

**DREAMERS, from page 4**

doors in order to help them out.”

In 2014, Oregon voters widely rejected Ballot Measure 88, which would have given his undocumented parents the ability to drive legally by obtaining driver's cards.

“My parents, if they make one mistake, it will cost them,” he said. His father's job in construction takes him to various job sites around the region, and public transportation isn't always a viable option. “You can't just not work,” he said, “because you have a family, so it puts you in a really tricky situation.”

He also worries his father's past mistakes could get him deported; he has a history of DUIs. If that happens, Manuel said, supporting the family would fall on his and his mother's shoulders. Now a stay-at-home mom, she would likely get a job working in the fields, he said.

His father was also recently involved in a car accident.

“Now he is trying to figure out that, and how he can pay his fees without having to be directly involved with court,” Manuel said, “because if he goes to court, he can risk being detained. I think that's the same for a lot of people in our community. They want to go to court, and they want to fix things and they want to get things straight, so they'd rather pay double fees than go in and fix it personally.”

In high school, Manuel took a chemistry class from a teacher who helped him discover his passion for the subject. While his friends couldn't understand why he liked chemistry so much, he thought he might want to pursue it as a career.

Manuel applied for scholarships available through a private liberal arts college in Salem and was awarded one based on merit. While Dreamers cannot get federal financial aid, he was able to get additional need-based funds through the school's financial aid program.

Now he's in his first year at Willamette University, where he said he'll likely major in biochemistry.

The scholarship and financial aid weren't enough to cover all the costs, so he fills in the gaps with money he earns working as a cook in a local restaurant.

He said college was a culture shock for him after attending McKay High School.

“Salem has this de facto segregation where you notice the communities and how they come together in different areas,” he said.

At the university, he said, he's been meeting with other Dreamers and a few “trusted professors” to figure out a way the school can support DACA recipients if they or their family members get deported.

When he isn't working or attending classes, he said, he likes to volunteer.

“I believe it is important to give back to your community and be involved,” he said. “I actually work with the Community Service Learning office on my campus.”

But he also likes to relax and listen to music or watch “Black Mirror” on Netflix. Right now he's “really into Blanca Rosa Gil,” he said, but he also likes Modest Mouse and Vampire Weekend.

He said that during the Obama years, while he heard a lot about deportations, he didn't feel like it would happen to him.

“But now it's the feeling that it can happen to anyone, whenever,” he said.

“There is more fear, more precautions you

have to take, and less time you want to go out and work, and to the grocery, and out to wherever because you know if you go out you are risking yourself.

“It can be terrifying sometimes.”

His three younger siblings are all U.S. citizens, and he said he's not sure where they would go if his parents were deported.

“I could get deported tomorrow; that's a reality. But would I rather focus on that or focus on education and the hope that I might be able to provide for my community, and might be able to do something with my education? I'd rather focus on that than get down,” he said.

“If I did get deported, I really don't know what would happen,” he said. He has about \$1,000 in emergency savings. “It would only get me a hotel for a week, maybe,” he said.

**FÁTIMA**

Fátima has a brief memory of the night before her family left their home in the small town of Aguililla, Michoacán.

She remembers that her mother said to her, “I need you to please be strong tomorrow and take care of your sister.” Her sister was about six years older than she was, but had developmental disabilities.

She replied, “OK, Mom, I can do it!” She was just 4 years old.

Fátima remembers being terrified as she was separated from her mother and placed into a car with her sister and two strangers. As her sister cried, she remembered her mother's words.

As the car crossed the U.S. border in Nogales, Ariz., the sisters pretended to be different children.

“Your memory sometimes tricks you, but I have nightmares where I wake up and I'm in a car and driving the whole night, not able to sleep,” she said. “It's always a red car, there's a man driving and I can't see his face, and everything is black. I look out the window, and all I see are the stars.”

Her two younger siblings crossed in a separate car, and her mother crossed through an underground tunnel with a coyote, someone who smuggles immigrants.

She and her siblings arrived at the safe house in Arizona where they met her father, but her mother wasn't there. It would be two months before they learned she had been caught and placed in detention.

Fátima still remembers watching each car as it arrived at the safe house, hoping to see her mother exit the vehicle.

“The fear of missing her and the worry – that I always feel,” she said.

In March, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced it was considering a policy of separating children from their mothers when they are caught illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

After Fátima's mother was released, she crossed again undetected.

Fátima's family moved to Modesto, Calif., but her father was abusive, and he

drank. Her mother eventually left him, bringing her children north to Oregon.

Fátima said that once she was in the U.S., her mother had to trade in her high heels and manicured nails and take menial jobs scrubbing toilets.

She eventually got a job waiting tables at a family-owned Mexican restaurant. Fátima worries her mother, now approaching her 50s, won't be able to take the daily 12-hour shifts much longer.

“I remember my birthday parties, she wasn't there. Going home for Easter, she wasn't there. You get used to it over time – that's how it is in America if you're an immigrant,” Fátima said.

When she was 15, she began working at the restaurant alongside her mother because she wanted to help pay household bills.

“That's when I realized the situation,” she said. “When I watched her and realized how hard she was working – and not just her, but all our immigrant communities, how much they work.”

“I became really frustrated with the way we were living. I was like, this is pointless – we are never going to get anywhere. My mom's never going to be able to buy a house; we're just paying rent and paying rent. And I was like, there has to be a way out,” she said. “She's just working her whole life for nothing at the end.”

Over the next 15 years, the Latin American-born population over 40 in the U.S. is expected to grow by 82 percent, according to a paper published in the spring 2017 edition of the Brookings Papers on Economic Activity.

There is no safety net waiting for undocumented immigrants. They cannot collect Social Security and are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare, despite paying the taxes that fund those programs throughout their lives.

“A large elderly population of undocumented immigrants is a policy challenge that the United States has hitherto not faced,” stated the Brookings Papers authors.

Figuring out a way to take care of their aging parents is a burden felt by many Dreamers.

In Salem, Fátima watched as many of her Latino classmates went straight from high school into full-time jobs so they could help support their families, she said.

“They don't see an opportunity for them,” she said. “Their families are barely surviving, so to think about an education is completely out of their mind. So those that do make it, it's very rare.”

But Fátima was determined to break the cycle. She began volunteering with the Boys and Girls Club, recently speaking on the organization's behalf at a conference in Las Vegas.

She applied for scholarship after scholarship until she was awarded what she needed to attend Portland State University, where she's now in her first year studying social work and political science.

She wants to use her education to give back to her community and to have the means to provide for her mother.

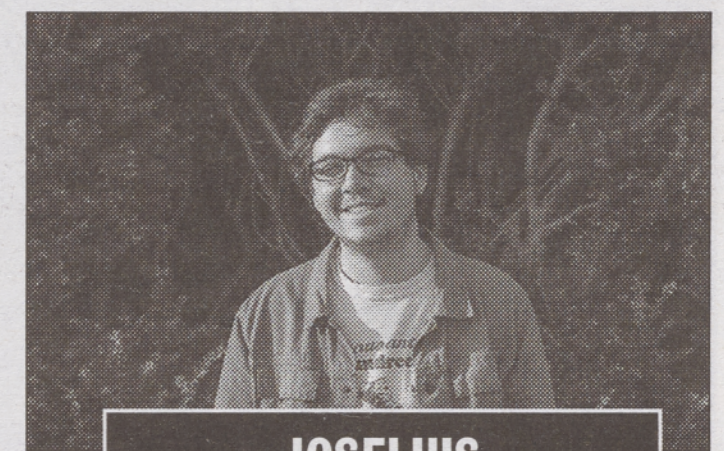
One day she might open a nonprofit that helps domestic violence victims, she said. In the meantime, she has an internship at Causa, where her supervisor, Cristina Marquez, said she's been an “incredible community leader” who's “fearless in

sharing her story.”

In other ways, however, Fátima is the typical American teenager. She likes getting her coffee at Starbucks and eating hamburgers. Outside of school, she plays soccer and volleyball, and she said she loves listening to Bruno Mars and Beyoncé – she *really* likes Beyoncé.

She said there are only 80 Dreamers enrolled at PSU – a school of more than 27,000 students.

“The rest, where are they?” she asked rhetorically. “They're working. They are providing for their families. They are scared; they don't want to come out. I'm given the platform, so I'm willing to speak out for them.”

**JOSELUIS**

Joseluis' mother brought him to Oregon from Tijuana to visit their extended family when he was 3.

“We came as tourists, like most people do, and just overstayed our visa,” he said.

His mother was planning to return to Mexico, but she fell in love with Oregon's green trees and abundant nature and decided to stay.

“I don't know if you've been to Mexico, but it's very barren,” he said. “In Tijuana, there are loose dogs everywhere, and random mountains that are just dirt. Even now, every time we are driving around, she just stares out the window and is like, ‘wow this is amazing.’”

Like Fátima, he worries about his mother's situation as she ages. He said he and his brothers would like to buy her a house one day.

“She's been cleaning houses since we got here, and now she just works labor jobs,” he said. “She's not made for those jobs – but it's all that she has because of her status.”

His mother had a better job in Mexico, working in a government office. But she never returned home because she wanted to see her kids flourish in America, Joseluis said.

“She was sacrificing her youth to raise us into men who can one day be successful. Because of the way Mexico is, it's very difficult to do something without getting into corrupt politics. It's pretty dangerous in Tijuana right now, because of all the cartels.”

Growing up, Joseluis said, he didn't really think about the risk of deportation.

“I was in high school. I was still a kid,” he said, “I was thinking about not wanting to go to class tomorrow.”

He played football in middle school and ran track briefly in high school. But he said it was too expensive for him to continue. Instead he joined the student government, began mentoring freshman students and took lead roles in service clubs.

He said getting involved opened his eyes to many needs in his community, such as

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