

Immigration policy divides families, enforces contradictions

La otra frontera

BY GILES MORRIS

I arrived at Southwood Mobile Home Park through the back entrance, an unmarked driveway off Old Lynchburg Road just past the Albemarle County Police Department offices. It's so easy to miss that, even though I'd been there before, I drove past the turn and had to double back to catch the narrow access road, which leads over a rise into a different world. A mature oak grove, dotted with metal-sided trailer homes stretched as far as I could see in every direction.

I hung a right down a side road, past trailers adorned with Mexican flags, home to miniature vegetable gardens and pickup trucks with soccer team stickers in the windows, and stopped at a nondescript rust brown trailer parked next to a derelict food truck.

A young man wearing a dress shirt, slacks, and a tie stepped out on the porch to meet me. Richard Aguilar is a 21-year-old straight-A student going into his senior year at James Madison University. Southwood is where he grew up and where nearly 1,000 Latinos, mostly undocumented, live in Albemarle County.

Richard and I had spoken in person once before, and we would spend the next hour and a half walking around the mobile home park, talking about what it was like to grow up there, and talking about why the place is a living, breathing reason for immigration reform.

"I saw a lot of things. I saw the gangs. I saw the drugs. I saw the prostitution," Aguilar said. "I don't blame Southwood for being like that, I actually blame society for letting a neighborhood like that exist."

Aguilar is a U.S. citizen born in South Central Los Angeles to undocumented immigrants from El Salvador. There are around 11.5 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today and last year a record 396,906 people were deported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The U.S. government spent about \$17 billion on immigration enforcement and created a 3 percent dent in the problem. Meanwhile families all over America in places like Southwood, live in total fear.

Doug Ford is the director of the Immigration Law Clinic at UVA School of Law and handles cases for the immigration advocacy program at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville. Here's how he sums up the legal situation facing undocumented immigrants.



Richard Aguilar, 21, grew up in Southwood Mobile Home Park with undocumented parents who came to the U.S. after fleeing a civil war in El Salvador. He graduated with honors from Monticello High School, where he was an all-district lacrosse player and a state champion football player. Aguilar is a rising senior and straight-A student at James Madison University and a public advocate for the Dream Act legislation. (Photo by John Robinson)

"Basically you are deportable every single day you are here," Ford said. "If an officer doesn't like you and puts you into

the system, unless you have some amazing claim to hold you here, there's almost no way to get you out. Because you are deportable, it's just at the discretion of ICE how to use its resources."

The country is at a decision point. Unemployment is high, politics polarized, and immigration is a touchstone. So often, the conversation around immigration centers on abstract talking points. Amnesty versus the rule of law. Black and white. But the issue already exists in shades of gray, impacting almost every aspect of life in the Latino community.

"I grew up in that lifestyle knowing that my parents weren't citizens, that they couldn't live in the United States, that they faced the threat of deportation any day," Aguilar said. "If my mom got pulled over for running a stop sign, or if my dad did something, I could never see them again, despite the fact that I was born in the United States. That's a horrible feeling."

Here are some more numbers to consider. The Pew Hispanic Center (PHC) estimates that there are 200,000 undocumented immigrants in Virginia, 12th most in the nation.

According to the U.S. Census, Charlottesville and Albemarle County are home to about 7,000 Latinos, somewhere between 5 and 5.5 percent of the total population. People familiar with the community estimate that between 40 and 60 percent of the adult Latino population is undocumented. Albemarle County schools are already 8 percent Latino, with some schools (Cale, Agnor-Hurt) close to 20 percent. Another number: Pew Hispanic Center estimates there are 4.5 million U.S.-born children with at least one unauthorized parent.

A month ago the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of one major piece of Arizona SB 1070, the most severe immigration law ever proposed, paving the way for state and local law enforcement officers to determine people's immigration status during stops and to detain them if they are unable to prove that they are legal residents. Prince William County enacted similar legislation in 2007 and proposed its adoption statewide late last year.

Ford: "In some ways, Prince William paved the way to Arizona."

Corey Stewart, the county supervisor and lieutenant governor candidate who pushed for its adoption, claims that Prince William County law enforcement officers have identified 4,700 "illegal immigrants" since the measure went into effect. If the GOP backs the legislation's adoption statewide, it would likely have the votes to push the measure through the General Assembly. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down farther reaching components of Arizona SB 1070, including a provision that would have made it illegal for unauthorized immigrants to seek work and for citizens to house them. Polling data shows that nearly 60 percent of Americans approve of the law, but 75 percent of Latinos oppose it.

Just before the court decision was handed down, President Barack Obama announced that his administration would no longer deport undocumented immigrants under the age of 30 who came to the U.S. before they turned 16, have lived here for at least five years, and possess clean criminal records. The policy will make it possible for between 800,000 and 1.5 million people to obtain driver's licenses and work legally when it comes into effect, which may happen as early as next month.

In reaching out to the Dreamers—the name for the under-30 group—through his enforcement policy, Obama courted the Latino vote and vocalized a liberal agenda.

"They are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper," Obama said, as he introduced the policy from the Rose Garden.

The undocumented immigrants in Charlottesville are nearly invisible, but they are here. They work cleaning our houses, offices, and country clubs, as roofers and landscapers, in restaurant kitchens. They can't speak for themselves, because, on the record, they don't exist. But other members of the Latino community are ready to speak for them, and to explain how immigration reform can bring them out of the shadows.

Living in limbo

Richard Aguilar was born a U.S. citizen in 1991. His parents had fled a 12-year civil war in El Salvador, fueled heavily by U.S. funding, that killed 75,000 people. His father was in the army and felt the war was wrong. He heard there was opportunity in the U.S., so he took his family north and became a day laborer.

When Aguilar was 3 years old, the family moved across the country to Charlottesville and, alongside many other undocumented families, they landed in Southwood.

"People don't realize that if you're undocumented, buying a house or signing a lease requires having a social security number, whereas in a mobile home park you don't," Aguilar said. "People would rather buy a trailer than live in a neighborhood where a neighbor could report them."

His mother didn't make it past second grade in El Salvador and his father had only finished ninth grade. Neither one of them spoke English when they arrived. Today, Southwood's children are supported by a community center run by Habitat for Humanity—which purchased the park in 2007 with the intent of redeveloping it—that offers health resources funded by UVA, outreach services from Albemarle County Public Schools, and programming from the Boys & Girls Club. When Richard was young, none of that existed. He was the only Latino kid in a seven person after school group at the community center.

Southwood underwent a watershed change through the '90s, and by middle school Aguilar said his part of the neighborhood was mostly undocumented Mexicans, Salvadorians, and Hondurans.

Gloria Rockhold, community engagement coordinator for Albemarle County Schools, is in charge of interfacing with Latino families, and she says the situation facing immigrant children makes dealing with the school system challenging.

"When they're interpreting for their parents they become the gatekeepers of knowledge. They become the ones who control the information that comes into the home," Rockhold said. "Then when they get to school, all of a sudden they're treated like children. There's this huge misunderstanding of the responsibilities of the immigrant child."

Rockhold recounted a story of a second grader who stayed home alone to take care of her 3-year-old sister. The girl told Rockhold that when someone knocked on the door, she took her little sister and hid under the bed, because she was afraid they would be taken away.

"When you get a child that grows up with that culture it's very difficult as an adult for that child to delete the fear," Rockhold said.

Southwood has a reputation for gangs, drugs, and prostitution. But as Aguilar and I walked the streets on a hot, summer day, there was little evidence of that. A group of men sat at the bus stop waiting to get a ride into town for a late shift.

"Most of these people are hardworking Latinos. My father goes to work at five in the morning. I know a lot of people who live that way," Aguilar said.

But, he said, the secret lives of the undocumented are fertile ground for illegal activity. Aguilar's best friend growing up became a member of MS-13, a notorious Latin gang with Salvadorian roots that is aligned with the Sinaloa drug cartel. His mother forbid them from seeing each other and they took different paths through high school.

"I talk to people in my neighborhood and they're too scared to go to the police because they're afraid they're going to deport them," Aguilar said. "You go to a mostly white neighborhood and they're quick to call the cops. There's something wrong there. That's why there's such high gang activity. Such high drug activity. I hate to admit that. I wish I had the



Richard and his mother, Ena Franco, pictured on the front steps of their trailer in Southwood Mobile Home Park. (Photo by John Robinson)

answer. If I did, I would do something about it. We're just not addressed."

Like many children of immigrants, Richard and his sister grew up working, babysitting, and translating. His father worked construction. His mother cleaned houses in Ivy, Keswick, and Lake Monticello.

"I was robbed of childhood and adolescence. My father and mother were always working. If I wasn't a babysitter then I had a job," Aguilar said. "I worked illegally when I was 12 in an apple orchard in Lovingston. I never had the picturesque American childhood, never got to go to Chuck E. Cheese's and all that. So for me my outlet was my education."

His sister, Vicky, just graduated from Liberty University. Aguilar plans to study law when he finishes college next spring. His parents finally won their permanent residency status in court last month with help from students at the Immigration Clinic.

Aguilar's story is remarkable, and he knows it. He credits Headstart and his teachers at Cale Elementary School for making sure he learned English well, but meeting him in person, you get the sense that he would have made it no matter where he was born.

"I would just bury myself in books and the more I read the more I realized there was more to the world than this place. I just told myself I wanted out," he said.

Aguilar's bedroom sits at the front end of his family's trailer. It's not much more than a bed and a television with a window. There are books everywhere. *Catcher in the Rye*, *On the Road*, *Moneyball*, Harry Potter books, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, even Patti Smith's autobiography. He counts Steinbeck as one of his favorite authors, and there was a stack of hardbound library books in a pile, left over from an anthropology term paper on Afro-Cuban identity.

"If I could somehow instill that in people now... I have friends who are dead. Friends who are in jail," Aguilar said. "Friends who have already had kids with multiple people. I always tell people you can come from dirt, but you don't have to be dirty."

At Monticello High School, Aguilar was class president for three years, a member of five honor societies, an all-district lacrosse player, a state football champion.

I asked him what the kids he grew up with think of him now.

"It's almost like they think I'm better than them. Or that I have some higher status. But in reality I relate to them. I'm still the same person," Aguilar said. "I have friends who are dealing drugs and smoking pot and all that, and they're kind of iffy about me because I want to be a lawyer. But there are a lot of people who are proud of me. That's why I feel so much pressure at school."

For now, he's content trying to get straight A's and pushing for the Dream Act, legislation that would grant a path to citizenship for the same cohort of unauthorized immigrants addressed in President Obama's new enforcement policy. Aguilar is already involved in organizing Dreamer workshops that will educate people about what they need to qualify for deferred status, the legal category ICE uses to close cases and grant work authorization. It's a loophole that could vanish with a new administration in place, not a permanent solution.

"These are people's lives you're dealing with that you're messing with," Aguilar said. "I know people who have been class valedictorians and been three-sport standouts in high school and they can't go to college. They can't pursue higher education. To me that's a problem."

Another recent enforcement development would have directly impacted Aguilar growing up. Last year, the Obama administration issued a memo to ICE setting the parameters for the use of "prosecutorial discretion" in its cases. The Morton memo essentially laid out a list of factors that would affect ICE officers' decision to pursue deportation proceedings.

Ford: "If mom and dad got caught up in immigration detention, there's a whole series of positive factors—and it's basically a soft type of character test—where if you've got U.S. citizen kids, you've got work history, you can get community letters of support, you don't have a criminal history, then there's the possibility to get what they call prosecutorial discretion."

In a community where English is not the dominant language, where literacy rates are low, and where fear is paramount, the notion of understanding the ins and outs of U.S. immigration law and policy is remote. Instead, the law exists as a malevolent force, not as a clear set of guidelines.

"You just have to experience it. That's all I can say about it," Aguilar said. "Once you've been undocumented and experienced living in fear, living in poverty, the gangs, and all that stuff. Once you've lived that, maybe you'll have an

understanding. It's the cliché: walk in someone's shoes."

Divided families

As a full time United Way employee and the face of Creciendo Juntos, a nonprofit network that serves Latinos in Charlottesville, Trujillo is, in many ways, the local voice of the Mexican-American community. Because she dresses professionally and speaks good English, it's easy to assume that Trujillo's story is different from the undocumented immigrants she works with. But it's not that different.

In 1999, her husband, Ruben Trujillo was working in customs and immigration in Mexico when he was tipped off that his life was in immediate danger from colleagues in his own department because of his role policing corruption. He literally had to run for his life, leaving his wife and their brand new home in downtown Mexico City behind.

Ruben came to the United States, thinking he could make his way to Alaska, but he had a friend in Charlottesville and this is where he ended up. Trujillo came six months later on a tourist visa.

"I had to follow my heart," she said.

The couple applied for asylum status, but their application was denied. They got a company to sponsor them and eventually obtained work permits and legal resident status. Trujillo will become a citizen next year, she hopes at Monticello's July 4 naturalization ceremony. In the meantime, she solves problems for Latino immigrants, many of them Mexican.

"I have succeeded on a personal level. As a family and as a member of the community, even if the economy is bad, I'm in a position to help people," she said.

For the first time in history, the net migration from Mexico to the U.S. is at a standstill, but Mexicans still account for close to 60 percent of unauthorized immigrants in this country. Over the last decade, Mexican-American U.S. births outpaced the number of Mexican immigrants who arrived in the country. The Mexican-American community straddles the physical border, with family members on either side, but it's also divided by an invisible border separating family members in this community.

Ford: "A split status household often intensifies mistrust because of the difference in treatment and future options for the two groups. While most come here to work hard and uphold the rule of law—countless times I have clients tell me some variation of this—they may not use the courts to resolve dissolving marriages or call the police when victims of crimes out of mistrust."

Wendy Miranda, one of Trujillo's clients, came to the U.S. when she was 5 years old, with her parents, legal residents from El Salvador, after the family had spent stints in Maryland and Washington D.C., a main port of entry for Latino immigrants.

"I grew up in Charlottesville. This is the only place I know," Miranda said.

Miranda was one of only a handful of Latinos when she started out in the local school system, but the number had grown significantly by the time she graduated from Charlottesville High School. Her parents are citizens now, and her problem is essentially personal, cultural maybe.

When Miranda was 18 she met Eduardo Hernandez, an undocumented Mexican who worked in restaurant kitchens. They had a daughter, now 6 years old. Eduardo disappeared, and Wendy is not sure whether he was deported or left of his own accord. Either way, she can't get any child support from him, because he doesn't exist.

"He left and there's basically nothing I can do," Miranda said. "Maybe he was obligated to leave. I don't think he would have wanted to up and leave his daughter."

Trujillo is trying to help Miranda locate Hernandez and file a claim for child support, but she is also documenting the myriad family problems that our immigration system creates.

In June, I met Trujillo and another of her clients, Alicia, at the United Way office. Trujillo was helping Alicia, a U.S. citizen who didn't want her last name used in the story because her husband is undocumented, with two problems. The first was that Alicia was pregnant and wanted her mother around to help her with the birth, but her mother couldn't get a visa to come to the U.S. The second is that Alicia's brother, who was also born in the U.S., never got his birth certificate when his parents took the two of them back to Mexico as young children. He has had a difficult time establishing his citizenship and has no U.S. passport.

Alicia is frank about her situation. Her husband, who works in landscaping, likes the lifestyle in the U.S., even if he has to live in fear of deportation. As a citizen, she has nothing to fear, but she would rather be in Guadalajara, where she was raised and where her family is.

"[People at home] think everyone here has a laptop and an iPhone. Once someone gets here they realize the American Dream is totally different from how people tell it," Alicia told me in Spanish. "The people who have never come here think of it like the Ultimate, like we'll be able to do whatever we want. And then when they're here they realize it's totally different. So many doors close on you, and the first one is family."

These days, when Americans think of the the border, they think of walls and fences, but to the people on the other side it functions more like a tap. When the U.S. economy needs workers—in agriculture, in factories, in construction—the tap is turned on. When public opinion gets hostile and jobs scarce, the tap turns off.

But the draw to come to the U.S. and make a better life is always there.

"At least here the food is cheap. Rent isn't obviously, but here you can eat meat and there it's nothing but beans," Alicia said. "The reasons [for coming] will always exist."

Alicia may be a U.S. citizen, but she doesn't feel part of our society.

"I feel like a missing person in this country. I feel like I'm any other person without papers," she said. "For me it's a totally unknown country. The culture, the language, the people... it's all foreign, strange."

Alicia and Wendy Miranda's children are U.S. citizens, born to mothers who are U.S. citizens, but they'll live with the reality that their fathers could disappear or have disappeared. As the U.S. ratchets up its immigration enforcement, the fear of losing it all is becoming very real for people who have spent a decade or more here working and paying taxes, and it plays out in many ways.

"I have seen the tension growing between the ones who came and the ones who were born here," Trujillo said. "They know they don't have the same opportunities, the same rights. Even in the workplace, if you know that I don't have documents, you won't be treated in the same way."

Trujillo has helped women who have lost their jobs because their employees found out they were pregnant. She has dealt with families that have been separated because one parent or another has been deported. And she has crossed the border facing an uncertain future. She says that among all the issues she sees her clients facing, the inability to cross the border freely is one of the constants.

"It breaks your heart to think that you haven't seen your mother in the last 10 or 15 years. You're not part of the family anymore. You become a Norteño, someone who's relied on to provide money," she said. "When you hear your mom is gone, your dad is gone, you lose every connection you have to your own country. Not to be able to be there and give them a hug and say goodbye, it depresses you and it takes many years of your life to recover."

Trujillo has had three family members kidnapped or killed, fallout from her country's drug war, which, like the immigration problem, reveals how inextricably Latin America's issues are tied to U.S. demand for cheap labor, cheap drugs, cheap materials.

"Sometimes people think that you are selfish coming to the United States and leaving your family, but you don't have a choice," Trujillo said. "People work from early morning until sunset for a week there to make the money you can make here in a day."

Trujillo estimates that about 40 percent of the local Latino population is undocumented and that the largest percentage of citizens are under the age of 18. In other words, Charlottesville, like so many towns and cities in North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia, has a generation of citizens whose parents are not legally recognized and who can't yet vote.

She does not believe the immigrants she deals with will go home or that the U.S. can deport its way out of the current predicament. With the net migration stable, an inhospitable economy, and a recent court decision underpinning the legal framework for national policy, she feels like the country needs to seize the moment.

"The number of citizens is growing in a tremendous way. Something has to be done," Trujillo said. "The fact that parents have been here for 20 years, I think they deserve an opportunity. If you have been giving your life to make a good economy and you've raised children who are good citizens, you should have an opportunity to have some kind of documents a path to citizenship."



Bertha Solorzano, the owner of El Tepeyac, a restaurant and tienda on Greenbrier Drive, entered the United States illegally twice. A U.S. citizen since the early '90s, her life story reads like the prototypical American Dream narrative. (Photo by John Robinson)

The American Dream

I met Bertha Solorzano at her store, El Tepeyac, on Greenbrier Drive just off 29N. It took her a few minutes to disengage herself from the cash register. She was answering a man's questions about forms he was trying to fill out. I waited for her in the little restaurant area in back, which is like thousands of other tienda food counters around the country, decorated with paintings of pastoral Mexico, an Aztec warrior, and a colorful rendition of the Last Supper.

Solorzano's husband, Adolfo, is from El Salvador so the food counter sells Salvadorean pupusas in addition to Mexican favorites like menudo. You can buy anything at El Tepeyac: a replica soccer jersey, a DVD, a phone card, a loaf of bread. Stores like El Tepeyac are the unofficial centers of Latino immigrant communities all over the U.S. First, there's the tienda, then the restaurant, then the soccer league.

Now 46, a U.S. citizen, and a successful business owner twice over, Solorzano speaks perfect English with a notable Chicago accent. She has four daughters. The oldest, Bertha Estrada, is a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. Maria Gracia, her second, graduated from Northwestern with a political science degree. Jasmine, who attended Albemarle High School, is in nursing school in Chicago, and Denise, her baby, is still at AHS.

Solorzano is a living monument to the immigrant's success story in every way except that she entered the U.S. illegally twice.

Ford: "In the old days there was a waiver, a way to wipe off your illegal entry, and that waiver doesn't exist anymore."

After 9/11, immigration law changed, and the clause in the Immigration Nationality Act that allowed people who had entered the country without authorization to naturalize if they had sponsorship from an employer or family member expired.

Solorzano came to the U.S. from Michoacan in 1975 as a 9-year-old with her parents. Her father worked as a chef and her

mother worked at a factory on the north side of Chicago. In those days, public schools wouldn't accept students without a social security number, so Solorzano attended Catholic schools.

When she was 15, she fell in love with an undocumented Mexican, and they were married. She got pregnant with her first daughter and her husband took the young family back to Mexico. She had her second daughter there and then her marriage fell apart.

"The only education I had was in the U.S. I found myself kind of lost in Mexico. What kind of a future could I offer my daughters there? I couldn't see any potential. I had no family there," Solorzano said.

She found herself an isolated teenage mother in a country she didn't know.

"In Hispanic tradition, you're supposed to stay with your husband. I decided to come across illegally," Solorzano said.

So she packed up her two baby daughters and made her way to the border at Tijuana where she hired a coyote to take her across with her youngest daughter. Solorzano, her oldest daughter, had a U.S. passport, so she went through on her own.

"They took her across in a car and she had the passport and everything. We stayed behind and walked across. It was the worst. Very hard and very sad. But I was sure I had to go across," Solorzano said.

Solorzano made her way back to Chicago where her parents, who had become legal residents, took her and the girls in. She worked at a pizza shop and as a seamstress at a factory and studied for her GED.

"My English might not have been the greatest but I was able to get ahead," she said. She filed for divorce from her husband and petitioned for legal status with her parents as sponsors. She got her resident status in 1990 and became a citizen five years later at a ceremony alongside 5,000 other people in an auditorium.

"It was a sense of happiness. I was seeing things completely different. I kind of felt like I was finally heading in the right direction," she said.

Having fought hard for a foothold, Solorzano began to climb. She left her daughters with babysitters while she worked as a receptionist, secretary, sales person, and office manager and went to school.

"It was very hard because I didn't spend the time I wanted with my kids but it was a sacrifice," Solorzano said. "I knew if I wanted to give them what they could have I just had to work harder."

Solorzano met Adolfo, who naturalized in the United States after getting asylum status as a result of the war in El Salvador, and they got married. She got her real estate license and found her way to the Frigid Fluid Company, where she was initially hired as an accountant.

"I was working just as hard but I wasn't washing dishes and sewing clothes," she said. Frigid employed almost entirely Spanish speaking workers. Solorzano worked there for 10 years, holding every job and eventually running the operation.

"They opened my doors and I opened their market in Latin America," she said.

The Solorzano family, 100 percent legal and U.S. citizens, was thriving. Solorzano's parents had moved to Charlottesville and they kept telling her that there were opportunities amidst the growing Latino immigrant community. In 2003, she succumbed to the whispers and she and Adolfo opened La Guadalupana on Carlton Road in Belmont. Later she started El Tepeyac, a restaurant, named after the hill where legend says the Virgin Mary first showed herself to the indigenous people in the person of Juan Diego. She estimates that her customers were about 80 percent Hispanic and that only 10 percent of the adults she dealt with regularly were authorized residents.

The businesses were so successful that Solorzano and her husband sold them both and took a year off to spend time with their kids. Then they decided to reopen El Tepeyac. Solorzano is extremely careful of how she talks about immigration. She knows it's a hot button issue, and she is a business person first and foremost.

"You gotta look at it both ways. It's hard. I don't think I can describe it. There's a lot of hardworking people looking for their dreams. Hard working people. For people like that, there has to be an opportunity," Solorzano said.

As much as Solorzano treads lightly around the immigration debate, she is also careful to talk about her appreciation for

the immigrant community that has built her business. According to federal statistics, undocumented immigrant workers make up 25 percent of U.S. agricultural workers, 20 percent of household industry workers, 30 percent of roofers and dry wall installers.

"The immigrants are working here. They're spending their money here. They're paying taxes and helping the economy," she said. "If we don't have these people, who's going to do those jobs? These are hard jobs that not everyone is willing to do, because they are hard manual labor."

So what's the solution, I asked her.

"It's political. What can I say? I guess these people should be given a chance. Splitting up the families is not the best thing to do. It just hurts everyone. The kids that are here now need the support," she said.

Like a lot of Latino immigrants, Solorzano is counting on her kids to make an impression on the U.S. in a way that her generation couldn't. Currently, Latino voters make up only 3 percent of Virginia's registered voting population.

"I remember in Chicago when there was only one Latino radio station. It's just a matter of time. We're gonna grow and we're gonna catch up. This is just the first generation here. When the kids grow up, they're going to take us there. Right now, it's just small," Solorzano said.

As we were finishing up our interview, the clerk at the front register came around the corner and held up a bag of pretzels.

"Dos veintinueve," Solorzano said in Spanish. Then she looked at me. "In the future, everybody's gonna be bilingual."

Bilingual. Bicultural. Legal. Full of promise. Richard Aguilar gets the last word.

"What Charlottesville needs to know is that we are part of the community and over time we won't be seen as documented or undocumented, legal or illegal. Ten, 20, 30 years from now, we won't be looked at the way we are now. I see a movement, just like the black movement in the 1960s, and I'm so grateful to be a part of it, because it's going to go down in history as one of the great demonstrations of liberty. Not just in Charlottesville but nationwide, Latinos are going to stand up for their rights. Right now it's early stages."