

“How I Got Here: Veronica—Student-focused Video”

Veronica: Is this thing on? Hi guys. My name is Veronica and I love to dance. I love to dance because I hate to exercise. That's my form of movement. It's my way to keep active. I dance salsa, merengue, bachata, you name it I'm there.

As a little kid I didn't get to dance a whole lot. I was raised in a family where we were all migrant workers. We were responsible for picking fruits and vegetables. My childhood was a little bit of a mini-adulthood.

I actually didn't get to go to school between the months of March to about October until I was roughly thirteen years old. I always knew that I needed to go to college. It wasn't an option to not do that. I needed to be out of that lifestyle, and I needed to do something different and something better for myself.

As a middle school student I was invited to a job shadowing program where we took a little test and we were told what our strengths were and what our interests were. Mine led me to speech pathology.

Hi there.

As a speech pathologist, I see patients that have had strokes, that may have trouble with speaking.

We're going to go from low to high.

[Eeeeeeeeeeeee 00:04:30]. Good.

Helping my patients makes me feel really happy. It makes me feel that my college education and all of the time that I put into it is totally worth it.

[foreign language 00:04:44]

Speaker 3: [foreign language 00:04:44]

Veronica: [foreign language 00:04:45]

To put Veronica's situation in perspective, she only attended four months of every school year until she was thirteen. That's way more than a summer slide. That's like a slide/roller coaster/downhill slalom combo type of thing. Needless to say, it was difficult. The only way for any student to overcome these kinds of conditions is to have some type of major a-ha moment. All it takes is an epiphany of some sort where they identify a career path or passion early on in life. Think about that tie in your life when you knew exactly what you wanted to do and share that with your students. Once that's

Before Gear Up I knew that I wanted to go to college. Once I started working with them and going through the program, it really solidified my purpose.

Speaker 4: Thank you very much.

Veronica: I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. Because of my education I have a very different lifestyle from when I was a little kid. I don't just go to work, I get to play too. Here's the math, now I make eighty thousand dollars more per year than my family did as a whole. I have the luxury of owning my own vehicle and having clothes and pretty makeup and nice shoes.

Getting through college was not a walk in the park, but neither was picking fruits and vegetables for ten hours a day under the hot sun. On those days where you're thinking, "Oh, I can't really do this anymore," keep on trying. By attending college, you open so many doors for yourself. Just don't let anything hold you back.