

Nicolle Mendoza  
Terrytown Elementary  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### “Leaving Honduras”

I was forced to leave my native country of Honduras because in the part that I lived in it was very dangerous. There were a lot of mafia groups which stole stuff, killed people and kidnapped kids. My mom lived scared of something happening to me or my brothers. She always had been careful and paid attention to the people in the area. My grandma also lived in one of these areas, but one of the most dangerous ones because there was a group called The 18 that sometimes were fighting with guns and shooting in the night near our house and my grandma's house. This made my mom scared. After all this, my dad decided to come to America because of this reason and also because he wanted a better future for us. For example, to learn English and know a lot of things that we don't really know in Honduras, so in the future we could find a good job and have better living conditions.

Honduras just wasn't safe. We had my house, my grandma's house in Tegucigalpa (my mom's mother), my grandma's house in Choluteca, Comayagua (my dad's father), and my great-grandmother's house in Sabana Grande, but none of these places were safe. In every house my grandma or grandpa had a shotgun just in case. In Tegucigalpa, most of the people who did not have a good job, or a lot of money couldn't put up walls to protect their houses or land, just fences if they had a farm. My grandpa did have a farm, and he had fences for the animals, like the cows, however, it still wasn't safe at all. One time my dad told me that five men came in the middle of the night to my grandpa's land with guns and ropes and they stole three cows from the farm. The next day they realized this, and my aunties and cousins were really nervous and worried because someday they could come back and get into our houses. My grandpa and my uncles weren't worried because they had guns: they were mad.

My dad came here first. The day before he left, I wrote a letter to him wishing him luck in his trip and wishing that nothing bad happens and that I hope he gets to his destination safely. I prayed all month for him. I really love him, and he loves me too. He brought this letter with him in his wallet; every time he had time to do something, he

read that letter. He took it with him and was careful with it. He suffered a lot coming here but he made it. He didn't bring a lot of things with him— - just money, clothing and my letter. The day before we were going to leave for the U.S., we took pictures with our family: my older brother, aunties, cousins, grandma and grandpa. We kept these pictures in our phone; we also brought clothing like jackets and jewelry, and little gifts that our family gave us. My mom also brought the rings that my dad gave to her in 2018. I just brought my first phone that my dad gave to me when I was 7. This phone had a lot of images of me and of my whole family from when I was little.

I am very glad to be in this country because I like learning more things, and I always loved the language of English. My mom doesn't want to go back to Honduras because she has a new life here—she has a house, two cars, and she says she has made too much of an effort just to lose everything she has made here. Although my dad sometimes wanted to go back to Honduras because he missed his father and other family members, the most important thing to him was to see his family safe and happy.