

# Just Like You!

by Joanne Blanco

Being born of two permanent residents, I experienced how the status of being an immigrant family brings with it racism and discrimination. Even

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though I was born in the U.S., I learned the words “spic,” and “wetback,” very early in my childhood. DCPS (District of Columbia Public schools) assumed that because my

first language was foreign I needed “special” education, when in fact I was always in the top ten of most of my classes.

I remember when my father, mother, and uncles told me stories of how they came to the United States, and all the suffering they went through. They even endured being cooped-up in hiding places with little air by people they paid to get them across the border alive. It’s very hard for me to picture my parents in those conditions, but they did it for my brothers and me. If I were in their situation, I would have done the same thing to give my child the opportunities she has now.

Long ago I learned from my mother, who was from El Salvador, that the fight for what you deserve should be done with integrity and pride. That’s why I know I am doing the right thing when I participate in the Immigration March and let my voice be heard. You see, this fight is not for just some legal papers; it’s also for the right to stay with our families and get a great education, and to work hard together for generations to come.

I will continue to support my people and fight beside them. We’re not just people who



Christine Kenny

*Immigrants’ Rights March, Chicago, March 10th, 2006*

clean your toilets or cook your food, or are put on the front lines to fight your wars. We are humans just like everybody else in this country and we deserve to be given a chance to succeed. We are just like you; I am just like you. I’m not “just an immigrant,” as some Americans call me. I am a person, a citizen. I am Joanne Blanco.

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*Joanne Blanco attends the Academy of Hope in Washington, DC. She is currently working towards her GED.*

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