

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Young Photographer's Alliance Honorable Mention



ALEX SANCHEZ

Photography
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I am the son of a United States Army soldier and veteran. Moving from place to place and living through many moments in my life without my father has been extremely difficult. I have moved and traveled to over six states, and that has showed me that there are different people out there. I have learned about many cultures and how to embrace diversity.

So many years I can remember important moments – an educational milestone, birthday or holiday – without my father present. I understood he was gone serving America and keeping his promise to keep our country safe. Many people say that freedom is not free and I know firsthand what the sacrifices of freedom really mean.

My father was gone when serving in Desert Storm, Korea, Saudi Arabia and Iraqi Freedom. I had to learn how to be there for my mother and sister and be the man in the family. It was hard. I was still young and did not know what to make of the situation. However, when the time came for him to come home, it was like meeting a new person. The conversations were awkward at first, but after a while I could not be happier. The thoughts of him being in a warzone were gone and were replaced



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with ones of love, support and knowing that he will always be there for me. Then, as if nothing before ever happened, he leaves for another deployment. The thing I feared the most was happening, the cycle started all over again.

Not having a father around made me frustrated, stressed and overwhelmed with all the issues I had to face. Art was my peaceful escape from this madness. It is what kept my mind from the thought that my father was out in a dangerous warzone and I might never see him again. I drew and painted to show what I was really feeling. I discovered a passion for photography. It allowed me show others my view and takes on life, and most importantly express myself. When I am behind the lens I am in my own world, which allows the stress and distress to temporarily go away. It allows me to focus both emotionally and physically on the image I'm about to capture and everything else seems to fade in the background.

In the future I plan to share the experiences I have faced, and spread the word of how the life of being a military child can be, both the ups and downs. Not everyone can experience having a member of the United States Military in their family, and they are unaware of what families like mine go through. It is my mission to spread the emotion and experiences through my artwork. Some things as simple as viewing the life of these people can change the community, such as more troop support, donations and family support groups. However, even though my experiences have been somewhat of an obstacle, it has taught me how to cope with situations, shaped me into the person I am today, and most importantly introduced me to the world of art.

