

Nickole Livas is the proud daughter of Greek and Mexican immigrants; she is the youngest of three siblings and a first-generation college graduate. Her parents met in Tijuana, Baja California, where she was raised. She never thought she would go to college but that is where MANA de San Diego's Hermanitas Youth Leadership Mentor Program and family friend, Norma Jasso stepped in.



When Nickole was in middle school, Norma Jasso, a family friend whom Nickole refers to as Tia, let her know about the Hermanitas program. Nickole went ahead and applied to become an Hermanita and began her journey to become "college ready." Due to personal reasons, her involvement with Hermanitas was very off and on so she wasn't able to form a strong bond with her mentor, however her Tia, Norma was always there for her. "It was helpful because I never thought I would go to college and Hermanitas encouraged me to apply to a community college which allowed me to find my passion...When the time came to transfer, I remember my Tia [Norma] going with me on the tour and helping me to fill out applications," says Nickole.

If Hermanitas hadn't been there she would not have known about the various ways to pay for college as she didn't qualify for financial aid. Throughout Nickole's education, she was able to find a connection to her mom's work, as she runs a senior home in Tijuana, and her experience with her father's passing when she was younger. Being able to attend community college before committing to a four-year university allowed her to find her passion in geriatrics and neuropsychology.

Nickole loves helping others and she sees herself becoming a mentor herself in the future and staying connected with MANA de San Diego. Her next steps will be to go back to school to become a clinical psychologist. In the meantime, she is looking for opportunities to gain experience and exposure in the field of psychology. She hopes that being able to experience other areas of psychology will better prepare her for her goal of opening up a nursing home or assisted living facility in the future.

Can you help Nickole find new opportunities? If so, please reach out to manasd@manasd.org and we will get you in touch with Nickole.