



Marissa Kawate-Rodriguez

Marissa Kawate-Rodriguez graduated from Gardena Senior High School. She will be attending El Camino Community College with major in microbiology.

My name is Marissa Kawate-Rodriguez. I was born on September 27, 2002, in Gardena, California. I come from Japanese descent, on my mother's side, and Puerto Rican on my Father's side. My dad passed away when I was about nine years old, and my mother has been taking care of me ever since. I am the youngest in my family, next is my older sister, Kaylynn Kawate-Rodriguez, and then my mother, Junie Kawate. My mother is my hero, who gave up everything for us, and when I start my career, I will be helping my mother, who has supported me through thick and thin.

I am a senior attending Gardena Senior High School and my interests include the art of music, drama, and science. I have been in the Gardena High Marching Band and Drama Club since my freshman year of high school while being a leader of my band section for three years. With my interest in science, I plan to earn a degree in microbiology and use that degree to pursue a career as a pathologist, working for hospitals, testing out blood, DNA, and more to find out what illness someone is suffering from. My mother is a medical biller, and my sister is planning to earn a degree in kinesiology, which means that everyone in our family will work in a field of science. I am very motivated to build the best future for myself, and start my career to help people in need.

My being Japanese has been a part of my culture ever since I was a kid. Every August, my mom would take me and my sister to the annual Obon festival in Gardena, where we celebrate to honor the spirits of our ancestors. My sister and I used to dress up in happi coats, which were straight-sleeved coats that are usually only worn during festivals, and went to go celebrate our Japanese culture. When I get older, I plan to keep my Japanese tradition alive and go to the Obon festival, just like how I would as a young kid.

My Japanese culture means a lot to me, and to my family. I am extremely grateful to have a family like mine, and I am grateful for everyone who has supported me throughout the years. I am also grateful to keep the Japanese traditions that my mother has taught me. I am Marissa Kawate-Rodriguez, and I am proud to be of Japanese descent.