



MARISOL'S STORY

In 1999, Marisol was a young mother living in El Salvador. She was unable to feed her two young daughters and her family faced extortion and threats on a regular basis. Not knowing if she'd ever see her daughters again, she decided to travel to the U.S.

"There was so much violence," she explains. "I was desperate to create a better life for my girls."

On the journey, she feared she might die. "My daughters were my inspiration to keep going." After twenty-eight days, she reached her brother in Oakland. Soon after, she received a work permit through TPS and was able to find work and send money back to her daughters in El Salvador.

Marisol's husband initially stayed behind with the children, but eventually the entire family, including Marisol's parents, was forced to flee. The girls were ten and nine years old when they made the harrowing trip, separately and alone. By then both their parents were in Oakland. After terrifying journeys, they were reunited with their parents and finally able to meet their four-year-old brother.

In 2012, the girls were approved for the DACA program. Before DACA, the young women worried constantly about being deported. "We were scared to be without our parents, afraid to go outside, and afraid of raids," Ana says.

She continues, "DACA gave us the opportunity to go to school, have jobs, and be here with our family. To be legal, without fear."

In 2016, Ana enrolled in community college, and she was recently hired as a medical assistant, a job she loves. She dreams of becoming a nurse and buying her mother a house. Without DACA, she knows she wouldn't have been able to attend college or pursue her dreams. She worries about being forced to return to El Salvador. "I don't want to be apart from





my family,” she says. “El Salvador isn’t safe. We can’t access food, jobs, or education.”

Her younger brother, a U.S. citizen, agrees. **“Thanks to DACA and TPS, my sisters and parents are here. If DACA and TPS were cancelled, I would be alone. What would I do without my family?”**

Marisol continues, **“Please support a legal solution to keep my family together. Our lives will be in danger if we are forced to return to El Salvador. After being in the U.S. for eighteen years, the gangs will think I have a lot of money, and I’ll be at extreme risk of extortion and personal violence, including sexual violence. I can’t even think about my daughters being there after we’ve finally become safe.**

I am afraid of being separated from my children. My 16-year-old son is a U.S. citizen. I would never take him to El Salvador—it’s an extremely violent place that is dangerous for young people—but I can’t imagine leaving him here alone. I don’t know what will happen. My dream is to stay together with my children. We all want to be together.”