



LEE, KAO KIA

Kao Kia is a sophomore at D.C. Everest Senior High School. She plans to attend college to become a fashion designer; however, she has a roadblock. Her parents' plan for her future is different than what she plans it to be.

I'm 15 years old. I was born on July 5, 1989 in Thailand. There are nine people in my family and we have been living in the USA for ten years, I think. I usually speak Hmong at home so my parents can understand, but at school I speak mostly English because everyone speaks English. I enjoy swimming, jumping rope, and riding bikes.

What do you think about gangs and have you ever been asked to join one?

I think that they are bad and irresponsible. Gangs say they're your family, but when you want to leave they beat you up. I've never been asked to join a gang, but they are giving the Hmong a bad reputation. People think we're all in gangs, but we're not.

What do you think about drugs and alcohol?

I think that they mess up your brain and make you do things that you will regret later on in life.

Have you ever been pressured to do any of those things? If yes, how did you respond?

I've never been pressured to do any of those things, though I have been pressured to do many other things by my friends and family.

What is your parents' expectation for you?

They want me to go to college and be a doctor, but I don't want to be a doctor. I want to be a fashion designer. My parents have a dream for each of us, but we'll never be able to be what they want us to become.

How do you feel about being a Hmong girl?

I feel great, because being a Hmong girl to me means freedom. Personally I have a lot of freedom just as long as I don't go overboard. I was born a Hmong girl, so I enjoy being a Hmong girl.

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What do you want others to know about the Hmong people?

It's hard to explain. It's just that when you say you know about the Hmong people, you can never really know everything about the Hmong people. I want kids in the future to listen to your parents and don't do something that you are going to regret later on in life.