

The American Dream

By Kaleigh Peat



Kaleigh Peat was born in the small town of Kalamazoo, Michigan; at the age of four her family moved south to Florida where she has spent the majority of her life. Moving around the country became a typical thing for Kaleigh in her early years, and impacted her life dramatically. In her essay Kaleigh will explain just what in her life made her the way she is today.



“Moving isn’t just about packing boxes, Changing mailing addresses and re-hanging pictures on new walls. Often, moving is a major- sometime jarring- emotional experience, associated with a significant life change.”(Berry, 2007) Every place I moved impacted my life in a different way. I don’t remember my first years in Michigan, but it still impacted my life even today.

I was born in Michigan and still have many family members there. Because of this I feel a sense of closeness and pride in the state. When I was around four my parents decided to move south; they moved us to the small town of Punta Gorda, Florida. Three years later when I was in third grade I was moved to Stewart, Florida for six months. My family then moved back to the same house in Punta Gorda, and I attended the same school.

Two years later in fifth grade I was torn away from close friends at the time and moved back up to another small town in Michigan known as Birmingham. For the first few months in Birmingham I protested the move and began to get bad grades and didn't really start to make friends until the beginning of sixth grade, where once again I began to make close friends. Again I was ripped away from what was beginning to feel comfortable; but I was beginning to get used to this moving, and constant change in my life. Yet at each location we moved to I still made good friends, knowing the possibility of moving was always there.

Our next move was to Scottsdale, Arizona. This move was one of the most dramatic. I got used to Scottsdale fairly easy, and ended up making friends that I still communicate with today. Within six months I got the dreadful news, were moving again but this time to Palm Harbor, Florida. Within a month I was registered in Carwise Middle school, and once again began making friendships I figured wouldn't last long. In the end, I was right.

At the end of seventh grade I was moved back to Punta Gorda with my brother and dad. I started school at Punta Gorda Middle and eventually made friends. Now that I sit here and look back on this experience I realize how it has impacted my life. It has definitely made me more of an open, down to earth, an overall a person who takes change quite easily.

In each place I lived there were always different people, landscape, experiences, and issues. But being exposed to those differences added a little more variety to my life, and opened up my eyes to different races, ethnicities, and family styles. Moving does impact a person's life dramatically, but not always in a bad way.

I relate these experiences to socialization, which refers to a lifelong process of learning how to participate with his or her society. This can lead to the way an individual thinks, their morals, and how they communicate. All of the places I moved helped shape the person I am

today. “School-aged children have more of a difficult time adjusting to parental divorce than younger or older children.” (Amato, 1994)

Growing up my mother and father were always off and on. Meaning they were married than divorced, but started dating again. For three or four years in Elementary school I lived with my brother and dad, and sometimes my dad’s girlfriend. My mom moved back to Michigan, and every now and again my brother and I would fly there to visit her. The distance between us made our relationship a lot stronger. Being the only female in my Florida house caused me to grow up a lot faster. Even today people tell me I act more mature than my age, and that’s because I grew up caring for my brother at times.

Eventually my parents got back together, which didn’t last very long. In seventh grade when we were living in Palm Harbor they re-separated. For a while my brother lived with my dad in Punta Gorda while I stayed with my mom, but the summer of seventh grade I was forced to move back to Punta Gorda with my brother and dad. This again strengthened the relationship I had with my mom. I relate this experience to family role; certain families have roles that each member plays. At times I was the mom, and at times a sister, but when a member of the family is away it is right for one of the members to fill in.

I have gone through a lot in my life but this this felt like the worst, I was finally happy and hoping not to move again each time, but in the end it changed my life, maybe for the better. Change is a good thing in life. Not all people can deal with change well, but I have learned that with practice it can become quite normal. All in all, these experiences impacted my life, sometimes for the worst, but all in all for the best. They have made me who I am – Kaleigh Peat.

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