

Student Voices: Raghad and Rahaf Barcudi

Author

Raghad and Rahaf Barcudi

Raghad: My name is Raghad. Today is June 3, 2018. I'm speaking with Rahaf, who is my sister. Where were you born?

Rahaf: I was born at Homs, Syria.

Raghad: What were you like as a child?

Rahaf: I was a shy kid. I liked playing around with my toys and watching TV.

Raghad: How old were you when you moved to the United States?

Rahaf: I was 16 and a half.

Raghad: Why did you decide to move to the United States?

Rahaf: I decided to move here for a safer place and better education.

Raghad: How is the U.S. different from Syria?

Rahaf: I would say living in Syria, it's easier to make a living. In the U.S., I guess life is more complicated. Also, it's definitely a bigger place, more people here. I would say in the U.S. it's more high tech. It's more civilized than back home.

Raghad: Tell me more about your home country, Syria.

Rahaf: Okay. So first of all, the language is Arabic. We speak Arabic there. I lived in a town called Homs, which is two hours away from the capital. My high school, or both middle school and high school, were very close to my home. I used to walk there with my friends and, yeah.

Raghad: Have you ever been in a dangerous situation before in Syria?

Rahaf: So, since we had the war in Syria, I have been in a couple of dangerous situations. One of them is when a group of people attacked my school. A couple of my friends were injured, but I'm fine now.

Raghad: Aw, I'm sorry about that. I'm glad you're safe. So if things were safer in Syria, would you go back there?

Rahaf: I would probably go back to visit, and I want to, but not to go live back again because the transition was hard and I don't want to experience that again. Plus, I have my school here now and my career in the future. My life is here.

Raghad: Who was the hardest person to say goodbye to and why?

Rahaf: Since me and my immediate family all moved in here, the hardest person to say goodbye to was my best friend. I've known her for a long time and we went to school together for five years and yeah. Yeah, she was the hardest person to say goodbye to.

Raghad: What's one thing you miss most about Syria?

Rahaf: Well, I definitely miss my family, my home, my bedroom. But the most thing that I miss is the environment, the loving and the caring people in my neighborhood.

Raghad: Was it hard fitting in, like getting used to new traditions?

Rahaf: Yes, it was, definitely. Obviously the language, I didn't speak English when I moved in. That took me some time to just learn the language and communicate with people. Plus, until this moment I feel like I don't fit in just because you miss a lot on the culture. It's not just the language anymore. It's just the whole culture. I didn't grow up here so I don't share a lot of experience with others, so yeah.

Raghad: What was your childhood dream?

Rahaf: As a child, I wanted to be an architect. Yeah, that was my dream.

Raghad: Can you describe one of your happiest moments?

Rahaf: My happiest moment is when I got accepted to UCLA as an engineering major. I was super happy and proud. It's always been secretly my dream school, and I love UCLA. Go Bruins.

Raghad: What are you most proud of?

Rahaf: I'm proud of who I became now. I got into UCLA. I actually transferred to UCLA to probably one of the hardest majors to get in as an engineering major to one of the toppest research institutes in the world. That is definitely something I'm proud of. Also, not just that, the fact that I was able to learn the language, communicate with people and do that within four years after I moved in. That was something I'm proud of.

Raghad: Can you tell me about someone who had a big influence on your life?

Rahaf: It would definitely be my mom. Since we moved here, she sacrificed her work, her entire life for us to get a better education and live in a safer-