

STOCKTONSpeaks!

RICARDO ANTONIO CUEVAS

Between 1910 and 1930, over one million Mexicans (almost 10% of the population of Mexico) migrated to the United States to seek a better life. Still today, the dream of achieving a better life continues to motivate people to take this hazardous journey. Each day, hundreds of Mexican men, women, and children risk their lives crossing the border into the United States. They travel through the cold mountains, the blistering deserts, and the dense valleys. Many of these immigrants have come to the United States in search of employment in fields ranging from industry to agriculture.

Like these others, the dream of the Cuevas family for a new life in the United States, outweighed the danger of the journey. Ricardo Cuevas' father came from Mexico at age 13. Six years later, his mother, at age 20, made the journey. A year later, Mr. and Mrs. Cuevas were married. Ricardo's parents moved to Stockton to begin their lives together and to start a family. Ricardo was actually born in Napa, California but still calls Stockton home. He has one sister and two brothers.

Ricardo's mother was a stay-at-home mom who took great care of the family. Growing up, Ricardo didn't see much of his father. His father had been a farmer, but had changed his career to become a drug addiction counselor. It was a difficult, emotionally trying job. Often Ricardo and his mother would have to console his father after a particularly trying day working with clients in deep trouble.

Though Ricardo would have liked to have seen more of his father, the separation did not keep his family from being close. They attended Mass as a family and participated in Ricardo's Baptism, first Communion and Confirmation.

Ricardo and his father have also grown close through a shared passion for track and field. They converse regularly about conditioning and practicing, as

well as running strategies and team bonding. His father is fully supportive of Ricardo's participation on the Delta College track team. While Ricardo practices religiously, he maintains a good grade point average. This dedication to both school and running has shown Mr. Cuevas that his son is even now a successful individual and athlete.

Growing up in a Mexican culture, Ricardo heard about the many obstacles his parents had to overcome to provide the foundation for the life he now enjoys. His parents' strength and successes have made him realize the importance of education and the privilege of being able to attend school. Because of his upbringing, Ricardo strives to excel.

He is beginning his pursuit of a college degree with the realization that if he is successful, he will be the first member of his immediate family to graduate and that this achievement would mark his transition into adulthood. He is on his own, pursuing his own goals, working to make his life better in the hope that one day, he can provide his children with as much or more than he was given. Ricardo feels lucky to have a family who loves and supports him. Unlike many of his friends who have made poor decisions, Ricardo has used the strength and support of his family to better his life and honor his family name.

Over the years, Ricardo has based many decisions on a piece of advice his father gave him: "Follow your heart and never give up on anything you might be striving for." As he continues in his own journey towards manhood, Ricardo knows that the coaching he's received from his father and family will keep him running in the right direction.

Interviewer: Tanya Moreno

Author: Brandon Stevens

Ethnic Group: Mexican American

Generation: Youth