

IMMIGRATION

TRUMP SAID IT. DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

They've been slammed by presidential candidates and brought into the mainstream of the political discussion. But immigrants — those seeking a better life in this country — refute the notion that they come to this country for all the wrong reasons.

They're |
They're bringing **drugs**
They're bringing **crime**
They're **rapists**

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rugs, crime and rapists. That's what presidential candidate Donald Trump said "Mexico is sending" to the United states. And to stop illegal immigrants, Trump wants to build "a big, beautiful, powerful wall." Then he wants to send those immigrants here, millions of people, back to Mexico. People we see every day. People who are now part of our community. . . . Miguel Plasencia '15 grabbed a sweatshirt from the Lion's Closet. He wanted to represent his new school, so he threw on the first thing he saw. A white sweatshirt, SMLAX written in yellow letters across the front. The new seventh-grader, in his new gear, headed to lunch, but he was hit with an unex-

pected question. *Yo, you play lax?* Another seventh-grader at the table asked Plasencia. *What do you mean?* He'd never heard that word. Lax. *You play lax?* They repeated. He still didn't know. *You don't know what lacrosse is?* The kids laughed. As a first generation American, Plascencia didn't know what the sport of lacrosse was. His friends didn't play it, and his parents certainly didn't play it. In fact, his parents were both immigrants from Mexico. His mom used a fake visa, with all her real information. His dad hiked over the border.

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STORY PHILIP SMART, WILL CLARK PHOTO ILLUSTRATION ALDEN JAMES, WILL CLARK

Morris family optimistic one year after daughter's disappearance

by **Aidan Maurstad**
Christina Morris went missing from The Shops at Legacy in Plano — Aug. 30, 2014. A year later, however, after efforts from an outpouring of volunteers and the arrest of Enrique Arochi, the chief suspect in Christina's disappearance, Christina has still not been found. But Christina's mom, Development Office coordinator Anna Morris, marked the anniversary not with sadness, but hope. "A group of family," Anna said, "and people that have been really

strong supporters, who have begun calling themselves 'Team Christina,' we just all had a picnic at a park close to our house and were just together. We tried to spend the day with loved ones and make it a positive thing." "Team Christina" also designated the weekend of Aug. 29 and 30 as a time for random acts of kindness in Christina's honor. "We had what we were calling a 'Pay-it-Forward Weekend,'" Anna said. "We had some cards printed out and asked everyone to perform some

random act of kindness in Christina's name. And they did, to tell her story and pass on a card and her information." The cards also contain a picture of Christina. Anna says that getting Christina's face out there as much as possible is key to the search efforts. "We wanted people to be able to recognize Christina's face as well as they could recognize their family member's, their neighbor's, their friend's face," Anna said. "I hate that it has to be so repetitive, but I have to think that

that repetition is good, because hopefully if someone does see her they'll connect the two things." Anna Morris hopes that the people will continue to 'pay it forward' in Christina's name, past just that one weekend. "Hopefully that will continue to go," Anna said, "and not only spread the word that Christina's still out there and she's still missing, but also just to have some positive momentum. Have something good happen because of her."

A BORDER ISSUE

A NATION DIVIDED,
AMERICANS DEBATE
OVER THE ISSUE OF
IMMIGRATION — AND
WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE.

Plascencia’s parents came to America to provide for their family. And Plascencia thinks that many Mexicans, the ones who own houses, live here and go to work here, come to America for similar reasons.

“Mexico is known for being a country for having a lot of drug-dealing and trafficking, but the people that come here to the United States . . . they are there because they have a job to do,” Plascencia said. “And that job is to advance their culture. To advance the people they love. To make people better, to make people smarter, to make their kids have a better future.”

Another first generation American, Hilario Vargas ‘15 says his parents moved to the United States to find better opportunities. Opportunities that his parents didn’t have in Mexico.

His dad walked for hours to cross the border. His mom did the same, meeting her uncle on a nearby interstate.

“Being a first generation American and coming from a Mexican background, I believe, had already put me in a disadvantage to those people who were born here,” Vargas said. “However, it’s all about opportunity, that’s what really helped me and is still helping me. The opportunity to join an institution like St. Mark’s and then a higher education beyond that.”



MIGUEL PLASCENCIA
Thinks immigrants come to America for opportunity

Plascencia and Vargas both came from similar situations, and when their paths crossed in the Great Hall, listening to former Headmaster Arnie Holtberg deliver a speech to new students, the two instantly identified with each other.

They hailed from Oak Cliff, which really helped out when Plascencia needed a ride home from a spirit party and no one else in the grade could give it to him. They both went to public school before, mainly hispanic. But now the two had an experience as first generation Americans that many others at school hadn’t had.

“[Being first generation] pushed me to be like them, so my kids could be like you guys were,” Plascencia said. “So that my second generation Americans can live comfortably and live well. That’s what I strived for. When I saw a lot of [other] guys and saw I was first generation, it made me want to go prove everyone wrong.”

As an immigrant, Student Services Supervisor Miguel Mesta has found a life at the school. He even learned English from the students here.

“They used to send me 10-15 boys a day, and I was taking them out to clean tables back in rooms and other little things,” Mesta said. “But when I was saying something wrong, it was always one



student who would said ‘Mr. Mesta, you say it like this.’ That’s how I learned a lot from the students at the school.”

Immigrants, and descendants of immigrants, like these community members have always fueled the growth of this country. But there are still questions remaining regarding the issue of immigration. Important questions, ones that Trump brought to the forefront of the national headlines still stand: “Who do we let into our country?”

Local immigration lawyer Harry Joe addresses this issue.

“[Trump] says America’s need for these people is a magnet for them to come into the States,” Joe says, “and he’s right about that. This country has a very long history of needing and relying on immigrant behavior.”

The immigrant who wants to work is not the issue, according to Wes Butler of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency.

“From a law enforcement standpoint,” Butler said, “we want to stop the bad stuff, the bad people. Our big concern is not someone coming over here to work illegally. I don’t think somebody who’s going to be supporting their family working two minimum wage jobs is really going to start wrecking the economy.”

But even so, Butler has to enforce immigration laws universally, even when it is tough.

Like when Butler encountered an immigrated woman who had been living in the U.S. for ten years. She had two kids who were born in the United States. She had no criminal record. She was completely innocent of any crime, but he had to deport her, and consequently, her children went with her.

HARRY JOE
Critical of Trump’s views



“That’s the thing. It’s black and white,” Butler said. “There’s no gray in there. You can’t just sit there and let something slide. The law is the law. She came over here illegally, she overstayed illegally, that’s it. You can’t just all the sudden choose what you want to enforce. You have to enforce it all.”

Many politicians have proposed solutions to this issue. Trump’s solution: mass deportation and building a wall. But Butler, who works on the front lines of the immigration issue, knows the reality of the problem.

“There’s always a Trump out there or somebody with the same ideas that Trump has,” Butler said. “He doesn’t understand how impossible doing all that would be.”

Vargas has similar feelings about Trump’s plan.

“I don’t know why anyone in their right state of mind would vote for a man who is as ignorant as he is,” Vargas said. “I don’t know how easy it seems to him to be able to deport 11 million people but it would be impossible to do that. His plans for the United States are improbable and unrealistic.”

Joe doesn’t deny that there are bad people who come over to the U.S. illegally, but the idea of removing them all seems too difficult to pull off.

“And then those that are bad, those that want to cheat and steal, no country should take them, and the United States is no exception,” Joe said. “But do we really want to kick them all out as Donald Trump is saying? Are we willing to pay the price for it?”

Joe says the the only way for Trump’s plan to work is to criminalize the hiring of illegal immigrants.

“Make it a crime for people to employ an undocumented worker,” Joe says. “You make it a crime to employ people who mow your lawns that are here illegally. Now, is this what you really want to do?”

As an immigrant himself, Mesta knows what it takes to immigrate to the U.S. and find a new job, a new life.

“But most of the people, I can say, they cross the border to get a better job, to live a better life,” Mesta said. “I put myself as an example. I grew up helping my mother raise a family. Moving into the United States, our idea was to work and send money to them to survive.”

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Plascencia was curious. He knew his parents came from Mexico, but now their home was in America.

“If, somehow, Mexico and the United States went to war, who would you fight for?”

“I love my country of Mexico, but the United States has provided me with a life,” they both say. “And for that, I’d lay down my own life for the United States.”

And for Plascencia, that’s what being an American is.

“It doesn’t matter the color of your skin, where you come from, but it’s an ideal,” Plascencia says. “A sense of being. A sense of something greater than yourself.”

COMING TO TOWN Speaking to a crowd of more than 20,000, presidential candidate Donald Trump (left) rallies supporters in the American Airlines Center Sept. 14. Protesters outside the arena (below) show off their opinion on Trump.



at the Rally

Opinions were strong — on both sides of the immigration issue — at Trump’s Sept. 14 Dallas rally.



STEVEN OTTO
Clarifies that Trump is for legal immigration

Here’s what a big confusion is with the whole immigration thing. Many people think that [Trump] is completely against immigration. He’s against illegal immigration. Americans are on the backburner right now. The illegals, the Mexicans, the Puerto Ricans, they’re all frontrunners. They don’t have birthrights here, and they’re being given everything. That’s where [Trump] is trying to make it where it’s Americans first.

VICTOR STRUM
Tired of Republican party



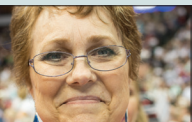
I like what [Trump] has said so far. I really don’t like the party brand of Republican, so that’s why I label myself as a conservative. I’m real tired of the way the party has been run for the past 20 something years in general, and I’m looking for someone who’s willing to do what they say.



JAMES JOHNSON
Likes Trump’s political approach

Some of [the illegal immigrants] are criminals. The problem is, when a person like Mr. Trump makes a comment, the media takes it and blows it up. And he’s the kind of gentleman that speaks from his heart. That’s why I’m here. He tells things as they are, and they can very easily be misunderstood or misconstrued.

DEBORAH MARMON
Wants more secure borders



We have so many of the illegals that are coming in and mingling with the American people that are committing crimes. I’m from a Latino family. These illegals coming over here are a danger to our country, they’re a danger to our economy. This is the United States of America, not the United States of Mexico. And it has nothing to do with racism, it has to do with our borders.



TAYLOR KOREN
Curious about Trump’s policies

[Trump] has just said he wants to deport everybody, but he hasn’t said how he’s going to do it. So I’m open to hearing how he could possibly deport all of the illegals.



BROAD SPECTRUM Diverse political beliefs were represented at the Trump Rally at the American Airlines Center and the protest at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe.