

Immigration: A Young Girl's Story

It was 1975, and a little girl named Tammy was born; little did she know she would have to endure a hardship that no one should ever have to go through. During the Vietnam War, the Communists won and took over South Vietnam. Citizens that fought against them were taken as prisoners of war, and her father was one of the many that were taken. Her mother had to make the hard decision of leaving everything they knew and loved to keep her daughter safe. Little did she know, she was going to become an immigrant soon.

The Vietnam War was long, expensive, and isolating. It was the communist government of North Vietnam against South Vietnam with the support of their ally, the United States. More than three million people were killed with more than half of those people being Vietnamese civilians. It is unknown who won the Vietnam War, and some say it was the United States due to fewer casualties and deaths. While others say the United States entered the war with the idea of preventing a communist takeover, nevertheless, both North and South Vietnam were united together under a communist banner in July 1976.

As Tammy and her mother were leaving, they grabbed a small bag and filled it with a few day's worth of necessities and \$200 hidden in a toothpaste tube. Tammy boarded the boat with her mother, wondering where her father is. They set sail to Malaysia, where a refugee camp was waiting for them. But it wasn't a comfortable ride. Pirates, criminals, and robbers were known to board ships and steal people's money, innocence, and lives. Knowing this, her mother did her best to distract her from all the commotion. As they arrived at the Malaysia

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refugee camp, they were sponsored by France and were transported there. At the time while they were living in France the mother had friends that lived in California who would sponsor them to move to California. After living in France for a year Tammy and her mother packed up and traveled to California. When they got there, everybody welcomed them with open arms, yet Tammy still felt like an outsider.

Tammy faced several challenges involving racism, money, and the fact that she had to work harder than everyone else. In school, she had to take the time to learn English because Vietnamese was her first language. She was constantly taunted by her classmates because of the way she dressed, looked, what she ate, and her culture. Growing up, Tammy never wanted to invite her friends over because her household was different from theirs and included different types of Vietnamese delicacies. She was insecure about everything from her childhood to her adolescent life. Their life was hard, as they had to take whatever people gave them. This was hard for her mother as she was a very prideful woman. Throughout her life, she was able to gain confidence by surrounding herself with extraordinary, compassionate friends. Tammy started to feel accepted and became proud of where she came from. Looking back, she wished

she never was embarrassed by her culture. She made a vow to ensure her children were active in the Vietnamese culture by eating Vietnamese food, celebrating holidays, and upholding Vietnamese traditions. Tammy started from very little. Nonetheless, she has worked very hard and focused on her education. She has worked her way to get to where she's at. Tammy

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currently holds great responsibility as a Senior Finance Executive at a large high tech company and is highly regarded in her profession.

From a social perspective, Tammy has made a significant impact in her community. Tammy lost her mother due to cancer. Thus, in honor of her mother, Tammy donates and actively fundraises money to the American Cancer Society. This can help our world because the American Cancer Society looks for all opportunities to get rid of cancer, including treatments, oversee research, and support patients. As a result of Tammy's efforts, she is helping the American Cancer Society get closer to stop cancer from taking over people's lives.



As the granddaughter of two people that have gone into the Japanese internment camps for the Pearl Harbor bombing, I understand how challenging, complicated, and strenuous it was for the Japanese. In the spirit of Yasui's life's work, I can build bridges to help newcomers to this country face any challenge. When newcomers arrive, they usually feel like outsiders and invisible, as if their opinions don't matter. I would make sure all immigrants get to become part of our country as citizens. From there, I would create small groups of them to take part in city and country meetings or vote to make sure everyone's voices are heard. Immigrants or local minorities should never have to be silenced, especially if there's a situation like the Pearl Harbor bombing. Just because one country attacked another doesn't mean that all the people from there are evil. Minoru Yasui taught me that no matter the race, skin color, or orientation, everyone should be treated the same and have equal rights. Hopefully, the groups of

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immigrants/minorities are heard in meetings and voting. Therefore they can help prevent events like the internment camps from happening again.

In conclusion, all immigrants deserve a place to grow old and be happy. A place to call home, where they can spend time with their loved ones and feel safe. Where they can be celebrated for their differences, and speak freely, and be heard. There are many other immigrant stories that are just as remarkable as Tammy's. That's the beauty of this country. We are a nation of immigrants. That's what makes the United States so unique.

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