

# News Summary



**ATTENTION:**

**Sara Wacker**

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**YWCA San Diego**

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**DIANE BELL**

## *Students write of sacrifices made by their mothers*

Former pro football player John Brockington once mentioned at a barbecue that his mom loved to eat chicken backs. My husband chuckled and suggested that Brockington's mother most likely was leaving the meatier parts for other family members, an example of self-sacrifice so typical of moms.

That exchange came to mind as I read student essays nominating their moms for Time Warner's annual San Diego "50 Best Moms" contest.

All the usual adjectives came into play: loving, giving, sharing, caring, kind, generous, hardworking, strong, inspirational, uplifting and a role model. Laced through the majority of essays, however, was the theme of sacrifice.

Nhi Nguyen, a Kearny High ninth-grader, wrote that her mother, who grew up in Vietnam, refuses to eat the fish she serves her kids for dinner. Instead she watches them devour the choice morsels, saying, "I'm allergic" or "I hate fish." Yet Nhi has later caught her mother examining the emaciated fish skeletons for a few scraps of flesh. "I feel a lump in my throat," writes Nhi, suddenly aware of "her utter sacrifices for us."

**Forging a new life:** Lana Culliver fled from domestic violence in Florida five years ago to start a new life in California. "When we got here, we didn't have any money or any place to live. I think my mom had only about \$30," notes her son, Tyler James, a fifth-grader at Horizon Christian Academy in Clairemont. "We stayed in shelters like St. Vincent de Paul and the YWCA Cortez Hill program, and my brother and sister and I went to Monarch School, which is a special school for homeless kids.

It took us a little more than two years to get our own apartment, but when we did we were so happy."

Lana, now studying to be a nurse, visits shelters, schools and prisons to talk about domestic violence and encourage others to change their lives as she did.

Fifth-grader Anna Yang of Serra Mesa tells of her mother's harrowing flight for her life from her home in Vietnam with attackers in pursuit. When a toddler and infant were abandoned en route by relatives because their crying increased the risk of capture, Anna's mother, then age 13, strapped the children to her own back. She continued her jungle trek until reaching safety in Thailand.

Now living in San Diego, her mom assumed the primary bread-winning role for 13 kids when Anna's dad died two years ago. Even so, she still finds time for charity work.

**Fostering love:** Yezenia Martinez, 22, didn't plan to take on the mantle of motherhood. When her parents left San Diego to return to Mexico, however, she became the foster mom to her 18-year-old brother and her

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## DIANE BELL • Many students' moms are single, divorced

FROM B1

14-year-old sister, Rose.

"Every day she has to go to work full time, go to school, then come home

to take care of me," writes Rose, a Carlsbad eighth-grader. "She is a great mom because she always puts me and my brother before herself, and she always tries to do what's best for us." Yezenia says she doesn't mind the added responsibility: "It's my family."

### **In sickness and health:**

Many students' moms are single, are divorced, have military spouses, work two and sometimes three jobs or deal with health problems.

Rosemarie Magtoto gave up her career to care for

two of her four children born with Down syndrome, plus her diabetic mother, who is a double amputee. "My mom never asks for anything," says her daughter, Danamarie, a Mira Mesa eighth-grader. "She will do these things for us forever ... just to take care of her family."

Despite suffering from kidney failure and awaiting a donor, Nathan Rasch's mother, whose Navy husband is often deployed, cares for three kids and volunteers at their schools.

"She puts everyone in her heart before putting herself in it," writes Nathan, a Tiersanta eighth-grader.

Likewise, Point Loma eighth-grader Andrew Roder suffers from kidney failure. He gets tireless care from his mom, who puts him on a dialysis machine every night. "She always tells me how strong I am and that I can do anything. My kidneys may fail on me," he concludes, "but my mom never will."

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