



# The American Dream

Daniela Baca

What does the American Dream mean? What does it mean to you as an American? What does it mean to you as an immigrant? What is the American Dream?

This piece is a mixed-media painting based on a trip to El Paso I took earlier this year. The El Paso trip is an annual tradition of Sandia Prep. My senior class had the opportunity to stay with a family seeking asylum. Throughout the trip, we heard horror stories of people who had escaped their country. The only difference between these stories and the scary movies I watched on Halloween was that these were real. I think privileged people, including myself, have become desensitized to the stories and pictures we see on the news or online. We watch people in suits argue about what should be done with the children who were separated from their families from the comfort of our living rooms. Kids are being taken away from their parents and thrown into cages, women and children are being raped and murdered, innocent people are dying, and the best we can do is put a hashtag on our Instagram story?

During the El Paso trip, I learned that I can make a difference in the world—even if it's just making a few sandwiches for some people on the street. Hearing the stories of these beautiful people, I found a calling in my life: to make a difference.

I hope you feel uncomfortable looking at the collection of doors and artist statements from me and my classmates. I hope you feel repulsed by the American Dream we frequently discuss. And I hope that the next time you open your Instagram to a hashtag, instead of reposting, you get out into the world and make a difference.