

BACK IN THE USA

Young student who was born in the United States but raised in Mexico gets boost from ESL classes at Lincoln Unified Adult School

By Jacob Peterson

Johana Cruz was born in Oakland, but her family moved to Mexico when she was just 4 years old. They returned to the United States last year when she was 17 years old and—though she knew some English from movies and music—she realized she'd need to improve her language skills. She learned about English as a second language (ESL) classes at Lincoln Unified Adult School from a cousin, and decided it was a good place to begin her educational journey.

"I decided to start adult school because I wanted to learn English more," Cruz, now 18, said. "I also couldn't start college yet because I wasn't a resident of California."

Cruz says she hopes improving her skills with the language will enable her to pursue a career in the healthcare industry. She credits her cousin with more than just telling her about ESL classes at the school, but for helping her with enrollment and following through with her classes.

"I entered very confused, without understanding almost anything," Cruz remembers. "So she was a big help for me."

Cruz says taking the courses has helped her feel a lot more confident in her overall communication skills.

"Thanks to classes and practice, I'm able to do many things so simply that before I couldn't," Cruz says, "like ordering food, going shopping or going to the gym and asking for help."

Cruz spoke highly of the program, saying her teacher not only helped with her communication skills, but also with helping her figure out what she wanted to do in the future.

"She told me about the [San Joaquin Delta] College and how to apply because I wanted to go to college the next semester," Cruz remembers. "She was very helpful in finding opportunities."

Both San Joaquin Delta College and Lincoln Unified Adult School are mem-



Johana Cruz intends to pursue a career in the medical field after sharpening her English skills at Lincoln Unified Adult School. Photo courtesy of Johana Cruz

bers of the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium, a partnership of adult education providers aimed at improving adult education in the region by coordinating resources, programs, and services to help adult learners achieve career, academic, and personal success.

Cruz also says the classroom setting was very supportive of her and the other students, making it easier to learn without feeling overly self-conscious.

"The adult school helped me a lot to trust myself and learn from my mistakes," Cruz says. "With my teacher and my classmates, communicating with them was easy for me."

Cruz currently plans to go to college and study for a career as a nursing assistant, confident her new English skills will help her along the way. She says she definitely recommends others in a similar situation seek out ESL programs like those offered

at the Lincoln Unified Adult School.

"This program helped me with a better understanding of the English language," Cruz says. "And now that I know more than before and I feel proud about it."



**SAN JOAQUIN
Adult
Education
CONSORTIUM**

For more information about English as a second language and other programs at Lincoln Unified Adult School, visit lincolnadulthoodschool.lusd.net/. To learn about more adult education opportunities in the area, visit the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium's website at sjadulthood.org.