

Division I

3rd Place

Mark Keppel School

Jacqueline Martinez, 8th grade

What it means to be a Latino in Los Angeles County.

I think that much is expected when you are a Latino or some kind of Spanish decent. My grandparents came here for the American dream, to prosper. After many hardships, pain and suffering... they made it! They have now given us the opportunity to get an education and become something great!

There are many Latinos in high places of government. For example: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. He is truly a magnificent person! With his guidance, we, Latinos, who have low income have been able to afford housing. In addition, the crime rate has fallen, so there isn't as much violence.

My dad and grandfather says, "We are the backbone of this country, we are educators, doctors, lawyers, gardeners, crop pickers, we work in warehouses, and are janitors. We are the people who like to get our hands dirty, and be in the thick of it all, and are consumers. We all like our fiestas and siestas (also known as snoozing)."

There are a lot of us here in Los Angeles. There are also numerous Latino restaurants, and many people come from different places to eat the delicious food like: beans, rice, tamales, tacos, arroz con leche, and Latino candies. There are lots of popular songs that have been adopted from Latinos as well. For example: mariachi bands, salsa, and cultural dances. Even at school, some announcements, permission slips, and emergency forms have a Spanish side! This is incredible to me.

Although, there are still some people who dislike us. They don't like the thought of us being their equal, but I still believe that I belong in Los Angeles. This is my home! No one can tell me otherwise!