

## Chia Xiong

*Chia Xiong came to America in 2004.*

*She now resides in Wausau.*

***What is your name?***

My name is Chia.

***How old are you?***

I am eleven years old.

***How many siblings do you have?***

I have one sister and three brothers.

***Do you remember when you arrived in America?***

In 2004.

***How did you feel when you first arrived here?***

I was happy.

***Do you feel comfortable living here now?***

Yes.

***What are your hobbies?***

I like to play at my friends' houses. We pick apples, play around. At home I read and cook dinner for my family.

***Are you fluent in English?***

A little. When someone talks to me, I mostly understand if they speak simple words.

***Do you know any other languages?***

Not really. I know a little but not as much as I know English. I didn't get to go to school in Thailand.

***What did you do in Thailand?***

I mostly stayed home. Sometimes we got to play outside and then we didn't want to go home. We went to play at quan one.

***What is quan one?***

It's like a town. In Thailand there are four or five towns. Quan one was in the Thai area; quan two was

by the graveyards, quan four was in the mountains. We lived in quan four but we went to play at quan one. When it rained-when we were little, we would go play in the mud.

***What did you play with your friends?***

We jumped rope and sometimes fought over that. Sometimes we stole the Thai's monmon to eat. They never caught us.

***What did you do throughout the day in Thailand?***

When we woke up, my aunt would wake me to pick tamarinds to eat. We had a garden. We grew greens, corn, and sugar cane.

***Do you have any stories of your life in Thailand?***

Well, when we were going to come to America, we had registered and packed everything. On our way to the registration, we passed a huge boulder, bigger than this table, on top of a hill. There was a little child whose name was Chia-like me; she was killed under the boulder. My dad had run over to her and tried to wake her up. It was really because of her grandfather. Her grandpa had dug a hole and begged for the boulder to fall on him and kill him. He did not want to come to America. He was scared that the Americans would eat him. The child had come to sleep with him. The grandpa complained about her smelling bad but the mom had said that it was alright. When the child had fallen asleep, the grandpa moved her to her parent's bed. If he had not moved her, she would have lived. When we were about to leave, her dad had taken her to the hospital and they said she was dead. The dad brought her home and cried. They eventually did not move to America. My mom heard that they moved to live with the Hmong-Thai.

***Were you scared to move to America?***

I was a little scared. I had a friend who told me that her uncle had died and the Americans had eaten him.

***Who sponsored your family?***

My father's older brother, Lao.

***Where did you first arrive in America?***

In Wisconsin.

***How did you feel on the plane?***

I had never flown before. We fought for the window seat so I wasn't scared. I wanted to look out the window to see what it was like but I fell asleep. The airline gave us food but it wasn't good because we weren't used to it yet.

***How did you prepare for the trip?***

We packed clothes and food.

***What do you miss most that you left behind?***

I miss my house the most.

***How did you feel when you first saw the Americans?***

It was strange. They were talking strange. I asked my grandma what they were saying but she told me

*"He did not want to come to America. He was scared that the Americans would eat him."*

that she didn't know either and to not be nosy. Once when my grandma was going to the bathroom, She bumped into someone and said, "Excuse me." But they were mean and yelled at her.

***Do you see a difference between Hmong-Americans and new arrivals?***

Well, they know English more.

***Did you make any American friends?***

I did. When I went to John Marshall, I had an American friend but my Hmong friend told me, "You hang out too much with Americans. We don't like you anymore." That's why I don't have many American friends anymore.

***What would you like to become?***

I want to become a person who takes care of kids.

***Do you want to go back to visit Thailand?***

I do, but right now there's nobody there to visit. My relatives have all moved.

***What do you miss?***

I miss that in Thailand I had tons of friends and I played all day. Here there's not much place to play and it's too cold. Thailand was not cold.

***Were there any holidays you celebrated in Thailand?***

We didn't have any but the Thai had one called "may hun nun." Once a year, they bought face paints: red, green, blue, and black. We painted our faces and people who carried buckets of water would throw water at us.

***Do you have any advice for the new arrivals?***

I want to tell them to be careful here because there are more kidnappings and gangs.