

Immigration

I recently attended a breakfast sponsored by a local non-profit and we heard two presenters talk about an organization called Youth on Their Own. The first presentation was a rather typical fund raising appeal. The second speaker, Rashel was much more moving, about a person who at a very young age chose to become an American. I did a bit of research to see what former Presidents had to say about immigrants. I found two that I like, both from men who served in the military during WWII. John F Kennedy, Navy, said “Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life. Immigration policy should be generous; it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy we can turn to the world, and to our own past, with clean hands and a clear conscience.” The second was from Ronald Reagan, Army who said “I received a letter just before I left office from a man. I don’t know why he chose to write it, but I’m glad he did. He wrote that you can go to live in France, but you can’t become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Italy, but you can’t become a German, an Italian. He went through Turkey, Greece, Japan and other countries. But he said anyone, from any corner of the world, can come to live in the United States and become an American.”

Now back to the presentation I heard. A couple came to Arizona from Mexico just over twenty years ago. While here, they had a baby girl, Rashel and because she was born here, Rashel became a US citizen. While she was a young child, her parents decided to move back to Mexico. It was not a forced move but a move by choice. After living a while in Mexico, Rashel wanted to come back to the States, so she did. Rashel lived with relatives who were poor and had a family of their own to take care of. Life was difficult, Rashel moved out and lived on her own while still in high school. She found the non-profit, Youth on Their Own (YOTO) whose primary goal was to help young people who were homeless to find a better life and get an education. Rashel got some assistance from YOTO, finished high school with good grades. Rashel is now a Sophomore at the University of Arizona, living on her own, receiving scholarships and doing well in college. She talked briefly about some of her hardships, but focused more on what is going well. I asked her what she planned on doing following graduation and she told me that she wanted to work with a non-profit similar to YOTO to help other young people achieve their dreams. Rashel is a wonderful college student who will definitely make our country a better place. I was impressed and very happy to have met her. When someone tells you about the terrible people crossing our southern border, please remember Rashel’s story.