

# Latina law student fights for Latinx youth, immigrants

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SASHA URBAN

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Carson Scott, a graduate student in the Gould School of Law, has been interested in helping immigrant communities since childhood. (Annalise Pasztor | Daily Trojan)

From a young age, Carson Scott knew she wanted to help immigrants.

Over the summer, the Gould School of Law graduate student worked with the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, helping over 60 unaccompanied minors and their guardians fight deportation through Esperanza's Legal Orientation Program for Custodians of Released Youth.

"It's basically a presentation on what the responsibilities of custodians for unaccompanied minors are," Scott said. "We also provide them with information on what the legal defenses against deportation are for the minors, how to find an attorney and what court proceedings are going to look like."

Scott said most of the minors she worked with had come to the United States on their own, but by the end of the summer she began to see some children that had been separated from their families at the border.

"It is a very emotional experience," Scott said. "I had worked with trauma survivors previously, but this was a whole new thing. I didn't realize how unprepared I was, because it's challenging."

Mercedes Nuñez Roldan, Scott's supervisor at Esperanza, said Scott is efficient, passionate and a great advocate for the people she works with.

Scott, who was raised by a Mexican mother and American father in Phoenix, said growing up in an area where Latinos were not always welcome allowed her to understand why many of those in the United States fear for their safety.

Outside of her summer work, Scott also volunteers at the USC Citizenship Project and is president of the Public Interest Law Foundation, which provides free legal assistance to marginalized communities.

Eliane Fersan, the director of USC's Initiative on Immigrants and Global Migration, works closely with Scott through PILF. After hearing about her work from Esperanza and other immigrant rights groups, Fersan was drawn to Scott's humility.

"What struck me is her commitment to immigration issues, and not in a pompous way," Fersan said. "She's right there to get the job done."

Working with children is not new to Scott. From 2009 to 2014, she ran a summer art camp with her brother in a small pueblo in Jalisco, Mexico. Scott's grandmother, an artist, always complained about the lack of art education for students in her town, so the summer before

her junior year of high school, Scott and her family started a makeshift camp for children to learn music, dance and visual arts at her grandmother's house.

"[My grandma] would tell a few people in the town, and then the word would spread and then the day that the camp started, kids would just flood into her house," Scott said.

Since then, Scott's interest in underprivileged communities and immigration has only grown. She is now at USC working with the school's immigration clinic where she is representing eight different clients, as well as volunteering with Esperanza at least once a week.

"Even though it's really difficult work, I find it really rewarding," Scott said. "I like interacting with the kids. It's something I enjoy and it helps give me perspective of why I'm studying so hard and why I'm working so hard in school."

This story is part of a mini-series highlighting Latinos at USC. It will run every week during Hispanic Heritage Month, which ends Oct. 15.

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