

Look at the picture. Then read the title and the first sentence in each paragraph. Who is this article about? What happened? Read and find out.

Rafael Salazar

Rafael Salazar was born in 1981 on a small farm in southern Mexico. His family was very poor. He remembers waking up at 5:30 a.m. and going with his father to milk cows before breakfast, then walking one hour to his local elementary school. "I was fortunate because my parents always pushed me to study," Rafael says. "They weren't educated, but they knew that education is the only way out of poverty."

Rafael's parents encouraged him to move to the United States. He arrived in 1999 and moved in with his aunt in San Diego, California. He spoke no English, but he was determined to learn. Right away, he signed up for ESL classes at San Diego City College. He started with morning classes, then he joined the afternoon classes and even attended evening classes. Everyone was glad to see Rafael's passion for learning. "I never saw such a determined student," said Amanda Yellin, Rafael's teacher in ESL 1. "He practically lived at the school."

Rafael's career counselor helped him get a weekend job as a houseman in a local hotel, where he moved furniture and

prepared rooms for banquets, or large dinner parties. His boss noticed his passion to succeed and encouraged him to consider a career in the hospitality industry. Soon, Rafael was promoted to the position of lead houseman, then banquet waiter. Now, he's banquet captain.

Rafael believes strongly in setting goals. "Set a goal and make it happen. When you reach that goal, set another one," he suggests. His next goal is to become a food and beverage manager. He plans to begin a certificate program in hotel management in the fall. Eventually, he wants to

be the general manager of a major hotel.

At a recent banquet honoring hospitality employees, Rafael received his hotel's Outstanding Hospitality Worker Award. Speaking fluent English, he gave a speech in which he thanked his parents, his aunt, his ESL teachers, and his boss at the hotel. He encouraged others like him to set goals, work hard, and, above all, learn English. "Don't allow language to be an obstacle to your success," he told them. "If a poor farmer like me can succeed in America, so can you."



1 Check your understanding

1. What was Rafael's childhood like?
2. What do Rafael's parents believe is the only way out of poverty?
3. What was Rafael's first job at the hotel? How did he get it?
4. What is Rafael's next goal? What does he eventually want to become?
5. What advice does Rafael give to others?

2 Build your vocabulary

A Find and circle the words below in the article. Then use a dictionary and complete the chart with the missing forms.

Verb (v)	Adjective (adj)	Noun (n)
encourage	encouraged	
		education
	determined	
succeed	successful	success

B Complete the sentences. Use words from Exercise 2A.

1. George is a very _____ student. He takes English classes whenever they are offered.
(adj)
2. My neighbor Lisa is an _____ woman. She graduated from high school and college.
(adj)
3. To learn a new language as an adult, you have to have strong _____.
(n)
4. With the _____ of his parents and teachers, Max became the first person in his family to graduate from high school.
(n)
5. When Leila got an Outstanding Student award, she thanked her teachers for helping her to _____.
(v)
6. An instructor _____ his students in subjects like English and math.
(v)
7. I am not rich, but I feel that I am _____ because I love my work and people respect me.
(adj)

3 Think about it

1. Do you think Rafael is a successful person? Why or why not?
2. Is Rafael's story unusual?
3. Do you agree that it is important to set goals? What is your goal now?