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DACA allowed him to follow his dream

By [Salvador Macias](#)
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The sunlight came in through the shades, shaking me from my dream. But as a 6-year-old, that just meant Saturday morning cartoons. I sprang up and dashed to the living room. As I turned on the television, there he was — a blue-and-red blur flying across the screen. Soon after, the iconic “S” came into focus: SUPERMAN. By far, my favorite superhero.

I liked him for his abilities. Who wouldn’t? He was super-strong and able to fly. But my connection was deeper. He was more than a hero, he was an immigrant who left his home and came to the United States. He left everything and adapted to this new place.

And, best of all, he used this experience to become stronger and protect others, standing for “TRUTH, JUSTICE and the AMERICAN WAY.” Leaping from couch to couch in pajamas, I dreamed of one day being able to protect people, too; I dreamed of growing into someone loved in America.

I outgrew my pajamas, but never quite outgrew my hunger for leadership. That is why four years later my dream was to become President of the United States.

One day, in fourth grade, my teacher opened our civics class to talk about the requirements for the presidency. There was no kid more eager. I took out my notebook and prepared to plan my future. She began by writing on the board, “Must be at least 35 years of age.” One day I’ll be older; check. Next: “Must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.” I will have lived in the country for 31 years by then; check. Finally, “Must be a natural-born citizen of the U.S.”

With that, my world came crashing down.

My whole life I was told you can do anything you set your mind to. And now, over something I had no control over — where I was born, I was being denied my dream.

My teacher continued with the unofficial requirements, saying a president should also go to college and asked who among us would do that. Oops. She pulled me aside and asked why I felt it was beyond me, to which I said, “I’m undocumented.”

Understanding the pain I must have felt, she asked why I wanted to be president.

I said, “I want to make a difference in my community, like Martin Luther King.”

She smiled and pointed out that he wasn’t a past-president. I countered: “Well, like Cesar Chavez.” Again, she smiled and corrected me. That’s when I realized, my dream was not to become president; my dream is to make a positive impact in my community. I want to interpret the law, not be a victim of it.

Thankfully, I did find a way to go to college when back then it seemed impossible. I had to pay three times the tuition my classmates did, and couldn’t apply for most scholarships. I was unable to qualify for loans, and unable to work.

Then, a miracle occurred.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was created and brought me out of the shadows. It could work enough to make me feel free of fear of deportation. Thanks to this program, I followed my dream, went to law school, graduated and passed the Arizona Bar exam. The lesson of understanding the law that I learned in fourth grade became the engine that drove me.

Nearly 800,000 individuals across the nation have benefited. We have found jobs, reached for higher education and offered help to community resources. While many hoped DACA would remain, I always understood it was

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merely a Band-Aid; I always understood that true security can only come through Congress.

We encourage fellow immigrants to use their voices and tell their stories. It's these stories that help lift the veil of misunderstanding.

At times like this, I remember those childhood Saturday mornings, think back to Superman going up against an impending apocalypse. It wasn't his super strength that saved the day, it was his resolve. It was knowing that he was fighting on the right side.

Dreams can be funny. They begin in a land of make-believe, but with perseverance and grit, they can become objects of reality. I may not be wearing an "S" on my shirt and may not be living in the White House, but my love for this country has led me to fight for my community and its dignity.


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