

Zayra is the second oldest daughter in a family of four girls. There were many hardships when Zayra was growing up. Zayra and her sisters were raised primarily by her mother due to her father's instability. Zayra's mother had suffered a childhood accident which resulted in permanent visual disability and therefore she could not drive. During Zayra's childhood her father moved from job to job and money was tight. The family also needed to help other family members in Mexico.

When Zayra was a teen her mother did not put emphasis on the importance of education. Just passing was acceptable. Zayra admits that she was a troubled teen and became pregnant. She gave birth to her first son when she was 18. When her son was a year and a half old she and her child's father divorced. At that point Zayra realized the importance of going back to school and getting a good education so that she could get a stable job. She had a strong motivation to help not only herself and her son, but the rest of the family.

Zayra met with a guidance counselor and looked at a variety of options for education and employment. Together they decided on a path to a career in nursing. With a shortage of nurses, Zayra believed nursing would provide steady employment so she could support her family. While she liked the idea of nursing as a career, she became passionate about it when her father suffered a stroke. She was inspired and influenced by a traveling nurse who came to the home to provide care for her father. With her father suffering from the aftermath of a stroke and her mother's inability to drive, much of the family's day to day care, including that of her younger sisters, fell on Zayra.

Zayra enthusiastically embraced her education goals with a focus on nursing. When she became pregnant with her second child, it put her education and nursing degree in jeopardy. After an extremely difficult pregnancy, Zayra got herself back on track, completed her AA in nursing, and in May, 2016 with the help of a Live Your Dream cash award from Soroptimist International of San Diego, entered the BA program in nursing at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Today Zayra has her nursing license and is employed at Sharp Hospital Chula Vista in the "new graduate residency" program while she continues her path towards her Bachelor's Degree. She also volunteers in the "Healing Touch" Program and has her level 2 certification. Zayra is an active member of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses.

Zayra told us she is very happy to share her journey. She believes in the "power of the story". The cash award Zayra received helped pay her first semester tuition and books at Point Loma Nazarene University. She is focused on specializing in the field of Cardiology and hopes to be an inspiration to her younger sisters, her sons, and young women in her community so that they too may live their dreams.