

TRANSCRIPT

Multicultural Midwest Oral History Project

Interviewee: Abner Arauza

Primary Interviewer: Muthoni Mwangi

Secondary Interviewer: Tim Volk

When: April 22, 2002, 10:30 am

Where: Multicultural Affairs Office, CMU Building, MSUM

Muthoni: Well, let us know when you are done.

Abner: Whenever you are ready.

M: OK. Could you let us know who you are?

A: My name is Abner Arauza; I'm the Associate Director of Student Support Services and Multicultural Affairs at MSU Moorhead.

M: OK, could you tell us where you first lived and why you moved to the area?

A: First lived.... like my home area?

M: Yeah where you grew up...

A: I'm originally from Crystal City, Texas. And I lived in a number of other areas before coming here, throughout my life... primarily always going back to Crystal City because that was my home area while moving around with my family for work, including the Fargo/Moorhead area.

M: Oh, so that's how you came to come....

A: That's how I knew of ... yes the Fargo/Moorhead area.

M: Ok, and what actually made you make your decision to move here?

A: uh... my de...what made me decide to come here?

M: yeah.

A: uh, college. Uh, I had been going to a community college in South Texas and uh.... I was going to be done there and I was looking for a four-year college to go to and chose Moorhead. Because we would come here over the summers to work in the sugar beet fields. And that's how I knew of Moorhead.

M: What was it like working in the sugar beet fields?

A: Uh... you know looking back at it, it's a lot different than having been right in it. At that time it's a way of life, so it's just like yours. And yours, and yours. You know, you live with it. Uh... whether... whether it's good or bad. You know and sometimes we have some circumstances that we realize are not as um... glamorous, as nice as for other people, but you don't see them as bad either, or worse their just life. And that's how I saw my life at that time. It was a way of making money. We traveled and did sugar beets here, we went to Wisconsin, did cucumbers there, sometimes we would go to south...uh, west Texas to do.. Pick cotton or tomatoes or harvest other vegetables. Uh... as with anyone who moves around, whether you work, move for the military, or work move for work as a migrant, you encounter many new experiences in your life. Some of them good and some of them not. Unlike moving for the military, when you move as a migrant you are seen as a... as a... commodity, you know, you come in and harvest the vegetables, or do whatever it is that you do and then you move on, you know uh... so it's... it's not necessarily a... you don't get a nice warm reception wherever you go.

M: What were some of the adversities you faced when you moved?

A: Ummm... In many areas, not knowing people. You know.... in, in some ways. In other ways it was good. You know, uh.... they... I, I had some good experiences also that I

wouldn't trade for anything else, and that is in... Being exposed to dealing with different kinds of populations. You know, ummm.... not only ethnic groups, but also people from different regions of the United States. Because even among the same ethnic group from different parts of the country, you're gonna find some um... a similarities, in their way of life. You know um.... in some ways, it was an adversity in that at 18 and 16 and 15 or younger you know, it's not as easy to meet people, knowing that you are not on equal level, you know, you are not seen as a peer. You know, you are seen as a migrant that comes in to hoe beets and harvest cucumbers and pick cotton and uh... those things. Um... I think that in one way. The other one is knowing that you were working at the bottom of the ladder. Umm.... there's, there's a... there is probably work and earning your own living. It's probably one of the ways that gives you self-esteem. A positive self image about yourself. And if what you do is at the bottom of all the levels, you know, it's not something that you necessarily like builds you up in great leaps and bounds, you know... and to know that in some areas you are even resented for doing that. You know, umm... it's, it's not the best of circumstances under which you can establish relationships. Umm.... adversities in that if my family was to keep up with the areas where there were jobs for... in the agricultural area, and not so much for myself, because my parents allowed us to finish the school year and then be there in time to start it, but for many of the migrants, uh, they had to leave before school started, I mean before school ended, the school year ended. And didn't return until after the school years had started. Uh... so in some ways although it didn't affect me directly, because I didn't leave early and return late to the school year, uh... being out of sync with... the curriculum. Because when we returned to Texas, the school system um... just assumed that all migrants would come

late, will leave early, so they put all the migrants in a different school. Okay, so it wasn't... we weren't given the same level of education as everyone else. Okay. Uh... never... so, when we go to college, we're not at the same level. Um... never the less, you're still seen as being in the same grade, learning the same material, etcetera. So that when you go for... for GPA, okay uh... in the school, you're... you competing with those who are in the better schools, in the school district. So for example for the National Honor Society, for the honors um.... students that are graduating with honors, you know, you would be competing with those same students. When you are applying for scholarships and admissions into universities, you are also seen as being at the same level as other students, and that wasn't the case. So there is some very obvious obstacles and some that were much more subtle like I just explained.

M: And um... because you went through all those things growing up, how is it that you were able to overcome them and actually go to college?

A: Umm... it's not that uncommon, you know, umm... for, for myself, umm...my parents I would have to say had a lot to do with it. It was just assumed I was gonna go, go to college. I didn't know how or where, you know, but it was just assumed I was gonna go to college. Umm... my parents were of the attitude that we were smart, we were hard working, and um... that so long ...that is we stayed on that, that we would, could reach our goals. But there were obstacles, ummm... that didn't count as far as we were concerned, you know, in fact sometimes when we would come home and complain about discrimination in school, uh... some more serious than others, but nevertheless there was quite a bit of discrimination in the schools that we went to. And when I could come home and... And uh... complain, oh I'm not seen as an equal, I'm not seen as if I'm smart

enough or as smart. And I guess for as long as I live I will remember that. My mom one day asked me well, you know why do you say that? So I said well... you know, they don't see me as being as smart as they do, they don't give me the same opportunities, they don't give me the same credit, they don't give me the same recognition, etcetera, you know. Well, how much smarter do you have to be to be considered an equal? I said two, three times... you know as smart. And she said well, then do it. And uhh... to me, you know that was...I guess a very big lesson in that uhh... you... you...overcome whatever is in front of you, by doing it. Ok and that if other people don't recognize it, and I end up having to do twice as good, because I don't have an equal then, although the other person may only see it as being an equal, that I am actually twice as good and that is to my benefit. You know and that regardless of what anybody says, I know it. Ummm...So if there was something that drove me to do that, I think that it was that my parents just expected that to happen. And as happens among many families that still embrace traditional family values you very often do it as much for yourself as you do it for your family and the family honor. So I too assumed that sooner or later I'd get my college degree.

M: And ... it's not an assumption, that I'm making, but your parents, they didn't have education that you got...

A: No they didn't.

M: So was it really important to them that you got it?

A: It was important to them in terms of.... Setting up opportunities. Ok, my dad had no education. I think he started the first grade and never got beyond that. My mother had like a third grade education. You know, uhh... but they handled their finances well, they

raised a family well, uhh... so... it had nothing to do with their intelligence; it had to do with opportunities. My dad had to go to work, so did my mom. But my mom uh... taught my sisters and I how to read, write, and... to read, write, and speak in English and Spanish by the time we started school. Um... she had taught herself, how to read, write and speak in English and Spanish, both. Uhhh... she used the bible to teach us, uhhh...she played numerous musical instruments, saxophone, all the keyboards, that piano, accordion, organ, she played the guitar; she played the violin, uh... the drums, the trumpet. So it's not as if there was a lack of intelligence or ability, it was lack of opportunities. And that's what their goal was, that we have those opportunities. And they had needed the means in terms of finances or uh... helping us in other ways, uh... to get a college education or to provide... the way by which we could inherit a successful business for example so for them it was getting an education.

M: Ok. Umm...

A: Interestingly enough, my mom got her G.E.D when she was 80-some years old.

M: Wow! That's cool...

A: Which was a few years after the G.E.D Program was introduced, you know but uhh.... my younger sister eventually got her degree also, she was already in maybe her 40's or 50's when she got her degree, so... and again it was partly opportunities or lack of um... lack of them. I myself, I went one semester had to stop out to work, came back, stopped out again, back to school, stopped out. Eventually, I stopped out for years, and then went back and got my degree also. And many people have to do that.

M: So when you stopped out you actually had to go back work, was it to help your family or just to get money for school?

A: Uhh.... no uhh... to pay for school and to support myself.

M: And that was in the farms?

A: Uhh... everywhere. Until I was 21, primarily in agriculture.

M: OK. Um... How is it that you came around to getting your current job right now? I'm mean you... you had to drop out of college and then come back in so I guess that motivated you to keep going. How is it that you went through college and then came to do what you are doing today?

A: Ummm.... There really wasn't a plan. Uhh... my... my first wife and I, we ... and I hadn't gotten my degree yet at that point, uhh... started a business in South Texas in our hometown in Crystal City and were doing very well. Uhh... it was quite a successful business. We got divorced; I won custody of my son, uhh... I and I... I did, and lost the business in the process. Uhh... At that point then, I was looking... I was looking for a job that I... I knew that I could do. And I soon realized that for me to get the job at a business where I wanted, that I needed a college degree and I still needed. And when I was at MSU because I came to school here, I had been working on an individualized degree plan, so for me to st... Try to finish that in South Texas, it seemed like very few of my credits would transfer into a... an established degree program. So I realized that I wouldn't... in order to finish within a year, year and a half or so, that I would need to come back to... it was Moorhead State at the time. That I would have to come back over here... and a... a friend of mine, a very close friend of mine was working here at the time and uh... I contacted her. At the time, umm... it wasn't so much to work here, as much as to come back to school here to get my degree, but to find a job in the... anywhere, to pay for my school and to support myself. And there was a job that was opening here. Uhh...

As it turned out, uhh.... I came here finished out, and the gentleman that was vacating the position uhh... I was hired in his place so it was kinda by accident, rather than anything that was planned.

M: And how have you grown into your position?

A: I really love my position. I... I really love what I do. Umm... I guess that because of my background, uhh.... I cannot... not only empathize and sympathize with what a lot of the students of color go through. But I experienced that extra, umm.... how do you call it? Extra baggage that you have to carry around just because you are a student of color, you know. Umm.... even given the same circumstances, the same background with a white student and a student of color, you know, uhhh...the student of color still experiences more obstacles. Umm... more hardships, less opportunities, you know, umm.... they may... they both may come from very poor families. They both may come from... umm... same kind of background in terms of parents not having an education. You know, but you walk into a room and just physically, you know, you... you're not an equal. Your background may be, but you're not an equal. Uhh... when you move around from school to school as a migrant, you know there is many things that you've missed consequently, you're not as academically prepared. So it's easy for me to see that, because I, I went through that myself. And while uhh... that is becoming less and less common because at this area we have fewer and fewer migrants coming each year due to advances in the technology of farming. You know, uhh... it gives me an opportunity to.... even out the playing fields... so to speak and I know that that's a cliché but that's the only thing that I can think of right now even out the playing field a little bit for some of the students by creating... some opportunities... support services that would help the student adjust and

get a running start. Ok... uhh... I've grown through experience. Uhh.... there... there was no training provided in this position. Basically I was given a desk, a chair and we expect you to recruit and graduate students. That was basically it. That was the training and Umm... So I've learned mainly through experience, umm... colleagues, umm... attending conferences, workshops, and then just finding my way through. You know.... I think that among all of those, I would probably have to give as much credit as to anything else, having a close relationship with the students. In that uhh... I work very hard at... keeping the channels open for communication, so that they tell me what they need. And being as responsive to their needs as I can.

M: And has that helped? Have many students come through the program?

A: Uhh... well, when I came here, we had umm... eleven, I think I remember correctly, eleven Latino students and about the same number of African American students, umm... just a few more than that Asian American and about forty-some or fifty-some Native American Students. Currently we have about eighty uhh... Latino and Asian students, and just a few less than that Native American and forty-some African American. So it's grown.

M: A big improvement.

A: Yeah...

M: A very big improvement.

A: And just as importantly is that we're graduating them.

M: I guess that's the most important point... part of it.

A: Sure

M: Umm... so by bringing in Latino students and Af...

A: Turn it on. Oh it started again.

M: Oh yeah, it's voice activated.

M: Put it on high?

T: It should be running all the time now.

A: OK

M: Ok, How have you gotten them involved in the community? Because I know they go to school but to have the full college experience you have to be involved in the community somehow. How have you been able to do that?

A: Well I, I guess part of it is that, that's been my, my way of life, I've always been involved in the community wherever I've lived. So when I came here it was just natural, a natural thing for me to do, to seek out involvement in the community. Uhh... whether it be social issues or housing issues, or work issues, or uhh... educational issues, you know. Uhhh... through organizations, umm, or as an individual through committee work, so definitely different ways.

M: What changes have you seen in the Fargo Moorhead area since you started coming here with your parents to work and now that you are actually living and working here?

A: In... reference to what?

M: To way of life, the way they treat newcomers, your parents and everybody. What changes have you seen since?

A: Well that's difficult to answer, because if we compare when I used to come as a migrant to now... it's an entirely different setting. At that time it was primarily migrants that were resettling. Now it's not only migrants, uhh... and it's not even just laborers, by that I'm talking about for example, one area in which, uhh... the labor market is changing,

I realize that we don't have as many migrants coming to the area and we don't as far as working in the fields is concerned. Sugar beets for example. However, we still have... if the definition of migrant is somebody comes here to work, not to resettle and then returns to a home area, you know, we still have a lot of that. But it's not as much in the sugar beet fields anymore. Now they come in and work seasonally to the turkey plants, beef, pork, snowmobiles, farm equipment manufacturers, you know, so there is different areas. So we still have that population... but it's not... it's not seen as... it's not seen as the same kind of population. And maybe to understand it, the best way to explain it is, you know when we came to work in the sugar beet fields, we'd be out in the sugar beet fields five, six in the morning. You know, that means we got up at about four forty five, five in the morning, got dressed, had breakfast, we were already moving that hoe in the sugar beet fields by six in the morning. Six thirty or seven in the evening, we were just stopping, to come home ok. Umm... now you're out in an open field, its ploughed land, there's winds, there's sweat, there's dirt. Guess what we looked like? We were covered with dirt. We were dirty! You know, we still had to go to the grocery store sometimes and had like maybe an hour before closing time, thirty minutes before closing time. Some of the migrant camps didn't even have showers. If you wanted to shower before going to the... get the grocery store, you had to go home, heat up water, set up the... tub and bathe in there before you... so guess what? Most people didn't do that; they went to the grocery store as dirty as they came off of that field. You know. And... the people in town didn't look at it as very good. Ok. Now if I'm working in a turkey plant or some place, and I live in an apartment, I can either go home and take a quick shower or even if I go to the grocery store the way I come off of work, at least I'm not full of dirt and muddy and

sweaty as before so it's a different situation, it's a different setting. Ok? We have to take that into consideration when you talk well, how are you received then versus now. It's a different situation. You know. Umm... Also then versus now, as I started to say a while ago, primarily everybody resettling in the area was somebody off of the migrant stream. Now there are many who come as professionals, you know or to go to college. And professionals anywhere from the banking industry, business area, umm... high-tech stuff in the computer fields. Uh, doctors, nurses, teachers, professors. You know they get a different reception than the migrant that I just described from twenty, thirty years ago. So we're not making an even comparison if the question is how were you received then, how are you received now? Umm... I imagine that because of the focus on the benefits of a multicultural society, that there may be some attitude changes also. So...it's a different situation.

M: Ok

A: And it's not.... I guess, it's not a fair comparison to... to...

M: Compare because it's so different now than...

A: Yeah

M: OK. Umm... I think it was in the year 2000, there was something that happened in the Romkey Park area. Could you tell us a little about what happened and how it affected you?

A: Umm... that's... that's a good question. Umm... but also not a good one in that I don't know what happened. You know, it wasn't something that... it was like the community was involved. It was somebody that was drunk, and his buddies tried to defend him when the cops came, umm.... to arrest this person for whatever reason. You know and a fight

broke out. It wasn't a community thing as it was put in... explained in the Forum. How did it affect me? I think that's just the... the part of the question that's good because unfairly and unfortunately it does affect all of us. You know, ummm... and unfortunately although we may not see it that way, it affects all of us on both sides of the skin color. Ok it affects me because I'm thrown in with a bunch of hoodlums, and I'm not one. And it affects the other side of the skin color, because I think that it lowers the humanity that we are striving for. You know, in that how they see me also changes. Ummm....

Unfortunately it does affect all of us. As far as how I let it affect me? I didn't let it affect me any. I'm still who I am. And I'm trying to pass that on to my children. Umm... so I would say that it didn't affect them either, in terms of their... their circle of friends and cont... and other contacts like in school...

How does it affect us in the greater community? And that's what I was referring to a little while ago, that unfortunately people do look at us as all being lumped into one. You know. Umm.... While in it may be an unfair view, nevertheless it does happen.

M: Do you feel that um... the whole issue was treated with the respect it needed or there was some discrepancies?

A: I feel... all you got to do is read the articles and I think it becomes very clear that it wasn't. It was seen as a Hispanic riot (chuckles). You know, apparently we're very... umm... what? We're very protected in this community. We don't know what our right is to start with. Uhh... and the other part like I said, it had nothing to do with the community. It was a few drunks and hoodlums you know.

M: Just like every community has them, it just happened that it was blown out of proportion?

A: Correct, and of every color... It's kind of interesting though if I may inject this, during the Olympics, you know, now, that one was a huge thing. That one was kind of a riot... or that was a riot, and you may have read it in the news. It was a group of white people that rioted, rioted because they were closing down the beer concession places and they weren't selling them any more beer. I don't know if you read about it in the news. You know, it was treated as something funny in the... in the news. Why was that funny and this was a dangerous situation? You know, it was no different. You know....

M: Does that make you really angry?

A: At one level. At another level.... I'm not gonna waste that... all of that negative anger in my life on something that I really can't change. You know, uhhh... that doesn't mean that I'm going to start... stop trying to change things. That's why I get involved in the community. But uhh... it's not.... it's nothing that is going to make a 180-degree turn. You know, in the next, even in the next year or two. You know, we're dealing with human nature that will always be there. There will always be some other people that will jump to conclusions and make uhh... decisions about who I am, based on someone else. You know. Ummm.... Personally, Ummm.... as I said, at one level it makes me angry. At another level I think it makes me more sad for all of us. Regardless of the color. As I said a while ago. It does affect us all. Umm.... I'm sure we've all heard the term you know, I'm coming down to s... somebody else's level. You know. And that's what we do when we participate in something like that. You know... I... I'm not gonna judge you, him or him by what I read bout somebody else in... in the news. You know, umm... who's been in the news lately? Crime, Gaede that guy that killed somebody in Wisconsin [*reference to recent murder case in area*]. Came over here, stole money, I don't... I don't judge

white people by him. You know. Why should I be judged by what... what 3 or 4 or 5, 6 guys at Romkey Park did? I don't even drink, or smoke, or have ever done drugs. You know... It's not even the same population.

M: And how has your involvement... how do you feel your involvement in the community is going to change the way Latinos are viewed?

A: I would hope that where the opportunity comes from, is in opportunity. That that's where the change comes. In creating opportunities. Umm... I think that first and foremost, we are humans. And as humans we are the same thing. To do better than my mom and dad did and to create a situation where my children are gonna do better than I have done. You know. Ummm... We want some comforts, hopefully some luxuries. You know, and it's no different than anybody else's. And if we create opportunities for that, I think that that's where it makes it easier to have interaction, and to have good relationships with people of all colors in our community. Excuse me... The hope is always there that some things will change in attitude and how we see things and what makes us ummm... form prejudices, and how they are formed. And we always strive for that. And we do see some advances. But each new generation brings a new group of those who want to interact with everyone in a civil a manner as possible, and there is that group that for whatever reasons they may have you know, don't and are at the opposite end of the spectrum. You know. So my hope that in being involved in the community would be to create situations, or to create opportunities for all. Umm... to reach our goals.

M: Could you tell us a little about your radio program?

A: Well, umm.... my individualized degree plan included mass communications.

Umm...that's something I wanted to do. And I have been involved with mass

communications for many years. When I came here in 88 to... to stay, Umm... there was no newspaper, there was no newsletter, there were no TV shows, there were... not even on cable. There's not even... there wasn't and still isn't even a column dedicated to the Latino community in the local newspaper. There were no radio programs. There were some people that would do radio seasonally, during the summer and had been doing that for years, but there was nothing that was on going throughout the year. And primarily what had been done before was music and announcements of services or events or something like that. Ummm... And I wanted to do more than that, and I wanted to do something that was permanent, year round. Umm... and the program... the concept's still the same. That music, and everybody understands music, you know, whether we understand the words or not, you know, we all understand music and react to it. Ummm.... sometimes even when it's not our choice of music, you know we still react to it and so for the Latino community, there was an attraction. You know, as well as for the non-Latino community, but the other part, the more important part of the radio program, is what I feel is an educational part of it. And it's interwoven with the music, and umm... it's not like a lecture from a class, because we do it in different ways. Simply by sometimes by talking about news, sometimes by interpreting trends, analyzing legislature, ummm.... talking about a... a biographical profile of an outstanding Latino. Individual or group. Umm... talking about historical capsules of special dates in Latino culture, umm, interviews, book reviews, talking about movies. Talking about the songs and the lyrics, and they style of music and why and all those things. Umm.... we try to mix it all up so that, I guess if we were gonna describe it, it's a window to our culture. More specifically it is a review of what's happening Latino wise. Whether it's new, and

we don't always have news. Sometimes 2, 3 weeks go by, we don't have news. You know, but sometimes the news bring a special message or a special view and we put it in there. And that's what the radio program is. I... I... It's.... I see an entertainment component in there, we deliberately keep it in there. But then there's and educational component also. And if it weren't for that, I wouldn't be doing it anymore. Anybody can get a pile of cd's and play them on the air. We could put on a computer or they could download it from the computer and do music. To me that's not the point, it's the sharing and it's the educating.

M: And how does the Latino community here celebrate their culture? What do you... how do you get together and do that?

A: Well, umm... our community is actually really... mild, in terms of formal celebrations. But see you have to understand that, when you ask the question, how do you celebrate your culture, you're talking about maybe special events. Ok. And there is a certain amount of that although not very much. But everyday we live the culture, you know, and we may not see it as celebrating our culture, that's what we do everyday. You know, just like you do and everybody in this room does. Whether you are celebrating the culture of your family, or rather living the culture of your family or your ethnicity, or the region or the cultural farm kid, you know, of a farmer. You know it's not like you're celebrating it, you're living it. Ok. And that's what we do. Umm... If ... if that is your question then what we're talking about is simply interacting with other Latinos in our community. And eating what we love to eat and listening to the music that we love to listen to and those sorts of things. Some people are... are putting cable strictly for the Spanish TV channels that they can pick up and the music and those sorts of things. In terms of celebrating

special days, umm.... some of them are celebrated through the Catholic Church because they are tied to the Catholic Church. Among Latinos umm... religion is... umm, deeply interwoven with the culture. You may never go to church, you know, but if I go to your house, you'll probably have a saint up somewhere or you'll do the sign of the cross before eating, or your language will reflect umm... a faith in God. Religion is deeply interwoven in the culture. Umm... so the Catholic Church for example, La Virgen de Guadalupe celebration, early... in early December, they do that. Uhh.... in Easter, also the cross March, that's celebrated. So there's... and there's others. Outside of there some of the celebration is done through the university. Although sometimes as happens with other cultures also we don't do it right on the date. For example for us to celebrate some Mexican holidays, would be Cinco de Mayo, Diez y seis de Septiembre, Diez y seis de Septiembre would be the Independence Day for... from Spain of... for Mexico. Umm... so those would be days that would be celebrated, all those who want to celebrate special days. Umm.... Here for example Cinco de Mayo, we don't celebrate it on campus, we're taking finals, you know, nobody wants to be tied up celebrating anything, other than getting a good grade on your final. So umm... and there's nothing that happens in the community. Maybe a band will come in and have a dance and that will be it. Normally in South Texas for example, there would be parades, there would be formal dinners, there would be dances, there would be speeches just like 4th of July around here. You know, umm... Our culture stays alive because of our taking and living it.

M: The food and the clothes... Do people actually put on the clothes? I haven't seen...

A: Put on the what?

M: The Mexican outfits, the Latino outfits, or is it just for special occasions?

A: Yeah, special occasions.

M: Ok... umm do you have any questions? Let me see... I think I covered most everything. Oh yeah, what goals, what are your goals for the Latino community?

A: Well I don't. I would have to be very presumptuous of who I am in this community to have goals for my community. Umm... I do... I am involved very much in the community and I do support a lot of what's going on in the community. But I think that anyone that is involved in the community, umm.... if you're involved for yourself, then you have goals. If you are involved for the community, then I think that you have to be very responsive to what the community wants. And that's umm... that's my level of involvement. More what the community would like. As far... if you're asking me about goals... about the comm... . . . related to the community that affect me, well then I stay involved because, as I said earlier, my goals are probably no different than anybody else's. I want to create a world that's better for my children, that... than the one that I lived in. Create more opportunities for my children, than the ones that I had. Create.... a world in which they can have a better life, than the one that I did. Umm... And I think that if I was to have some goals, it would be that in general. Specifically because of where we are and because there is still quite a bit of prejudice in the community. Would have to be that we create an environment where we see each other as individuals. Than a Mexican 13 year old girl which my daughter is, or an Asian, or an African American. You know.... uhh.... I don't know if that's gonna happen.

M: What does the Midwest mean to you?

A: What does the Midwest mean to me? Geographically or?

M: Geographically, personally....

A: Geographically, well, the middle part of the United States. Other than that, it's where I live. You know, umm.... As far as the culture, or opportunities or anything else that has to do with the Midwest, I have to say that for myself and... And I maybe different than other people, but I feel comfortable wherever I live. And I'm either going to find or create opportunities for myself and for my family wherever I live. It just so happens that I live in the Midwest. You know, and uhh.... whether anybody likes me or not, I still live here. I am still going to be happy here, I am still going to work hard at creating opportunities for my family. Uhhh... I think that would be my answer to that question.

M: Well, I think that's all I had... Thank you so much for the time you've given us.

A: Sure

M: I really, really appreciate it.

A: Well, good luck with your project!