

“Success can lead you”

by Maria Chapa

My proudest accomplishment from to date is graduating from High School and receiving my Diploma.

On August 22, 1998, my family and I received a call letting us know that my brother, Joseph, had been involved in a car accident and had passed away. My family and I had never dealt with a death in our immediate family. Instead of coming together as a family, this sad event separated my family. My sister and younger brother moved out of the home and a couple of months after that my step-father also moved out. That left just me and my mother. It was hard for us, but my mother and I helped each other to get through this painful experience. Shortly after my brother's death, I returned back to school but I felt empty inside because I had lost my best friend and I felt that I shouldn't have to go to school or do any of my work. I was so depressed that all I wanted to do was hang around my friends and skip school. I had felt that when I was around my friends I didn't think about my brother as much. So my grades dropped tremendously I didn't go to school do any of my work. The school year was ending and I had barely passed to become a senior. My grades were still dropping but not as bad as when I was a junior in high school. Around six months before graduation day I was called into the principal's office. As I walked down to the office I became nervous and started to sweat. I opened the door and there sat the principal and the counselor. Both informed me that since last year my grades had dropped and looking at my grades now I was not going to be able to graduate. I then started to cry and instead of going back to class I walked all the way home. After I told my mother what had happened at school, she became upset

and stated that just because Joseph was not here with us, he would always be with us in spirit.

The next day, I went to the counselor's office and asked her what I could do to graduate with my class. The counselor informed me that I would have to go to my English, Algebra, and Government teachers and ask what I would need to do in order for my grades to improve enough to graduate from high school. I met with all of them and they wrote down what I needed to complete and how I could earn extra credit. After all the extra studying and getting help from tutors, I was turning in all my work on time. Two weeks before graduation day, I was called into the principal's office. So I walked down the hall nervous and sweating again. Once again, the principal and the counselor sat in front of me. They stated that we are very proud of the improvement that I had made over the past months and informed me that I had made enough progress to graduate! I cried with joy and thanked them for all they did to get me motivated and more involved to meet the requirements for graduation.

The lesson I learned was no matter what you are going through, just never give up and always do your best because in the end, it always pays off. This lesson has helped throughout my life, whether it is continuing my education, my job or any personal hard times. When I feel down or upset because I am not getting where I want to be, I just think back to the pride and joy I felt when I received my high school diploma and how working hard to reach my goals will help me in the future in both personal and professional life.

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