



LO, IA

Ia Lo is a fourteen year old student in the local junior high school. She enjoys hanging out with her friends.

Do you mainly speak English or Hmong?

I speak more English to my friends because I live in a more American neighborhood. If I am around more American people then I don't talk Hmong, but sometimes when I am around my friends I talk Hmong.

Do your parents speak English?

They speak English to me and at home we speak English to each other. Then, when my parents speak to their friends they will speak Hmong.

Do you think you have more Hmong or American friends?

I have more Hmong friends because I feel more comfortable around Hmong. It's not hard to be friends with others, it's just that I have more Hmong friends.

Do you think your school does enough for the Hmong students?

Yes, I personally think they do enough for us.

What do you think they should do?

They should just make it more open to the Hmong community.

Do you think it would help if there were talks about minorities or the Hmong?

Yes.

Do you think there is any racism towards Hmong kids? And can you give examples.

I saw a whole bunch of Hmong kids play basketball and then some American kids said that they couldn't play there because they are Asian and not good enough to play basketball.

What do you think about interracial dating?

I think that's okay. I think it's really up to the people.

What do your parents think about it?

My parents think it's okay, but I don't know about my grandparents.

What do you think the opinions of other Hmong kids are?

I don't think other Hmong people think it is good.

Are there any kinds of Hmong traditions that you believe in? Any traditions like New Years, ball tossing, or weddings?

Yes, we do the weddings traditionally. We also go to Greenheck for the New Year Ceremonies. My family isn't into shamanism; we are Catholic.

When you have kids do you want to raise them in the Hmong way or do you want to raise them in a more Americanized way?

I will tell them everything about Hmong, but like them to be more Americanized too.

What about gangs? Do you think they affect others' images?

Yes, they just want to represent what they are and if they do bad things, Americans will think that is what we all do, which is not true.

What are your parents ideas of traditional Hmong boys or girls?

Well respected. They have to marry someone their parents want them to marry. You have to learn how to cook and clean around the house and listen to other people.

What do they expect of you and what do you expect of yourself?

My parents expect me to go to school, get good grades, and also to come home.
My expectation is just to have fun while growing up and just to be a regular girl.

Do you think Hmong boys get more privileges than Hmong girls do?

Yes, the guys have the better cars. When the girl wants a car, it is always bad. Their parents won't give them a good car.

What about marriages? Do you think that their ways are good and do you think that kids should get married young?

If you really love that person, you should marry them. But if you get caught and get forced to marry then I don't think it is good.

As a Hmong teen what problems you face every day?

Racial fights.

Is there anything that defines you as Hmong? And do you have any difficulties living between two cultures?

What defines me as Hmong is that I have black hair and talk Hmong. I don't think it's hard to be living between two cultures. It gives you more experience than others when you live between two cultures.

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