

## **Maria Rivas (MR) and Julia Medina (JM)**

MR: She was strong. I remember once when the Principal of the school, the junior high, kicked me out because I was chewing gum. So, my mom went up to the school and said, “I need to talk to the Vice Principal.” The guy put his fingers in his ears ‘cause he didn’t want to listen to my mom. And my mom just reached across that desk, I remember, and she pulled his hands out and she goes, “You’re gonna listen to me. My daughter was just chewing gum. She’s a good student – she wasn’t hurting nobody, she wasn’t doing anything.” I thought she was gonna whack him. And the guy looked at my mom and he apologized to her and said that ‘Maria can go back to class now,’ and my mom stood there with her arms crossed and I was so proud of her. I go, man, she’s strong.

JM: That’s Mom.

MR: Yeah, that’s Mom...yeah. She was real soft, and I used to love to always touch her skin. I was kind of a pest, I guess. She told me that. She says since I was little, I would sit right next to her and just poke her eyes and I would grab her cheek and I would pull her skin up like a tent, you know? And she would go, “Aye, stop it *mija*.” As she got older, you know, she couldn’t move her body as much. So after I’d bathe her, I put the lotion on her and she would tell me, “Oh, that feels so good. It’s good.” And it was so rewarding – I really, really, really miss that.

I used to work in Yosemite, and whenever I’d come for the weekend or when I would leave, my mom would step out on the porch and she’d wave. I knew that one day she wasn’t gonna be out there to wave at me, so I would go back to Yosemite and I’m driving and I’m crying, for miles and miles – I’m thinking about her waving. So, I said one day I need to take a picture of her waving. Now we have a big picture of her that’s by her couch that she used to sit on, and I’m so, so happy I took this picture, ‘cause,

um, before I leave for class, or before I go to work, I always open the door back up and I go, 'Bye, Mom!' And I wave at her – wave at her picture. I miss her waving goodbye, and, yeah, I miss that.

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