where you were being discriminated against due to your race and/or skin color?”*** AJ responded ***“Yes, There was this one time, this year... one of the kids was going around saying that I.C.E is going to take your parents.”*** CP replied with ***“Only in the school... like 3 times, but I don’t care and I will never care because I am proud of the language that I speak and to be indigenous as well... and proud of my color and I wouldn’t care because one day they would feel the same way that I felt if they bullied me, but no I don’t feel anything bad and I am proud to be Ecuadorian and Latina”.*** The last question I asked them was: ***“What do you think our community can do to support Hispanic/Latino Immigrants and children?”*** AJ replied with, ***“I feel like doing a protest is a really good idea to notice what they are doing wrong.”*** CP responded by saying, ***“I would help by someday going out and giving a little bit of food or helping children because now that classes are starting some kids are stuck without parents because of deportation and immigration. I would help with getting kids supplies and backpacks and even give them a little bit of food and money if that would be possible.”***

Afterwards, I interviewed S.E., the adult immigrant advocate. The first question I asked was: ***“What do you do for a living?”*** S.E replied with, ***“ I am a community advocate for immigrants and I work on visas and also citizenship applications.”*** Question two was: ***“Why is it important for our youth in our community to be***

educated and informed on what Hispanic/Latino immigrants are currently facing?” S.E answered with, “ It’s important for the youth to be educated on this because they are going to be the next adults and if they are not informed and they are not paying attention just because it’s not happening to them, it could happen to them. A lot of the time youth fail to realize that generations repeat themselves if nobody is paying attention. And so if there is a way to educate and get close to someone and help them out and learn what is going on, then there is a better chance at stopping the continuation of this type of situation.” Question three: ***“How can we show support to immigrant families in our local community?”*** S.E replied with, ***“ I think remembering that immigrants are human too and like we are all humans and nobody is better than the other! Nobody is perfect. We all go through things and we all have changes in our lives and it’s unfortunate that immigrants have to leave their home countries where they might experience violence, and all kinds of different situations that we can all experience in this country. We need to remember that they are human too and just because it’s not happening to us doesn’t mean it can’t. We can also be the ones that can experience this and so it’s important to offer that support, connect with them and remember that they too have lives, jobs, and children. If there are resources that can be shared or if there are food pantries then help it’s better to care than not.”***

Considering my interviewees experiences and the research I found, I came to realize how much the U.S immigration policies impact my family and so many others in our local community. It was not until I researched more about this topic and learned from children and adults in our local community who are impacted by these changes, how important it is to understand how children, adults, and workers are feeling about these immigration changes. This has become a very important topic for me and I hope it does for the readers because I want them to know that what is happening in this country right now is not okay. It’s not only affecting immigrants. It’s also affecting other people who know them or who are around them, such as family members, friends, students, neighbors, and co-workers. The main purpose of this article for me was to inform and educate myself and my community that it’s not okay to discriminate against people based on their skin color nor to separate families, or deport Hispanic/Latinos because all they’re trying to do in this country is give their families better opportunities that they didn’t get when they were growing up. I hope this article gives readers of all ages a little bit more understanding and empathy of immigrant’s experiences in our community so we can continue helping each other.

~Liliana Morales, rising 8th grader at Howard Gardner MI Charter School

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