



## A Story of Two Sisters

*Immigration Legal Services*

Two sisters were abandoned at the door of an elderly couple. Their parents intentionally had not registered them with local Chinese authorities so that they could try to have a son. The girls remained with the couple into their early teens until a man came to their village looking for girls to work in a factory in the U.S. with an offer of generous wages and free immigration documents.

Accepting his offer, the girls were given “documents” and travel arrangements were made. Their documents were later taken and they were flown to Mexico City where they boarded a van. The van, filled with young Chinese girls, headed to the U.S. border. Along the way they learned the trip was not free. The sisters would work in brothels—young teen and pre-teen girls to be exploited in the illicit sex trade. Their captors prepped them on illegal border crossing, which was done on foot at night. The older sister made it; the younger one did not.

Alone and frightened, the younger sister was forced to hide out for weeks before attempting another crossing. Eventually she succeeded only to be “sold” to a man in New York City. She spent months in his apartment forced into acts of prostitution. Meanwhile, the older sister was forced to work in a Texas brothel. One evening she fled to a nearby gas station. There she called for help and was reunited with family friends and a distant relative.

In New York, the younger sister escaped and made her way to a homeless shelter. She found an ad by her older sister posted online at a Chinese-language version of Facebook. They reunited and made their way to Atlanta to stay with a family friend familiar with the work of Catholic Charities Atlanta’s Immigration Legal Services program.

With the help of Catholic Charities Atlanta staff, the sisters applied for and received Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and are now lawful permanent residents. It has been a humbling experience for Catholic Charities staffers to work with these young women. These young women are amazingly resilient!

