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ITHA Scholarship

Prompt 2 “The backstretch community is a tight knit community. Describe the ways the backstretch community is unique from other communities. What are the challenges and benefits of growing up in the backstretch?”

21 July 2022

### The Backstretch Community

A great thing about living in a tight-knit community is that everyone is close to each other and that they will be willing to help each other without a doubt. Living in a tight-knit community when you are far away from your country makes you feel protected and somehow makes you feel like your back in your country. Some of the benefits of growing up in the backstretch are all the help we have always gotten. It goes from summer camp, library Mobil, school supplies, medical help, food, and scholarships, and the list will just keep getting bigger with all the help we keep receiving. The backstretch has become a part of everyone's life, as soon as you get involved with it a part of it will always stay with them.

I remember when I first came to the USA I was so scared because I thought it wasn't going to be like my home back in Mexico. But once I saw all the people out in the Dorms doing cookouts and just seeing how everyone was friendly it made me feel as if I was back home. My first summer was great as we had a camp that came each year during summer vacations to help kids in the backstretch. The camp took kids from the age of 4 years all the way to like 15 years

we all could join them and play. We would get breakfast and lunch. They would also take us to the library and the pool every other Friday. I just remember the joy I had back in those days(2013) and the joy my siblings would get every time (2021) they saw the “camp trucks”.

The backstretch community is made up of people that love horses. People that are happy with the work they do every day. This community is different from other communities in the union that we have and the love they have for what they do. My dad is an example of it. He loves horses. I remember my aunt telling him a few times to leave this job and go with my uncle to construction where he would get paid much more. But my dad rejected it saying how he was just fine with his work and how much he enjoys it since the day my grandfather showed it to him when he was just a teenager. The Racetrack has become very important to a lot of us. I see a lot of kids and teenagers say how they wanna stick around doing different jobs here at the backstretch when they get older. This makes a lot of people happy because it means this community won't end that it will eventually continue to grow throughout the years.

One of the few challenges we have faced living in the backstretch is how we had to be moving back and forth from Hawthorne to Arlington heights. How many kids had to wake up at 5 am, some even at 4 am to get their siblings and themselves ready for school and they had to wait for the bus and go on a long ride to get to school, Many people don't know but we also lived all together in a room. During our stay at Hawthorne we had to live on top of the horses that we had to share with our parents and siblings. We were all just together. We slept, cooked, ate, played, and did everything in a small little room.

We don't face a lot of challenges while living at the backstretch but even if we did I honestly wouldn't change it for anything. During these years I have grown living here and I

believe somehow it has helped me become who I am. Honestly living in a tight-knit community and growing up in the backstretch full of people that care about each other has been the best.