



First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First-Generation College Experience

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Immigration and Justice: Moving Towards Hope Series, 2014

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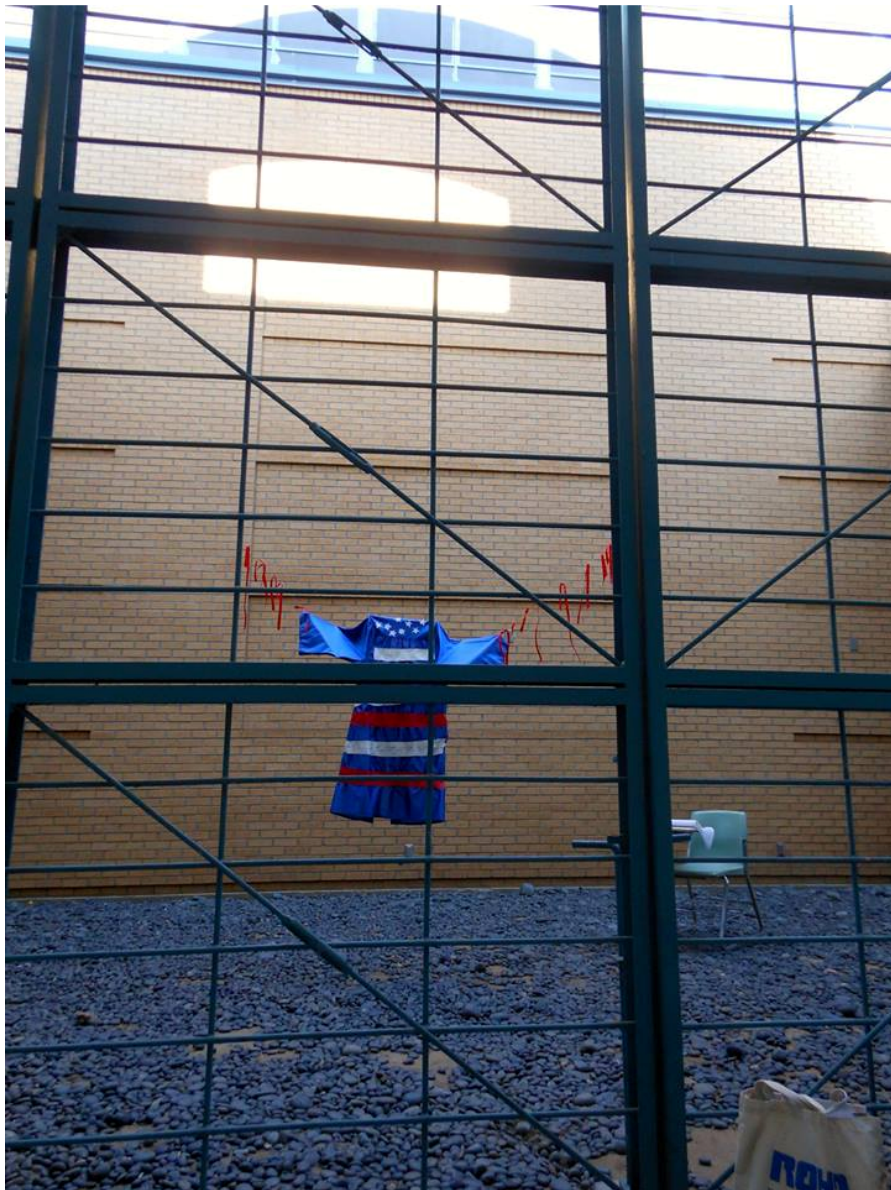
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We learn about and may witness many injustices, both abroad and domestic, which remind us we need to continue working for peace and justice. I chose to explore this issue in ART 355: Experiencing Art and Social Justice. I wanted to learn more about social justice, since it can be very complex and also very present in the field of Education, which I am truly passionate about. I am currently majoring in Political Science, and in many of my classes the topic of immigration continues to come up.



I have friends, family, peers, and fellow community members who are undocumented living in the United States, and I believe there are ways for further improving the nation's immigration policy—for making our country better and staying true to its foundations and values. As J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur asks: “What then is the American?” My piece tries to answer this question. What truly is American?



I conducted a heavy amount of research while creating this work. I read many articles, books, attended events, and talked with many groups, organizations, and individuals. I spoke with my American Cultures professor and reached out to LMU organizations such as RESILIENCE, Center for Service and Action Alternative Break Programs, DeColores Program, Underwings Praxis, El Espejo,

and the Immigration Justice Coalition. I also consulted various websites, including the National Education Association, PBS, History Channel, American Immigration Council, and watched two documentaries: *Turning Walls into Bridges* and *The Dream is Now*. After all of this research, what continues to inspire me is that many others and myself have an opportunity to create change that can contribute to future progress. We each have the opportunity to grant dignity, respect, and promote justice to all humans. We each can be the voice for the voiceless and afraid.



I am a strong advocate for equal access to education for all, and for the advancement of immigrant communities, which connects with LMU's mission of promoting social justice. My ultimate goal is to change the discourse around the immigration debate and raise awareness about the need for immigrant rights and the DREAM Act.



There are about 12 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the United States today. I believe it is important to fix America's broken immigration system and to give undocumented youth and their families a chance to succeed. This piece represents my support for immigration reform to allow hardworking aspiring Americans to earn their citizenship and pursue their educational goals.

