

MOUA, TENG

*Teng Moua is currently a senior at D.C. Everest Senior High.
After high school, he plans to attend UW - Stevens Point.
He enjoys playing any sports that include a ball such as
volleyball, basketball and baseball.*

My name is Teng Moua. I was born in Thailand and I'm 18 years old. I have one brother, six sisters and an aunt living with us; plus my parents.

How do you feel about being a Hmong guy/girl? Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

I'm grateful I'm a guy because we get more freedom. Girls have to do more work and help around the house. They also have to learn to cook.

What do you know about your traditions and culture and how do you feel about them? (For instance marriage, shamanism, the language...)

I don't know everything about my culture and traditions but I'm glad we have them.

How was the transition from Laos and Thailand to America?

It was somewhat hard for my parents. I was still very young when we came.

"I don't know everything about my culture and traditions but I'm glad we have them."

How do you feel about being Americanized?

I'm not very Americanized yet.

How do your parents feel about it? (Being Americanized)

They could do more to be Americanized, but I don't think they will become Americanized very soon.

Do you ever feel torn or trapped between the two? How so?

Yes because most of us are already forgetting everything and don't know what to do. I have two lives, one at school and one at home. It's hard to try to live in both.

What is it like living with two different cultures?

It is hard. My parents expect me to be the traditional Hmong boy, but sometimes I just want to go out and have fun with my friends.

Which culture do you feel is more beneficial and why?

Neither one is more beneficial than the other.

Are your parents more Americanized or stuck in the traditional way of life? And how do you feel about that?

They are more traditional and it is tiring doing all that's involved in the culture.

What have your parents taught you and how will you use it?

They have taught me how to cook and also how to greet my relatives because each one has to be greeted in a different way. I hope to use these with my in-laws someday.

Is education important to you? Why or why not?

It is somewhat important because you need an education to make a living.

What are your expectations and your parent's expectations for your future?

I want to go to college and my parents want me to go too.

At school or anywhere else have you ever felt peer pressure to do something? What was it and did you follow through?

Yes, I've been pressured to do many things. I didn't do anything about it, but I wish I could have beat the crap out of them.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted help on how to deal with their racial issues?

You should just try to ignore them. It's not worth being mad over.

Why do people discriminate because of ethnicity?

I really don't know; probably because we are different.

How do you and your parents feel about interracial dating?

I don't care about it, but my parents don't like it.

A stereotype is that all Hmong are in gangs, how do you feel about that? Have you ever been asked to join and why do people join?

I think they think that because we are always hanging around with our Hmong friends. I have never been asked to join. They want friends to be more.

What do you see in the future for the Hmong? What are your hopes for them?

We are going to lose our culture. It will be forgotten by the next generation.

Do you have any advice or words of wisdom to share?

Learn our culture and traditions because it is who we are.