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# YANG, PAKDER

*Pakder is a student at Wausau West. She enjoys to play volleyball and hang out with her friends. She wants to attend college in the future, but isn't sure where.*

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***Please tell me about yourself and your family, can you elaborate?***

I have nine people in my family. My parents got married at the age of 16 and 18 and they were both born in Laos but got married in the U.S. My name is Pakder Yang and I was born in Ladysmith, WI, I am 15 years old.

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

I am proud to be a Hmong girl because I could have been any race but I was born Hmong and I am not ashamed to be. The advantages of being Hmong is that you are a different race, which is what makes up the World. The disadvantage is that you are discriminated by other races also.

***What do you know about your traditions and culture and how do you feel about them?***

I don't know much about the Hmong culture.

***How do you feel about being Americanized?***

I don't really have an opinion on being Americanized or not because it is natural to be like that being born in the U.S.

***How do your parents feel about it?***

My parents feel it is a good thing but they also think that all this takes us far away from the Hmong traditions.

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

Yes, because sometimes I can't meet my parent's expectations, like acting like a Hmong girl would act.

***What is it like living with two different cultures?***

I think that it is a good thing because it gives us all an opportunity to learn to get along and get to know and learn about each other's culture.

***Which culture do you feel is more beneficial and why?***

Americans, because this is their country.

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

They are neither, we are like both. I feel that this is good because we get to learn about our traditions but at the same time we get to be just who we are.

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

To be a good person and always follow your heart. I will always try to be a good person and stick up for myself or do what I think is right.

***Is education important to you? Why or why not?***

Yes, because it is the first step to succeeding and achieving all dreams and goals.

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

My expectations are to finish high school, go to college and work hard to achieve all my goals. Those are also my parent's expectations for me.

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

Yes, I have been asked to skip school but I didn't do it although it was a hard decision to make because of peer pressure.

***Have you ever been discriminated against because of your ethnicity? If yes how did you feel and react to it?***

Yes, I felt angry and argued back.

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

Ignore others who discriminate or talk to them about it. If it doesn't work talk to a counselor or teacher.

***Why do people discriminate because of ethnicity?***

People discriminate because other ethnics think that they're better or because one race dominates more than the other.

***How do you and your parents feel about interracial dating?***

My parents don't allow it but to me I don't think that it'll be a problem.

***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 feel that people shouldn't stereotype us like that because not all Hmong people are a part of a gang. No, I have never been asked to join a gang. I think that why people join gangs are because they don't get enough attention from their family or because they think that it is a way of freedom.

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

I see the Hmong people with a brighter future and that many will succeed. My hopes for the Hmong people are that we will become a better racial group and become an important part of the world.