

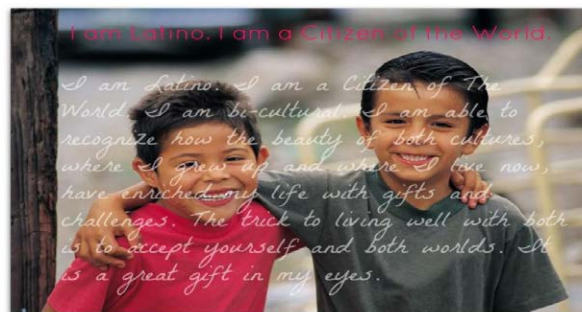


A Family For Every Child Diversity



"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common."

"I am a citizen of the world and my nationality is goodwill"- Socrates



Between Two Worlds: Cross Culture

Ethnic children who are adopted into Caucasian homes or children who have come from immigrant families, often times feel a loss of self-identity. The questions that often come to their mind are "Who am I and where do I fit in?" Since their perception of the world is quite different than their parents, anxiety is placed on the child of not being able "to fit in." Children in this predicament ask these questions due to their separation and or lack of better understanding their own cultural influences.

Western society's norms, values and beliefs are placed in front of these children and can cause them confusion of whom to conform to. Not only that, but they often question their own cultural influences and sometimes lose touch with their own cultural norms, values and beliefs. Often times this is a stressful position to be placed into, as most children gravitate to what their surroundings are and what the "normal" expectations are to abide by. This is better known as **Cross Culture**; combining, pertaining to or contrasting two or more cultures groups into

one's life.

Although it seems simple enough to incorporate both cultural influences, there are times where this is not so easy to achieve as families are often times not educated properly about what to expect from the ethnic child they are adopting or fostering. Simple education of their own cultural norms, values and beliefs can go a long way. Exposure to their culture through support groups, events and functions can give them a sense of belonging and give them an experience of "feel comfortable" instead of feeling like the "odd one out". Better understanding of the obstacles these children face and how crucial it is to keep their own personal cultural influences intact can help a family and the child feel more comfortable about what the child may be experiencing and how to better help them find their true identity.



Coconut's, Oreo's and Banana's, Oh My!

Ethnic Children Growing Up in Western Culture: The Trials and Tribulations

I am a first generation adult. My family came to the states for a better life and to flee from those who wanted to murder my mother. I was absorbed by Western Culture. I was thrown into Western culture to make sure I "fit in." Western culture was all I knew. What I have learned throughout my life is that I am much more than my Western Culture and I have other influences that help mold me into the person I am today.

I would be lying if I were to tell you that I never was called a racial slur during my childhood and into my adulthood. When I was younger, I don't think that I paid much attention to the kids that called me "Coconut". I remember at the age of 7 years old thinking, why are they saying that? So of course, I asked my mom what these statements meant and to my surprise she never really went into much detail, but merely said "they are making fun of you because you are different, just ignore them and keep being you because you are very special and they know it." So that's

what I did.

I ignored it until I couldn't anymore. I think I began to notice the way I was approached, who my friend group was and how people thought of me when I went in to middle school. There would never be a week that I wouldn't hear something from my friends or teachers regarding my race and culture. I remember one teacher in fact that worked with me independently to make sure I did well in his class because "I don't want you to end up pregnant at 15." Clearly his assumption of Hispanic females wasn't very high.

I remember numerous times getting on the honor roll and attending different clubs within the school in order to "find myself" among everyone I was around. I didn't really have an outlet to connect with many Hispanic kids at school so my friend group became primarily Caucasian. I connected with this group. They had the same future goals of attending college, doing well in school and their values and interests were the same as mine. I thought nothing of my friend group, until others pointed it out to me.

I had a huge reality check when I met Hispanic students in high school. I remember being locked in the bathroom by a group of girls saying "You think your white, huh? You think you better than us? You're just a coconut, you betrayed your kind!" I never thought that I was "Caucasian". I never thought I "betrayed my kind" and I never thought that I was doing anything wrong. I didn't take into account that I was different than most other Hispanic students.

I was allotted a slew of privileges than most. I had mentors of my own that my family acquired through church and helped instill key life skills, attitudes and beliefs that I still carry with me today. They made sure I had everything I needed and made sure that I wouldn't get into trouble. Even though I didn't think I betrayed my kind, I had. Western culture over dominated my own. As hurtful as that moment was for me it was an eye opener at the least. It helped me realize that even if my life differs than my cultural group, I need to place all my cultural influences into my life and not lose one or the other. This has shaped me into the person I am today.

I am Mexican American and I am proud!
Soy orgullosa de ser Chicana!

Join us in support of our fifth annual 'Home for the Holidays' our Winter Wonderland themed Auction. This night consists of dinner, auction packages both

*large and small, our famous desert dash, and a beautiful holiday celebration. This worthwhile event benefits foster children who are searching to find their forever families and will be held on **November 13, 2014 at the Valley River Inn**. We would love for you to join us in making a difference in the lives of children in our community who do not have a permanent family.*



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