

# HUMANS OF SGA Stories

## Jazmin Gamez

**J**azmin Gamez began dreaming the moment she was born on March 22, 2000. As a first generation student, Jazmin is a living embodiment of the American Dream. Her path to navigating through the ups and downs of college life is a journey of inspiration, dedication, and sacrifice. Attending university was once a distant dream before the opportunities were afforded by DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration policy. Through Jazmin's persistent and fortified drive and the tireless, never-ending dedication of her family, she now uses her voice to spark a conversation about dreamers just like her, looking to tell their story.

"I think you always have to start somewhere with sharing your story. For me when I didn't have a voice it was always hard for me to open up about being a DACA recipient and the struggles I live with. Even now it's very emotional to talk about, but it's definitely helped for me to be open about it. While it is really scary and emotional to even talk about, I think that it's beneficial to find people that you're comfortable and safe with. It relieves so much stress off your shoulders when you're able to be open and have conversations. It's hard to get the words out, but at least it's a start that will lead to changing the way you see yourself and your goals because you'll finally be comfortable talking about yourself.



Being a DACA recipient and being someone who's so open about it has definitely open doors for me. It's made me realize how many people are actually in the same situation that I am and I feel it's made me more approachable to others. It's made people think about the situation that I'm in. People who were probably not aware about DACA ask me questions and genuinely want to know what I go through. I think that's an important factor just because it opens peoples minds to realize that people go through so many different things and people live different experiences - it's educating them while also helping me grow by being someone who's more open about telling my story and what I go through with DACA.

UNT became an option when I found out that the DACA program had been instated to where it gave me more of an opportunity to be able to look into colleges. Before that, college wasn't even a possibility or something I was even looking into.

# HUMANS OF SGA Stories

## Jazmin Gamez

It was always just assumed that if I did go to college I would just go to community college and just see where that took me. But even then, looking up schools I based it primarily on financial aid and schools that could provide the most for me. Thankfully UNT gave me the most money and the most financial aid which allowed me to pay my way through college which wasn't something that people thought I could even do. Even sticking to college is something most people didn't think I would be able to go through.



I've always had to work - or at least I've always been told by my parents - that I have to work twice as hard as everybody else. In my mind, I've been given a lot of opportunities in this country so I have to go the extra mile, push myself to the limits and do the absolute best. At the end of the day, I'm lucky to be here and I'm lucky to have the opportunities to be eligible for DACA and the opportunities to be able to renew that every two years. My parents support me through college so I think it's always just this inspiration in the back of my mind. It's also kind of conflicting for me because when things go wrong, I look at it like I'm disappointing someone. Even if I'm not, it's just always in the back of my mind.

I have always just seen my parents work so much harder for them to be able to make ends meet for the family and I've always visualized that and always been told that we're doing this so that you can have the opportunity to be able to further your education so that you don't have to go through these struggles. So I think that it's just always been set in stone that I have to further my



education so I don't have to go through those struggles and in a sense pay my parents back. The end goal for me is 1) so I can be happy and successful in a career that I love. And 2) to eventually further my education enough to where I'm so successful that I'm able to pay my parents back.

I always say this, but I'm really lucky to have DACA just because it's not something that's cheap and it's not something that a lot of people can easily access.

# HUMANS OF SGA Stories

Jazmin Gamez

It's about \$400 when I first apply and every time I renew it's another 400-500 dollars every two years so a lot of people don't even have that money to be able to apply. Even people are eligible for DACA just don't have the resources available to apply for it. And even though I'm lucky enough to have DACA, I always forget that there are restrictions. I'll hear a lot of my friends talk about study abroad and I want to plan stuff like that but the sudden realization that I can't plan study abroad trips, I can't actually go out of the US. While it is possible, it's not realistic that it can happen. So you win some, you lose some.

**"... I have all these plans and goals and I'm not letting the idea that I have DACA get in the way."**

I think my biggest victory has honestly been living a normal life - the American dream life. I'm doing things that I wouldn't think I would be able to do. I've leased an apartment, I've almost completed two semesters of college, I know what my major is, I have all these plans and goals and I'm not letting the idea that I have DACA bring me down. Now that I've talked so much about it, not that I ignore it, but I just don't let it weigh me down anymore. While I may not be able to do the exact same things as other people, I have the same opportunities. My biggest achievement is that I haven't let everything get to me.

I would remind '10-years from now Jazmin' where I started. I have high expectations for myself so I want myself to look back and realize that the sacrifices my parents made and the sacrifices I've made were worth it. I can't let DACA or anything else weigh me down and stop me from furthering my education. Never stop learning, but most importantly, never stop dreaming."

- Jazmin Gamez

