



BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“...LET US CONSIDER THIS: WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS ON THE JOURNEY OF LIFE, NONE OF US HAS A FIXED ABODE IN THIS LAND, WE ALL MUST GO.”

– Pope Francis (03/21/2015)

DACA Recipients—Keeping The American Dream Alive

Since 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, has granted work permits and protection from deportation to young undocumented immigrants who arrived to the U.S. as children. Today, more than a quarter of DACA’s 800,000 recipients, often referred to as “Dreamers,” live in California. Although their paths to the United States may have been different, the dedication to the community in which they live is quite similar.

One such Dreamer is Jesus Limón, who was brought to the U.S. from Mexico when he was eight-years-old. Limón said his time growing up in California was



Jesus Limón Photo Credit: Sac State Hornet

filled with moments of fear and uncertainty due to his residency status. But, Limón credits his faith in God for helping him through hard times.

“Growing up around the corner from a church gave me a strategy to deal with fear,” Limón said.

He also believes giving back to the community is paramount. In the past, Limón worked as a grant writer and as a volunteer tutor. “I learned the way literacy can empower communities,” he said. After DACA was enacted, Limón earned his Master’s degree and began working as an Assistant Professor and English Lecturer at Sacramento area colleges. “There was a tremendous shift in terms of economics,” he said.

When Karina was just four-years-old, her father left the family’s home in Mexico to come to the United States and provide a better life for his family. Two years later, Karina, her sisters and their mother joined him. “Reuniting with my father was really rewarding,” she said. Growing up in the Central Valley, Karina said faith always played an important role in her life, especially

Continued on next page



Karina

as she attended college. “Even as I was learning about politics and power, I knew I had to stay grounded in the church,” she said. Karina says giving back to the community is rewarding and has helped lead a Cal



Moises De Leon

Grant advocacy campaign. “I wanted other Dreamers to be able to come into the university,” she said.

Moises De Leon’s parents brought him to the United States from Mexico when he was just two-and-a-half-years-old. While attending De La Salle High School, he embraced the motto, “Enter to learn, leave to serve” and lives his life by those words. Whenever he sees

an opportunity to volunteer at his parish in the San Francisco Bay Area, he does so without hesitation. He also works for Catholic Relief Services, helping those in need around the world. De Leon is excited to receive his Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology soon so he can continue giving back. When asked about his journey as a DACA recipient,

De Leon said, “I know there are a lot of obstacles, but knowing God is with me lifts my stress.”

Now Dreamers face a new wave of uncertainty as the Trump Administration is phasing out DACA. Separately, both Limon and De Leon have met with Congressional aides and elected officials on the state and federal level to advocate for the Dream Act and immigration reform. Limon is optimistic about the future of DACA. “Based on conversations I’ve had with leaders in D.C., I’m really hopeful,” he said. Karina, who has a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science, traveled to Washington, D.C. with Church World Service and met with Congressional leaders, encouraging them to sign a clean Dream Act—a pathway to U.S. citizenship without increased spending on a border wall or security. When asked why she feels so strongly about her advocacy work,

Karina said, “I’ve found this place to be my home. I’ve contributed so much.”

Please visit

California Catholic Conference
www.cacatholic.org/because-we-are-catholic

Catholic Resources for DACA Students in California
www.cacatholic.org/CA-DACA

Archdiocese of Los Angeles DACA Resources
<http://thenextamerica.org/>