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**The Voice of a Zapotec Indian**

My grandfather once told me “No matter where you go in life, or how successful you become, always remember who you are, and where you come from”. As a child I never quite seemed to understand what he meant. I simply shrugged my shoulders and responded saying “si, abuelito”. It was not until my junior year of high school I began to understand his words. Ever since I was a child, storytelling had always fascinated me. Learning where people come from, their beliefs, their language, and the culture they grew up in was something I deeply respected and appreciated. My interest for storytelling started with my parents. Although I was born in the United States, I traveled back to Mexico due to my grandmother’s illness where I grew and was deeply immersed in to the Indigenous Zapotec culture. Both of my parents are Indigenous Zapotec Indians from Oaxaca, Mexico, who raised my brother, sister, and I into a very rich culture. Coming to the United States was very difficult for my parents due to the language barrier. Not only did they not know English, but they knew very little Spanish as well. They were embarrassed about their identity, and as a result of that, protected us by hiding their culture, language, and beliefs from everyone else. During my junior year of high school, I took a film class in where I began to learn and analyze how media has impacted our society throughout the years. In 2014 I created a short documentary

where I interviewed my parents and family on how the Indigenous Zapotec community kept its traditions even though it was once looked down upon. After creating the short documentary and submitting it into my local school districts film festival, not only did I win the Filmmaker of tomorrow award but I also realized how passionate I was with media. My teachers and peers were impressed with my work because while others made short films about short action stories, or adventurous spies, I chose to make a short documentary about my history, my culture, and where I came from. I want to attain a higher education in Journalism because I want to help minority communities be heard within the media. There are many important events and issues in our society that many of us do not become aware of due to the lack of information and interest. Like Martin Luther King, I have a dream to one day complete my PhD and become a Documentary Researcher or an investigative journalist in order to make others aware of the issues that are occurring in our society and how it is affecting us. I not only want to represent my indigenous community, but overall the people of color around the nation who do not have the opportunity to continue in higher education. Storytelling is a way in which I can show other the reality of issues we face in our modern society, and how we can come together and build stronger relationships within our communities. I know that I can continue my dreams through higher education, because just like Dr. King, I won’t stop working until my dream becomes a reality.