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Palm school, morning routine, square dancing, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Miss Swinson, May fest, camping experiences, community involvement, parent educator, breast cancer, friendships, extracurricular activities, school performance, advocacy.

SPEAKERS

Speaker 2, Brittany Mendez, Speaker 1, Teresa Velasquez

Brittany Mendez 00:02

Okay, hello. I'm Brittany Mendez. I'm here with Raza Velasquez for the second part of our photovos interview. It's February 6, 2025 okay, okay, cool. Um, so I know we talked yesterday about these school pictures, and I guess I just wanted to follow up with, like, some additional questions, or smaller questions. I know you said that you lived like, a block away from Palm school, and so I was curious, like, what your, like, your morning routine was for school? Or like, like, yeah, like, Did you walk alone to school? Or, like, did you with your cousins?

Teresa Velasquez 01:00

Actually? We weren't we. We couldn't walk to school, I think, until way, way later, when we were a little older, because of the even back then, the traffic was just very, you know, a lot of traffic in that area of town, so they would drive us to school. And I think in, like in the interview, as I mentioned, my family owned Roy's taxi. So, you know, there was a lot of volume of vehicles coming in and out of the property where we lived, because we lived on the property where the family business was, ran from. So we, you know, we, we didn't walk to school until way later, but we were dropped off, you know, in front of the school every day, or in the I think they would drive us a lot of times to the back. There was a back parking lot, and that's where, like, the entrance to the cafeteria, there was a little entrance, and they'd wait there till we walked in, whoever dropped us off. But on occasion, you know, my mom would walk us to school. I remember, I think there's a picture. I'm not sure if I had shared that one. When my youngest brother started school, he was one of the last classes to attend the palm school location before Sanchez was built, and my mom and he came out in the newspaper, in the front page of the American statesman, where she was walking him to school.

Brittany Mendez 02:36

Oh, wow, I wonder if that's here.

Teresa Velasquez 02:39

I might have shared that one. I think, I think that was one that I added in. I had sent that that day that I was there, but trying to see if I see it there,

03:08

yeah, I don't see it.

Teresa Velasquez 03:12

Wait. Is this one sideways? The one on the end at the very top, the one above that one. Oh, this one turned sideways. This one, yeah, that's the cab thing. Okay, yeah, I don't see it. I don't see one where it's okay, walking him. But yeah, we, we were driven to school or walked

Brittany Mendez 03:48

and then I know you mentioned, you know, there was, like, a lot of and we probably might get into this a little bit more later on, because I know there's pictures of this, but you mentioned, there's a lot of, like activities at Palm school and stuff. So I was just kind of curious, like, if you could go like, more into detail about, like, what palm school had to offer for you specifically, and like for the other children and stuff.

Teresa Velasquez 04:20

Yeah, I remember every year, at the end of the year we celebrated Mayfest, we would have a big like, I guess, end of the school year festival, and they called it the Mayfest, and each grade level would perform different types of folk dancing. Or, I believe there was one that was like on roller skates. And they would roller skate with the, you know, the yellow rain coats and umbrellas to rain drops keep falling on my head, out on the tennis courts. And then they would do the full fledged Maypole with beautiful streamers, and do a dance where they they did up and down and kind of, I guess, braided the the streamers. Every child would hold a streamer of a different color. And they did some kind of dance where it would drape the pole in the middle of the of the tennis courts. And then we did another one. It was that was more of a folk dance with these bamboo poles. And we would do dances that our PE teacher, Miss Swinson, she was the one who organized all that that we would do. But that was a really big event that we would have every every year at the end of the school year, out on the tennis courts near the pool in the back of the school. And then I was talking about like my camping experiences with Girl Scouts, you know, and Boy Scouts, we would go, you know, here to Bastrop to Los Pines, and there was another State Park, Busch or State Park in just near Bastrop and Pedernales State Park and Camp Texas lake at the end of the school year, if we sold enough Girl Scout cookies, we would earn our badge and our opportunity to go to the Girl Scout camp. And then Los Pines was a place where the Boy Scouts would go. And then, I know, my mom was involved with Cub Scouts, and she would go in the summer and take, you know, my younger brother, and you know, daily, like a whole day field of events that they were involved in with, with archery and swimming and all kinds of stuff. And, you know, because I was the girl, she didn't leave me behind. So I would go, like, I guess, amongst all the other sisters of the other groups, and participate as well. They would have activities that I would be able to engage in as well. And then when the Boy Scouts would go camping, my teacher well and our troop leader, Miss Swinson, her husband, actually was the capital area, I guess, Headmaster of all of Boy Scouts in Austin area. And so they would often go to Los Pines on camping trips, and she would help drive to get the kids there, and she wouldn't want to make that long drive back by herself, so she would ask me to ride along with her, and we'd get the boys all settled in, and she'd drive me home in the evening, so I spent a lot of time with her, you know, doing things like that. And, you know, again, going,

going, you know, having those experiences with camping, because that was something that my parents weren't really they they didn't really engage in, like, camping and outdoors, a lot of outdoors activities, but they never hindered us in participating. So I was grateful, and I'm sure my brothers were to have those experiences. And then among the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts, primarily, we were brothers and sisters that were a part of both organizations, and our teacher, Miss Swinson, her and her husband were avid square dancers, so I guess, you know, she thought that would be neat to teach us square dancing. I I'm not sure if it was part of the curriculum at that time, but we formed a square dancing group called the Early Bird square dancers. And primarily we were the brothers and sisters of the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, which ended up being the early bird square dancers. And the reason we were called the early birds was because that's when we practice, before school. She would often pick us up early in the morning, and I don't know how she would fit us all in her car, or, you know, maybe some of the kids were dropped off, but I know my brother and I were two of the first people that she would pick up. And then we had, you know, the Gonzalez kids down the down the hill from us, they would be picked up next, and then the Estradas down on Holly Street. And you know, she would make her rounds, and we'd go pick up Rosa Lopez and Becky Castile. They lived down the street from me, I think, next door to each other on Canterbury or or Garden. And so we would make our rounds back to the school. And you know, the car would be, you know, we'd all fit in there and get started. We square dancing before school, and she she would have juice, and I know we would get, like, cinnamon rolls or something, she would bring for us. And then we would have opportunities. I mean, we really got to be really good at it. And we had our outfits. You know, we had red skirts and white shirts the girls wore with petticoats and the actual dancing shoes or tennis shoes. And then the boys always wore black slacks and a white shirt. And in order for us to have opportunity to go to these conferences, we would raise money to charter a bus so we would show movies and charge like a quarter for kids to come in and stay after school and watch a movie, and we sold popcorn and pickles and literally nickel and dined our way to being able to raise enough funds to charter those busses to go on our square dancing trips. One year, I remember the furthest place we went to was Kansas City, Missouri, and that was a real big thing. They had a place. I think it was Worlds of Fun. It was like the Six Flags there in that town. So we've got to go to that as an extended experience as well. Aside, when the convention was over for square dancing, we would go to square dancing conventions in Dallas, San Antonio, Beaumont, el PA We went one time to El Paso. I remember my mom specifically going, that might have been my first one. My mom, I remember my mom went on that trip with us, and I have some pictures of that particular time, and then some from the San Antonio trip. But those were always a lot of fun. And I know the HEB. What we had an HEB in the community here on what was, what is now Cesar Chavez, but it used to be East First Street, and we would sell cupcakes in the mornings as well. You know, to the shoppers we would I still have my little pans, my tin, tin pans that I would make my my cupcakes that we would sell there in the morning for a quarter. And before, you know, just to raise money to to have that opportunity to go on a nice charter bus. You know, every year we would go somewhere, and it was just a lot of fun. I mean, here, you know, these dark skin children, brown skin children going to these primarily Anglo environments of square dancers. But we would mix all in there. She would rarely let us dance with amongs each other. We always had to enter, you know, into square dances with other adults, and she would try to separate us out. So we just learned the steps, and we could, you know, was always a live caller. She would also take us to local dances here in the community. I remember McCallum High School, I guess they would use the facility there, and there would be dances, sometimes on Fridays and Friday nights, and they would take us. And then, I think the on the UT campus, the women's, I don't

know, I don't know the name of the place, but it was a beautiful Texas Federation of women, I think, is the name of the place, and I remember that just being so pretty walking in there. And it was a big, you know, square dance that we got to go to. But they were really, really neat experiences that I have a lot of fond memories of being able to participate with those activities during during my elementary school years,

Brittany Mendez 13:42

yeah, that's like, yeah, I guess to do that during elementary is really cool. And so, I guess, like, like, hearing you talk about, you know, all these different activities and stuff and whatnot, and how, you know, Miss Swinson was kind of like a really important person or important player, and like, you getting to experience a lot of a lot of these different things, I guess, like, what was it, you know, what was it like for you to have someone like Miss Swinson? And how do you think her how things would have been different if you know, like, if she kind of wasn't the person to, kind of like, lead you to all these various things and doing all these various things,

Teresa Velasquez 14:39

I don't think I would have been as outgoing. I think it helped me to be more of a leader as well in the school, just kind of, I guess, brought me out of my shell. I don't know. I don't ever remember being too shy, but I consider myself on the shy side, which I doubt that I am. but I don't know. I just remember she, she gave me a lot of responsibility, even, you know, early on in elementary school. And I remember specifically, I believe it was the trip to El Paso. We had raised enough money, and our principal was actually a square dancer as well. And we were in an assembly type setting in the cafeteria, probably with the whole school. And I remember her calling out my name, "Terry Velasquez, where are you? And come to the front." And I was the one who presented the principal of the school, Mr. Gordon Moore, the invitation to attend the the to go on the bus with us to the square dancing convention. So, because we had raised so much money that year to be able to go, that we, we, we took the principal with us. And, you know, I think that was like a big thing for me, you know, getting called out of the whole entire school that I was the one that presented that opportunity to the principal. You know, I was the, I guess, I don't know what it was a ticket or what, but I remember her calling me out in the assembly to come forth and present that to the principal. And, you know, I just thought that was, you know, really neat to to have that, that opportunity and continue on, yeah, and I think also it laid a foundation too. Like I mentioned, I think there's a picture here my mom's getting off the bus. I think she has a pink top, and she's holding a white purse there with white slacks, yeah, that was El Paso, and that was one of the first trips that we took as a group. And my mom ended up being very, very involved in staying involved with us. She had already been involved prior to this trip, but it really led her on to staying involved with us throughout school, not only with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, square dancing. Later on in middle school, I played volleyball and my brothers played baseball. In fact, my youngest brother played all the way into college, college baseball, and, you know, high school and college, and he is now. He's been working with the school district over 30 years, and he's a baseball coach. He works at Bowie, and it also led her to getting and staying involved with PTA, which ultimately, you know, got her involved in becoming an employee of the school district when my younger brother attended Sanchez, which was the school that replaced palm school. So you know, that led her into having a career as a parent educator, working with the school system. And I ended up working with the schools over 32 years, which I followed in her footsteps, you know, helping parents to get involved

in and stay involved with their children and their education. And not only, you know, during the school day, but then in after school, programming and and teaching kids how extracurricular activities enrich their learning capacity.

Brittany Mendez 18:33

Yeah, I guess that's kind of all like, very full circle.

18:39

Yeah, it

Speaker 1 18:46

very sentimental to me that that I was able to give that back and my mom as well what we got out of the enrichment that we had, you know, early on.

Brittany Mendez 19:08

Yeah, that's, yeah, that's very nice. And I don't know, just to hear about your mom and her involvement and stuff, like, I feel like that also, like, I don't know, I feel like that means a lot to like a child, you know, just seeing your mom, like, be really involved and having around and stuff when you go experience things like, during, like, very formative years,

Teresa Velasquez 19:30

yeah, yeah. Well, she knew the importance of, you know, keeping parents apprised of staying on track with their children and speaking up for them. She She helped parents advocate for things, you know, within the school system, and you know, I did as well, you know, gathering parents up and taking them to city council. Advocating for funding for after school programming, and she did as well, way since way early on. And that's a big thing for a lot of parents that don't don't really see themselves as advocates. They they don't really understand the power you know, that parents, you know, have in and when they're speaking up for their children and getting things done. One of the schools that we both worked at, it was an unsafe route for the kids. They would it was way over at Allen Elementary School, and the kids would have to walk through a long spring gal when there was a, like, a little, I guess, a creek, and there was no pathway for the kids to get from that neighborhood to the school, which would have been a shorter path, but at that time, she had a really, really good, strong PT at PTA, and they advocated and got that bridge built for the safety of the children. And I remember, I was already working at that school as well. And, you know, city council people came and they had, like, the ribbon cutting of the bridge. And it was a big thing. It was a big accomplishment that parents advocated for, and it showed them that their voice goes a long way. And, you know, they got that bridge built for the safety of the children to get to school and make it more accessible for them from that that neighboring community, to not have to go out of their way and risk, you know, getting run over, or, you know, go on, going more into traffic where they they made it more accessible for the kids from that community to get to school. Yeah,

Brittany Mendez 21:57

I guess. What is your mom's name?

Teresa Velasquez 22:01

Her name was Jean Marie Velasquez. Jean Marie Velasquez, J, E, A, N, M, A, R, I, E. Velasquez,

Brittany Mendez 22:10

um, how would you like if I had never, or, obviously, I've never met your mom, but how would you like describe her to me, you know, if you had to like, what kind of person she was and, like, just

Teresa Velasquez 22:24

Strong, strong, strong. I mean, she was not afraid of speaking up. And she was an advocate. She was a go getter. You know, she was one person. If she said she was going to do it, she'd do it. And always giving, you know, giving of herself to others. Very, very outspoken, and, you know, very strong minded. And again, she, you know, she, she was diagnosed with breast cancer in, I believe, 2004 when she first got it. And, I mean, I was devastated, and I remember, you know, just falling apart, and she grabbed me by the elbow and she says, "we're going to beat th"e I was like. I was like, you know, mortified that my mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer. And she was like, "I'm not going to let this get me. I'm going to fight to fight it". And I was like, okay, okay. She was all strong, and I was a mess. And, you know, she fought it for 14 years and and ultimately ended up having cardiac failure as a result of, you know, her years of chemotherapy, but, you know, she did never let it beat her, and that's just the type of person that she was. She had a lot of faith. When she retired from the school district, she ended up working at Santa Julia Catholic Church, which was in the same community where Allen elementary school was, and did a lot of social service work there within the community, and it was awesome to be able to work alongside her, not only at Allen, but with the programs that were offered in the community. **There** was a dental program at the time. I can't remember the name of it, but where we coordinated with the church and with the school, it was a mobile clinic, and there were three campuses that were being served by these by this dental program. And, you know, I worked with my mom, scheduling the kids, and she they were housing the dental clinic there at the church at Santa Julia. And I was coordinating getting the kids there from Brooke, Allen and, I believe, Govalle Schools, the other school. But you know, that was just, you know, really neat to be able to work. Alongside her like that, and again, providing services and making sure these children had the the basic needs that that that were necessary to, you know, have a good, healthy, healthy life. And again, provide we, you know, help them do outreach for housing a lot of times. You know, there was, you know, people that would migrate here from different places, and we would coordinate, if, you know, say someone came and they went to the church looking for help. You my mom knew what the job was that I did. So, you know, I would get on, you know, accessing resources, which that was a big primary responsibility that I had within the school system. As a parent educator, I was a more of a parent liaison that connected parents with resources within the community, whether it was health or education or food, clothing. We, there was a program called Operation school bell with the Assistance League of Austin that provided clothing for kids in need. So it was a matter of, you know, getting permission from the parents to provide that service, and then again, working with the school system on transportation and coordination of scheduling and taking the children and, you know, getting them fitted, and you know, it was just and then getting them back to school in time for lunch. And that was, you know, a major part of, you know, the work that we both did, you know, during our time as parent educators or parent liaisons

Brittany Mendez 26:46

powerhouses, yeah, how did you, sorry, how did you spell your mother's name again? J,

26:55

J, E, A n,

27:01

I love

Teresa Velasquez 27:05

Her name was Jean, but she went by Marie. Everybody knew her as Marie.

Brittany Mendez 27:12

And then, do you remember in this particular photo, I know she's getting off the bus. Do you know a you said in San Antonio?

Teresa Velasquez 27:22

This was in El Paso. Oh, yes, sir, yeah, the square dance convention in El Paso. There might be a few other pictures from that trip.

Brittany Mendez 27:38

Do you remember what year would have been, oh,

27:42

man, I can't remember

Teresa Velasquez 27:55

that. Probably see fifth grade. I might have been like 72,73 maybe, I'm assuming, maybe I was in fifth grade then. I don't know early 70s. I know that for sure.

Brittany Mendez 28:11

Okay, I just put circa 1970s and you said you were in probably, like in the

28:16

fifth grade, correct? Probably. I

Teresa Velasquez 28:34

that was at one of those square dancing conventions. That was the place that I said was like, like, Six Flags. It was called Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, Missouri.

Brittany Mendez 28:58

Is that you? I? Okay. What you said while attending a square dancing or at a square ..

Teresa Velasquez 29:28

Yeah, it was probably a national square dancing convention. I actually had, I don't know if y'all captured that. I had my name badge that year. I guess every year they would have themes and the theme for that one was something about hearts. And in my scrapbook I have, I have the actual name tag and my name badge for that convention. Oh, wow. Look, you know, it probably has the year on it if you want me to try to grab it. Quick, Oh sure, yeah, let me. Let me grab it. I just I know where they're at. My stuff up, yeah,

30:31

this poor scrap buckets.

30:35

It's so old, it's all falling apart. I

Teresa Velasquez 30:47

uh, it was the 24th national square dancing convention, Kansas. Oh, it was Kansas City, Missouri. We and it was 1975

Brittany Mendez 31:01

You said the 24th not national square dancing.

Teresa Velasquez 31:06

Yes, it was a national square dancing convention

Brittany Mendez 31:10

in Kansas City, three in 1975 do

Teresa Velasquez 31:23

and I remember it was a heart. And this is, this says element. I guess that was one of the steps, Allemande in Heartland. So the badge was a heart.

Brittany Mendez 31:38

How do you what

Teresa Velasquez 31:41

a L, L, E, M, a, n, d, e. Allemande. Allemande, I guess, I think that was a step. Allemande in heartland.

31:57

Allemande in heartland. I have,

Teresa Velasquez 32:01

I have, I don't know if y'all got all these. I have, like postcards, and they were just like souvenirs from the El Paso, but they're glued on I was trying to see if they had the date on them. And then the one from Beaumont at the hotels where we stayed, yeah, but I don't know that y'all have. And then here's the ones from Dallas.

Brittany Mendez 32:25

I think we might have gotten some stuff, but not everything. Um, yeah, there's a lot of here, a lot of stuff. No, it was really nice. Also, I'm kind of it's crazy how long your hair is.

Teresa Velasquez 32:41

No, that's probably the longest my hair ever has been.

Brittany Mendez 32:46

So if this was 1975 you would have been that

Teresa Velasquez 32:53

says, eighth grade. Did I stay in square dancing in eighth grade? You would have been in eighth grade. That is weird. See, my my year. I don't remember staying in that with that late. Let me see. Yeah, it's a 75

33:16

What year were you born again?

33:17

61 i

33:27

Professor, you were 14.

Teresa Velasquez 33:35

I don't remember being in square dancing past elementary school. That is weird. I remember Girl Scouts, but I don't remember staying in square dancing past Elementary School. Let's

33:51

see.

Brittany Mendez 33:53

Okay, so here's this picture.

Teresa Velasquez 33:57

Yeah, that's that's on the bus, probably going there or coming back. That's Miss Swinson in the very front, the lady with the red hair right here, yes, and then the guy in the middle, in the back with the sailor hat. That's my brother, Roy I

34:26

that I can't see,

Brittany Mendez 34:32

is that you in the red shirt? Or no

Teresa Velasquez 34:34

that, yeah, that is. That's me right there. I

Brittany Mendez 34:44

so this would have also been to when you're going to Kansas City, Missouri,

34:49

that same trip i.

Teresa Velasquez 35:04

But you can see how it was in the school bus we had, you know, nice comfort, big ole charter busses that we were on. That's El Paso. I don't know what year that was, but that would have been the same trip the of the one where my mom's getting off the bus. And I had a big group picture. And I don't think it got put with these. I don't I don't remember what happened to it, but I know I had a group picture of all of us that went, including the principal and the bus driver and Swinson Mother God, what was her? Miss Kane, Mrs. Kane. She was a little old lady, but she could dance. And a couple of the other parents that went were Miss Delgado and Miss Camacho, Margaret Camacho

Brittany Mendez 35:58

do for the El Paso one. Do you know? I know, just in the 1970s and you were in the fifth grade, 1970s if you were in the fifth grade, do you know how old you would have been if eighth grade you were 14,

36:29

A, C or 14, 713, right?

Teresa Velasquez 36:45

14,13, you would have been 11,12, yeah, probably 11. That was one of that. That was probably that maybe that trip too, that was similar. That was his name was David Pardo. Yesterday we talked about the Terry Terry P, Terry M and Terry B. This was Terry P's brother, Terry Pardo's brother. His name was David Prado, or Pardo, Pardo, Pardo. P, A, r, d, O,

Brittany Mendez 37:29

I'm assuming that's you on the left. Yeah,

Teresa Velasquez 37:32

me on to the left. Yeah. And the other girl swinging with the yellow sweater. Her name was Linda. I can't remember her last name. I

37:44

I think she ended up moving away.

Brittany Mendez 37:59

Linda with an, I do you know,

38:03

I, I n, d, a, I, I n, d,

Brittany Mendez 38:07

this was an in El Paso. I

Teresa Velasquez 38:29

that one on the next row down there. That's David, again, that same trip. And then the girl right next to him is Vanessa Estrada, who.. I have a core group of friends. Like I said, I've, you know, friendship has been, you know, a big part of, you know, my friendships from way back then. She and I were in Brownies together and stayed best friends. She ended up marrying my cousin, so she's part of my family now, and my core group of friends were called the Fab Five, fab fabulous five, and she's one of my my Fab Five people, and we have stayed and remain friends all of these years. And her brother was my brother's best friend. They were in they were each other's best men in their weddings. And you know, that's just how, like her brother and her were in the square dancing and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, as was my me and my brother. So we basically grew up together, the four of us.

Brittany Mendez 39:41

Oh, wow, that's crazy.

Teresa Velasquez 39:46

And they live, they lived on, how on, on Holly Street, on the 1600 block of holly, and the girl right next to her, that's Adele Perez. I'm friends with her on Facebook. I don't really get to see her, but her brother and my brother were friends. They, in fact, he's her brother stood with me and my brother's wedding. That just goes to show the core group of of foundation of friendships that were made way back and have continued on even now, yeah, that's

40:24

that's crazy.

Teresa Velasquez 40:26

Her family owned there was a, her mother had a taco stand right near Palm school, right across the street from it was Anderson drug store across the street. It was a place called AC foods, and that's that her mother own that little taco place there, and a hard working lady, really sweet, sweet lady.

Brittany Mendez 40:57

Okay, so I know. So it's 11:58 right now, and I know I said I have one at noon because, like, accidentally crossed my wires, but I think they might be busy, so I don't know. I'm gonna give them a call right now, really, if they're because I think they might need more time. I don't think they're ready yet. Um, if that's the case, do you want to go till one? Okay, let me just mute myself really quickly and call them very quickly. Okay, I you Okay, we're good to go. Okay, yeah, well, that's crazy. You've stayed friends for such a long time, and now they're part of your family.

42:36

That's cool.

Teresa Velasquez 42:40

Yeah, yeah. We, we try to get together at least once a year for the Fab Five, but it's just hard. You know, things come up and, you know, everybody gets busy. Yeah, we have a little text group. And unfortunately, she just let me, she let us our group know. She broke her leg Friday, and she's going to, she had to have surgery, and she's going to be going to rehab. So need to re, you know, we touch base on the on, just on a text, but, you know, we need to follow up and stay connected. Yes, this was actually, I think that might have the date at the very bottom of that picture. Does it not have a year? No, that would have been a school performance. I know that guy's name was Gilbert. I don't know his last name. I know his first name was Gilbert, I think. But that would have been a school performance.

Brittany Mendez 43:42

Do you know where this is at or at

Teresa Velasquez 43:45

Palm school that was at Palm school on the stage, like in the cafeteria? Yeah, in the cafeteria. And that looks like that girl, Linda in the back there, to the left

43:59

here. Yes, I'm

Brittany Mendez 44:08

assuming this might have also been in the 70s. Yeah,

Teresa Velasquez 44:15

but see how we're wearing our red skirts and our petticoats and our white shoes. I

Speaker 2 44:20

and that was your mom. That's,

Teresa Velasquez 44:40

that's that same El Paso trip. That's the girl Adele that was in the other picture. Here, right, here, right, uh huh. And then I think the boy standing in the middle, he's on a Mokarzel. So that was a big family. They. Yeah, I think his name was Edward Mokarzel. They're involved in the church. Like a lot of the kids that went to palm school were a big part of Our Lady of Guadalupe church. And I know their family is very involved there. And I saw pictures lady recently passed away, and at 103 years old, and his mom's in the picture with the the lady that passed away, and I remember her also being a really sweet lady that was always around. You know, it's funny how when you're, you know, growing up, and you stay connected to your friends, parents like that you see. One year away later on, I ran across her I was if I was babysitting or I had some kids, and I was at Symphony square, and she was there with her grandson, and she recognized me, and she liked to make these little, I don't know, this little crucifix out

of ribbon, real pretty and and I was admiring the work that she was doing, and she handed me, it was a bookmark, and I still have it. I thought that was just so sweet of her, because she knew I was one of the kids friends, and she gave me one of the little bookmarks that she was making out of ribbon. And so, yeah, it's just really sweet of her to do that.

Brittany Mendez 46:25

That is sweet. Um, do you know how to spell Edward's last name?

Teresa Velasquez 46:30

Oh, let me see. I had it written down here. Let's see the names of the kids.

46:38

Oh, let me see. Do

Teresa Velasquez 46:42

M O K, a r z, E L, S, oh, I'm not. S, Mokarzel,

Brittany Mendez 46:52

wait, M, o k, a r z, E L, also from this El Paso trip. Do you remember anything in particular that happened? Did you guys get into any shenanigans? Or was, Oh, also, I guess, like, like, road tripping and stuff like, like, whenever you were going off to the square dancing competitions, conventions, like, Was this your first time getting out of Austin? And, like, how was that for you? If it was,

Teresa Velasquez 47:26

well, I would travel to, you know, with my family, because my grandparents lived in Dallas, so I was used to, you know, going on little road trips a lot with my family. But as far as, like, going, I didn't really go alone, because my mom was on the trip with us, but it was exciting, because it was probably the furthest I had ever been, and then seeing mountains for the first time. I thought that was, you know, something new that I had never seen before, being so close to the mountains. And I remember I just ran across the postcard. It was a Roadway Inn back then that we stayed at, and that was another experience. Because, of course, you know, the parents they they stayed in a room separately. So it was a lot of fun staying in the hotel room with my friends, you know, and the horsing around that goes along with that. So, you know, girls giggling and showing off our pajamas and all that. And, you know, sharing clothes, and, oh, I want to wear that. You know, we had to wear our square dancing outfits. But, you know, when we got to go to other things, and, you know, I think there was a Kmart at the time across and, you know, we got to go to that. And then I remember taking snacks and stuff on the on the trip itself, but, yeah, I just remember it was just a lot of fun. And, you know, all the carrying on. And you you saw in the other picture, my brother standing up on the bus, you know, just getting involved with each other and again, making those friendships, and, you know, keeping those friendships for so many years, it's just amazing, yeah, but we were all pretty good kids, you know, we didn't, I don't ever remember anybody, like really getting in trouble or anything, trying to see anybody on that particular okay, this, that's that guy, David, here, right there. And then across from him, her name was Mickey, and then the girl behind her was Becky Castillo. I ended up coming across her few years ago, I was diagnosed in 2019 with breast cancer, and it was the year after my mom passed, and I had my cousin

step up and really helped me get through that time, and I was going to a lot of faith based um you know, programming at different places. And one of them was my cousin's Church, which was, what's the name of it? Remember, I can't remember the name of church off top of my head, but anyway, it was a group they called Sisterhood and Fellowship, and she was a part that girl, Becky was a part of that, and she shared her story, that she had been through some trying times, and she was happy to see me after such a long time. And I think Vanessa had gone with us to that, and it was just nice touching base. And, you know, just receiving prayer from her, you know, I'll keep you in prayer. And we stayed connected for a little while, because what ended up finding out from her was that she gives back to the community a lot. She does a lot of work with the homeless, and at that time, I was doing some volunteer work with my uncle, and, oh God, we were doing some projects with the memorial. It was during Memorial weekend where they would honor the servicemen that fought in Vietnam that didn't make it back with Johnston High School. And we would go and my my uncle, I believe, was sponsoring, like the luncheon or whatever, like sandwiches and stuff, and sometimes we would have a lot left over, and I'm like, I hate to I hate, I still to this day, hate throwing food away. Yeah, I connected with Becky, because I remember her telling me that, you know, she does that a lot out of her pocket to help feed the homeless. And she had given me her number. And I remember a particular afternoon, I guess it was like a Saturday afternoon, and I said, Hey, you know, I've got trays and trays of sandwiches. And she came to meet me. And sure enough, I mean, it was like, oh my god, I couldn't believe all the people like you don't see them, they weren't even out at the time like they are now, as it was just like she made one connection, and people just came out, people that were living in their cars, and, you know, just people that she knew of places to take all this food, and we just handed out food. And it was just like, Oh, my God, I said "you do this on a regular basis?" And she said, yeah, that, you know, that was just something that was a calling for her. And so, you know, I followed up with, you know, I felt bad that she was doing a lot of it on her own. And, you know, did it with her for, you know, few weekends after that. But, you know, again, you get busy doing your own thing and but I just, I admire her work in doing that. She had a lot of illness as well. But, yeah, it's kind of interesting that a lot of these kids that we had the same background, you know, now that you think about legal now reflecting on it, a lot of us do a lot of giving back work. I don't know if it was part of because of our experience and what we all got from growing up and having people that cared about us. But it's just interesting to think about the work that we all ended up ultimately doing in life, doing like, service type work of giving back to the community. Yeah, it's, it's just, you know, something I think about sometimes, what was her last or wonder, or wonder about, like, people that maybe that I haven't seen in a long Yeah, like, Oh, I wonder what so and so ended up doing. Or, I wonder whatever happened to, you know, certain people. So it's just weird.

Brittany Mendez 53:41

Uh, what was Becky's last name? Again,

53:43

Becky Castillo.

53:50

Oh, wait,

Brittany Mendez 53:59

so this whole this, this would have been the El Paso trip?

Teresa Velasquez 54:13

Uh huh. Now that guy I talked about, the family that lived down the street with all the nicknames, the Gonzalez family. This was Mario Gonzalez that I knew as Tener. I don't know why we called him 10 or T, E, N, E r, but he's the one I ran into his sister over the holidays. But he was, he was a character. He was, as you can see, you know, cutting up being goofy. But, yeah, he was involved in he was one of the ones that would get picked up. He and his sister, Linda, and we would, you know, go in the mornings to school to square dancing. And then that's that guy, David, there to the to the right, and then the boy in the back. His name was Benny, I believe. Let me see I wrote his name down, Benny. I think his last name was Renteria. Benny, Renteria no Benny Omario. Benny. I think his name was Benny, and he had a sister. Her name was Inez. She might be in some of these other pictures, but I know that was another brother sister that were part of this group.

Brittany Mendez 55:39

You said, Benny, Renteria. Do you know how to spell Renteria

Teresa Velasquez 55:44

r e n, e r i a rent area

Brittany Mendez 55:54

r e n, t e r i a

55:59

Renteria

Brittany Mendez 56:04

I'm assuming This is also the El Paso,

Teresa Velasquez 56:08

yeah, I believe so. Hello. Now that would have been, that's Vanessa there, oh, with her knee here in the back, further to the that's Vanessa Estrada, my one of my Fab Five that's married to my cousin. And then the boy next to her is Phillip it's Phillips last name, Philip, golly... And did I write his name down? God, I can't remember Phillips last name. I don't remember his last name. Well, it turns out okay, years and years later, I'm a parent educator. I end up becoming a coordinator that trains other parent Parent Training Specialist or parent support specialist, and his younger sister becomes one of my trainees, and we start talking, and, oh, yeah, so and so, you know, we start saying about what school we went to, or whatever, and I find out that Philip was her brother, so I ended up working with Philip's sister way, way, way, years, years, years and years later.

Brittany Mendez 57:40

What a small world. Yeah,

Teresa Velasquez 57:44

yeah. And I remember their mom as well. She was always real involved too with the school, always, always there at the school. And I know they have a sister, another sister that works for the school district as well. I don't know her very well, but I know two of his sisters work, work for the school system.

58:09

Wow, yeah. Do you know where this would have been?

Teresa Velasquez 58:15

That was at that Worlds of Fun. No, okay, this No, no, no. This one was actually at Six Flags here in Dallas. That was our Dallas trip that was here in Dallas.

Brittany Mendez 58:27

Was it part of the square dancing?

Teresa Velasquez 58:29

Yeah, it was a square dancing trip to Dallas. That was probably a state, state square dancing convention.

Brittany Mendez 58:39

Do you know what year or what grade you would have been when you went to Dallas,

Teresa Velasquez 58:44

probably younger, maybe fourth grade, I guess third or fourth grade.

Brittany Mendez 59:24

Here's the next one. I think this is a, probably the school performance one, correct?

Teresa Velasquez 59:28

No, actually, this was, this was a San Antonio square dancing convention, and that was go. Let's see what was his name. Lonnie. Lonnie Delgado. Lonnie Joe Delgado, and the girl is, her name is Cynthia Alba, and she actually grew up right near the Rainey street. She lived right at the end of the street. I don't even know right where that Emma Barrientos, i. Uh, cultural arts places. She In fact, I think her dad still lives in that house there. They lived right at the end of the street, there at the end of East Avenue.

Brittany Mendez 1:00:11

What was her last name? Again? Cynthia. Yeah, Alba. So Loni, Joe, Delgado and Cynthia Alba, Mm, hmm.

Teresa Velasquez 1:00:23

And his mother is the lady with the dark hair that's on the bus in one of the other pictures. Oh, yeah, yeah. She traveled with us a lot and went to events. There's another picture where we're in a parking lot and his mom and myself and Miss Swinson are getting off the car, and I believe that was San Antonio.

Brittany Mendez 1:00:45

Do you know, like, where in San Antonio? Or you just know that it was just in San Antonio?

Teresa Velasquez 1:00:49

It was probably a breakout dance at a convention, maybe. But see how that's one of the things where we would integrate with the other groups of people that would be at the dances. Yeah, and then we were always we stood out because we were always in our you know, like we were very identifiable, because we had our uniforms that we made us together. Now I my mom did have me. She had me some of my own outfits made, like when we would do other dances, I had my own and my own shoes and my, think, my own petticoat. And it's so funny that I'm surprised I don't have them, because I save everything. But I never, I never could find my square dancing skirts or petticoat or anything. I don't know why.

Brittany Mendez 1:01:39

Do you know for the San Antonio trip, huh? Do you know for the San Antonio trip, what year this would have been?

Teresa Velasquez 1:01:45

I don't know. I don't know, but Lonnie had a brother go. What was his name? Lonnie? God, his little brother was also in it. Can't remember his name. I can't remember the brother's name, but it was he and his brother that were in it.

1:02:12

Oh, that's so cool. Yeah.

Brittany Mendez 1:02:16

Oh, July, 74

Teresa Velasquez 1:02:20

Oh, has it? So that would have been, that's a sixth grade, see, I just don't, kind of remember being in it middle school like I always thought these were more Palm school dates. I think my my years are all messed up. That's okay, do

Brittany Mendez 1:02:44

I assume this is probably the same thing, right?

Teresa Velasquez 1:02:47

That's probably his brother, maybe. And then that girl let me see. I think maybe Sylvia. I don't I can't tell who that is. If you don't know who they are. Yeah, it's the same event, though, okay, but that might be the other brother.

Speaker 1 1:03:18

Oh, oh. Susan, so what does it say? And Lonnie,

Brittany Mendez 1:03:28

Mary, another girl.

Teresa Velasquez 1:03:33

Susan, okay. And oh, Raymon, Raymond was Lonnie's brother. Raymon Raymond Delgado. It was Raymond and Lonnie, Joe Delgado,

Brittany Mendez 1:03:50

so this is Raymond's and this is Susan.

Teresa Velasquez 1:03:54

Yeah, that that girl there would be Susan. I Oh, there's the two brothers, Raymond and Lonnie, are the ones in the back, and then the guy in the middle, in the front. His name was Jerry, and he has the hardest last name to spell. It was he's Jerry. Y, Z, A, G, U, I, R, R, A, Yzaguirra, but I called him shrimp. He called me bomb B, O, M, B, like because I was way big girl and he was a real little guy, so those were our little playful names for each other. In fact, I have a little souvenir from one of those trips that I have, I guess he gave me, and it says bomb on it. So I just saw.

Brittany Mendez 1:05:00

So this is John. No, this is

Teresa Velasquez 1:05:02

Jerry. Jerry. Okay, where are you at? Okay, that's Lonnie, Joe Delgado. And then the other one across. It's Raymond, his brother. And then, and then, Jerry Yzaguirra.

Brittany Mendez 1:05:26

And you said it's y, z, A, G,

Teresa Velasquez 1:05:30

U, I, R, R, A Yzaguirra. And and this was funny, too. This Raymond guy, years, years and years later, I am married, and we're at my former husband's friend's house, and there's all that he's introducing me to all these people. Well, lo and behold, there is Raymond Delgado. And of course, the name, and, you know, he kind of looked a little familiar. He ends up being married to a cousin of mine. It's so weird, like, really weird. They're divorced now, and I guess she's remarried. I know, but yeah, he ended up marrying a, like, a distant cousin of mine. This is so weird.

Brittany Mendez 1:06:24

Wow. Do you know where they're at

Teresa Velasquez 1:06:26

that's we're just on a break at that San Antonio convention that's somewhere, probably in a park or somewhere in San Antonio. They're just forcing around. Now those that's the bottom of the Alba, Girl Cynthia Alba and the girl was Mary Arevalo. That's Cynthia. She's the girl in the picture earlier, dancing

with Raymond, I mean, Lonnie. And then the girls Mary Arevalo. Now, Mary's mother was also very involved. She she ended up working with the school district, and I think her and my mom worked together for a short period of time. They were like bus monitors. They would ride the bus I remember during when, when bussing started. Yeah, yeah, yeah, and her brother was in Boy Scouts with my brother.

Brittany Mendez 1:07:55

Do you know how to spell Mary's last name? A

Teresa Velasquez 1:07:58

Arevalo? Let me see I have it here. R, A, R, E, V, a, l, O, A, Arevalo,

Brittany Mendez 1:08:14

and this would have also been in San Antonio, so correct. Yes. Is there any significance to the outfits y'all would wear? Or

Teresa Velasquez 1:08:32

IT was just those are just our outfits. Now, I know the badge on her left chest there, those were our I think it's a blue can. I don't know if you could tell if it's a blue we did have a little metal name plates that pinned on from the back. They were, you know, we had our names on them. They were called the The they had the early bird little sign on it, and our names. And then it looks like she's wearing some kind of ribbon or something. I don't know if we would get awards or anything. I don't remember, but I know we had little blue badges that we wore with our name, identify, identifying us as the early birds.

Brittany Mendez 1:09:16

You said the like your dance team is called the early birds.

Teresa Velasquez 1:09:36

No, that's the Lonnie Joe and and Raymond's mother

Brittany Mendez 1:09:41

This one right here?, uh huh, and this Miss Swinson,

Teresa Velasquez 1:09:45

Miss Swinson. And then the lady in front, the older lady, that's Miss Kane, that's Miss Swinson mother, Mrs. Kane, that that was probably the El Paso trip, because I remember her specifically going on that trip with us.

Brittany Mendez 1:10:12

Oh, this is the same as the other i

Teresa Velasquez 1:10:50

That's Mary Arevalo. That would have been probably Six Flags, or that Worlds of Fun Place, maybe the Worlds of Fun i and on the Kansas City trip, that's the bus driver. God, I used to remember his name,

and I can't remember, that's in El Paso. And it was so interesting that the bus driver was also a square dancer. Oh, seriously, yeah, that's funny.

Brittany Mendez 1:11:41

Oh, seriously, that's funny. Oh, that's the same one.

Teresa Velasquez 1:11:44

Now there's his name was Johnny, Johnny, Joe Hernandez. And then that's, that's Jerry Zagary next to him. He has passed away. I Yeah,

Brittany Mendez 1:12:05

do you know where, where you guys were headed on this one?

Teresa Velasquez 1:12:10

that either was that same trip because I in, because I'm seeing all the sailor hats, maybe the same Kansas City trip,

Brittany Mendez 1:12:20

I see Gerry with the shrimp hat, yeah,

1:12:28

does it say it? Shrimp on it? Yeah, shrimp.

Teresa Velasquez 1:12:37

No, this was actually in class, yeah. Yeah, there's Okay. Wait, Go down. Go down. There was the one in the car that right there at the top to the left. That's that San Antonio where I was said the Miss Swinson, and that's me bending over into the car, Miss Swinson, Miss Kane, and then Miss Delgado, that would have been San Antonio, where the boys are horsing around. They were probably waiting on us to unload the car. I uh, that's the car that she would pick us up and, you know, to go to square dancing in. She had that big, oh, I don't know what kind of car it was, but it was a big car. That's the car we would drive the boys to the to the scout place, and I would ride back with her. Did a lot of miles with that car. And then the the picture here to the left in the middle, that's El Paso, the one in the middle here to the very left the middle row, that one that's, that's El Paso. There's that Kmart I talked about, See the K. This was a roadway in and that was boy named Felix, I can't remember his last name. And then the girl was Irene. That was the sister to the boy I talked about, Benny Renteria. This was his sister, Irene. They were older. That was like the older group. And that, I think she's in that picture there too. That's Irene right there in the front. And then that Felix guys here to the right next to Mario.

Brittany Mendez 1:14:51

Mario, Felix, yeah.

Teresa Velasquez 1:14:53

And then Becky's there to the to the left of Mario, sitting down the. That girl, Becky, yeah, right. There

Brittany Mendez 1:15:12

is this on the way to El Paso as well?

Teresa Velasquez 1:15:33

Mm, hmm, I don't recognize anybody in that picture, but that would have been probably those same trips

Brittany Mendez 1:15:47

You probably might not know if it's like San Antonio or Yeah, I don't know.

Teresa Velasquez 1:15:53

I don't I don't place anybody. I see a red skirt in the back there to the left, but I can't place who it is. I The that's in the classroom that... it's got a bad glare on it, but that was probably either third or fifth grade, because that was in this Brownies classroom. I know the girl there on the left. They're kind of in the back. Her name is Pearl Foster that one. And then the girl on the other side, her name was Linda. Linda. Anyway, Pearl and I ran across each other just a few years ago. We have an RV, and we take it to the beach here at Port Aransas every year. And I was there on a trip there with my brother, and a lot of his friends were there and but, you know, big group of girls come over and she's with a friend of my brothers and end up recognizing, I said, Oh, my God, Pearl Foster. And you know this, like years and years later, right across her and then the other girl, Linda got I can't remember Hernandez. I think her last name is Hernandez, her father. Yes, her father ended up being a cab driver at our family's business. So we stayed in touch. You know, we'd see each other here and there over the years. And yeah, I was just, I tell you, stay connected.

1:17:36

No, yeah, for

1:17:40

Oh, my God, I hate this thing.

Teresa Velasquez 1:17:45

And then if you can zoom in, I think there's a boy in the back in that picture. One second. That's one of the other moms, Margaret Camacho. Oh, yeah, it's not that one. Yeah, I thought that was another somebody in the back, but that's not the picture

1:18:26

you said, Margaret. Margaret Camacho.

Teresa Velasquez 1:18:39

This her and my mom ended up being really good friends and staying real active, active, parent, parent, moms throughout our school, her son ended up one of her sons stood in my sweet 15. Oh, wow, yeah. And then one of her daughters goes to church with my brother. In fact, she had, she knew, you know, that we were raised a lot together, and you know her, her mom and and being involved in she asked my brother if I had any photos of her mom during those times of elementary years growing up, because my

brother always remembered their mom. And I said, Well, I don't know how good the pictures are, but, you know, these are the ones that I have. That's one of the ones I sent her. And then, then, when her, her, both of her parents were at my Sweet 15.

Brittany Mendez 1:19:31

Do you know this was the Kansas City trip?

Teresa Velasquez 1:19:35

I don't know. It looks like it might be. Yeah, because the again, those sailor hats must have been the thing to wear. Seemed like everybody had a sailor hat on during that trip. And that that girl, Cynthia Alba, he had a picture of Mary Aravelo, just like that, with that monkey. And now this is Cynthia Alba. Then that's my brother Roy, that's in Kansas City, that's at that world of fun. I and then that girl. This is a new girl here on the left, Doris. Doris, God, I think her last name was Hernandez, and then Cynthia, and then Mary Aravelo.

Brittany Mendez 1:20:50

I'm guessing this is at World's of fun too. Yes, uh

1:20:53

huh, yes.

Brittany Mendez 1:20:58

Margaret Gamache again, yes.

Teresa Velasquez 1:21:16

Now I don't know what happened with these pictures. They look like they got double exposed or whatever, but I know That was on the river walk in San Antonio. You

Brittany Mendez 1:21:56

Oh, so this says Terry, Miss Swinson, Miss Delgado, Miss Brick

1:22:03

Patty's

1:22:11

for this Picture,

Teresa Velasquez 1:22:16

yeah, oh yeah, Miss Delgado, Miss Swinson, myself

1:22:22

and this brick. Yeah,

Teresa Velasquez 1:22:26

maybe it's somebody else. I thought it was Miss Patty. Was Miss Swinson's daughter, but that's not her that looked like maybe it was the mother, Kane.

Brittany Mendez 1:22:41

I mean, if she's wearing the exact same thing, maybe it was just. Can you see this one?

Teresa Velasquez 1:23:12

Uh huh. I know that was that. That Benny Renteria, and then that's David on the left there with the print on his shirt. And I can't place the other ones that maybe is Jerry next to Benny.

Brittany Mendez 1:23:36

And this is probably the El Paso. El Paso one, correct,

Teresa Velasquez 1:24:13

Possibly, that one there in the middle. That's me, that one there with a boy named Mario Quintero. He was a real Shy Boy. He had an older brother. His name was Armando, but I believe he was mentally challenged. He was a big guy, hard worker. He ended up being a real close to my father. Years later, he would be one that he was real close to my uncle as well, but he often helped my family. In fact, he came to my wedding. I have a picture of him with my dad or my brother or somebody, or maybe with me and my husband, but it's just weird that I ended up knowing his brother way, way later. I don't know whatever became of of Mario, but his brother, we they called him Cato, but he unfortunately passed away. He had a lot of health issues, his brother. But I remember this guy. He was always just a little quiet guy. He could see that difference in size. I was always a big girl and towering over these little young boys. But I just remember him being real, real kind of shy and sweet.

Brittany Mendez 1:25:42

Was this in El Paso?

1:25:44

Yeah, probably.

Brittany Mendez 1:25:58

okay, so I think we probably might. We'll just end here. Okay, my, I just need to update my laptop. It keeps like, okay, doing some weird stuff.

Teresa Velasquez 1:26:11

So if you want to capture one more here in the middle row to the right, that one that's showing us, oh, that's in Palm school, in the swings. But the other one down the next row over in the end, the one on the right next to it, this one. Oh, no, this one. No above. Let's see where I right the one you just had, that one that's us practicing in the in the P our PE room was a portable and that probably was the actual class, like, not necessarily the square dancing group. So I guess she would teach, like square dancing like during PE class, but just to, just to show the limited space that we had to learn all these dances we are our gym was an actual portable building, like a, like a mobile home portable that was our gym. But these were some of the people that were, I guess. I think that looks like more class than the

actual square dancing group of people. But I thought it was interesting just to show the come find me. We would literally fit like four squares in there at a time. But she would do it. I mean, she she put her microphone, and I think I felt like she would stand on something, and so we could all hear her and have a microphone and call out the different steps, and we'd learn it, learn the dances. Yeah. So tomorrow. What time are we on for tomorrow?

Brittany Mendez 1:27:45

Yeah, give me one second.

1:27:49

Okay, so,

Brittany Mendez 1:27:54

okay, so this was the portable,

Teresa Velasquez 1:27:57

yeah, despite having, you know, limited space, it's just a kind of a snapshot of the confined space that we had to learn dances being that our gym was A portable building.

Brittany Mendez 1:28:15

And to answer your question tomorrow, at noon. Okay, noon tomorrow? Yeah, and we still kind of have, like, a bit to go, so tomorrow might just be like a longer

Teresa Velasquez 1:28:42

Ok, at noon tomorrow,

Brittany Mendez 1:28:45

Before we hang up I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording. This is the end of part two, stopping the recording now. Oh.