Each year, thousands of migrants travel through the United States in search of work in the fields in order to avoid a year of debts. Among the multitude of these farm workers is my family. We venture into a 3 day cross-country adventure—our destination: Williamsburg, Iowa. Although the trip is a strenuous and uncomfortable one, it is an experience that I have gone through every summer and fall of my life. Migrant work isn’t an appealing job, and the pay is minimal. There are no benefits to protect you as you age and it’s not as impressive as you would hope on a résumé. The summers are filled with scorching suns overhead and fruitful fields below. As you stand in the middle of the field and look around you, your mind is swarmed with millions of reasons why to pursue a college education.

As I matured and began to look for a job that can help me obtain the home and car of my dreams, as well as financial security, I realized that I was now competing with many workers who have the same goal: dream house, dream car, and security. A college education is a great advantage that can assure me that job. In the fields, our paychecks can at times be of a hefty amount, but we also know that it required 12 hours of work for 7 days a week with only an hour and a half worth of breaks. I also had the sunburns, aches, and rashes to serve as a reminder that working in the fields was an obligation and a job, not a career. I would much rather sit in an air-conditioned classroom listening to a professor lecture than to wake up to another day of field labor. Being a migrant also served as an opportunity to see what a sacrifice my parents have gone through to give us the opportunity to achieve all our dreams. They didn’t have the chance to follow their dreams. To them, this is a living.
Migrants today have had opportunities offered by programs that could help them pay their education. Being a migrant has opened doors for many aspiring students. It has encouraged them to pursue an education and to lose the belief that college isn’t for them. College today isn’t just for the suburban Anglo like before, but for everyone. Seeing the hype and encouragement focused on the underprivileged helped me lose the fear to continue into college after graduation. It taught me that with the determination that I have acquired through many summers of labor, I can make it through college with the help of tutoring programs and scholarships. It is easy to get into college if you work hard and ask for help.

Now as I look into the future, I feel prepared for what life has in store for me. As a migrant working for what I own, I know how much work it took to get to where I am and how much it will take to get to where I want to be. I can overcome obstacles in college and in the future with ease. Nothing can compare to being drenched in sweat and thirsty with an acre more of weeds to hoe in the middle of July. I have also obtained a sense of closeness with my family that will help me in the future when I have my own family. I know that I can always count on them when times get tough in college. I believe that without the field work experiences that we have shared, we wouldn’t be as close as we are. The confidence of a good family and the opportunities offered because of my migrant background equip me to face a college education and overcome anything.

In the end, I realize that being a migrant is more of an advantage than a disadvantage. I will go to college the following years because I understand that education is very important to avoid dead-end jobs with uncomfortable working environments, such as field work. I realize that there’s no reason why not to go with so many people helping
us and am encouraged because of how much easier it is now than before. And most important, I know that I'm prepared with what I've learned about my family, life, and the value of what I own to prevail over barriers that may come in college. Knowing that nothing can stop me from achieving my dreams, I am anxious to start my college career and become the person that I want to be. Each summer is filled with situations that motivate me to earn my degree.