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6<sup>th</sup> Grade

### “Moving”

Change is hard. Change means different. That's how life is. When I was finishing kindergarten, my family made a huge change. It wasn't a change we made by choice. My dad lost his job because the head baseball coach at the University of Oregon got fired, which meant we all had to move. I didn't really think much about it; I thought it wasn't going to be a big deal. But as we got closer to moving time, I heard my parents talking about it and moving somewhere new started to feel a little scary. Our family of five was about to move over halfway across the country from Oregon to New Orleans and start all over again.

Before we left, I wanted to make as many memories as I could. I played with my friends; I ate my favorite Oregon foods. When it was time, I helped pack some of my toys that I would keep and clothes that I would still wear. It would be a very different climate in New Orleans, and we wouldn't need all of our winter clothes. We packed all of the things we would need to get started in our new home. My parents said it would be too expensive to take all of our things, so we had a yard sale to get rid of old toys, clothes, shoes, furniture, and bikes. Then we had a moving away party at the park just across the street. People brought delicious food and sweets, but my favorite was the watermelon. It was going to be hard moving away from all the people I grew up with, especially my grandpa. We all took pictures together one last time to remember each other.

On the day that we moved, our family and friends that were really close to us gathered in front of our house. We all said our final goodbyes, and there were many tears, but we eventually drove away with my brother and my dad in a big U-Haul that was pulling a small trailer. My mom's car was packed to the brim, and she and my sister drove behind us.

A few minutes into the drive, I felt good. Driving with my dad felt like an adventure. The window was down, there was a nice breeze flowing through the car and we were listening to music as we drove past all the neighborhoods. It took seven hours to get out of Oregon. We drove through Idaho and Utah, through parts of Wyoming, down through Colorado, through the panhandle of Oklahoma, down to Texas, and across Louisiana. We stopped every day to sleep in a hotel. Finally, six days and 2573 miles later we reached our new home in New Orleans. We didn't have a house of our own when we got there, but my mom knew a friend of a friend that had a place we could stay for a month. We needed to find a house fast.

The first couple of weeks felt like a vacation, but it was so hot and humid that we started sweating as soon as we stepped outside. I hated the heat. We all did. It was different than Oregon, which didn't have humidity. We tried new food places like Raising Canes, Frankie and Johnny's, and Bayou Hot Wings. We ate new things like red beans and rice, snowballs, and beignets. The new food was rich and fatty and at first, we all got sick. It wasn't just the food that was different, people spoke differently too. They had an accent and instead of saying "you all" they said "y'all", instead of "backpacks" they said "booksacks," and instead of saying "I'm turning 12" they said, "I'm making 12."

School was really different too. My siblings and I went to Samuel J Green charter school. Kids wear uniforms and say, "yes ma'am, yes sir." Teachers go by their last names and kids had to walk in straight quiet lines. It was strict. This was a big change from my school in Oregon. Eventually, I got used to this new place. We've been here for six years and even though we didn't choose to move here, I feel at home.

Sometimes change is good even though it's different. If today's Sawyer could talk to the 6-year-old nervous Sawyer back in Eugene, I would say, "You are going be alright kid! You will meet new people and friends, and it will feel like home someday. Things will be different, but you will like different, and Louisiana is famous for its watermelon!"