



IMMIGRATION

Colombian ice cream entrepreneur fulfills American dream one scoop at time

BY OSCAR CORRAL
ocorral@explicamedia.com

June 11, 2018 01:04 PM

Updated June 11, 2018 04:07 PM

As an undocumented teenager, Luisa “Lulu” Santos faced the same obstacles before millions of immigrants in the United States: the constant threat of deportation, the fear of being separated from her family, the inability to find work or get into the college of her choice.

Her single mother brought her and her sister from Colombia as children, hoping for a better life. While her mother cleaned houses, Santos and her sister studied, never letting their undocumented status cloud their dreams.

Javier Soto, president and CEO of the Miami Foundation, remembers meeting Santos, known as Lulu, at Miami Dade College when she was a student there at an event organized by MDC President Eduardo Padrón.

"I was in the audience that day and Lulu was one of the speakers and she told her story," Soto remembers. "Clearly she was incredibly bright, incredibly talented."

Help us deliver journalism that makes a difference in our community.

Our journalism takes a lot of time, effort, and hard work to produce. If you read and enjoy our journalism, please consider subscribing today.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Soto spoke to her afterward and offered to help her get into the school of her dreams, Georgetown University. Soto, a Georgetown alumnus, chipped in with a Miami Foundation scholarship.

"Her story is like so many stories here in Miami," Soto said. "I think it's important for America that Miami succeeds. Because I think Miami looks like what the rest of the country will look like in the future."

Santos eventually launched Lulu's, her own nitrogen ice cream brand, from her Washington, D.C., apartment. Today, she has more than 10 employees and has ambitions to grow Lulu's.

In this eighth episode of Making it in America, a documentary series highlighting the impacts of immigrant entrepreneurs in Florida, viewers will see how Santos never gave up hope as a young dreamer in America and what she has accomplished so far as an entrepreneur.

Oscar Corral, a former newspaper reporter and Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker, is founder and CEO of Explica Media. He can be reached at ocorral@explicamedia.com

SUGGESTED FOR YOU