

## Daniel Zamora–Morales

### Daniel Zamora–Morales Strives to Help Others

by Faith Price

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Daniel Zamora–Morales's desire to help people has taken him on a journey to many corners of the world, as a missionary, a soldier, and a WSU student.

Zamora–Morales's family hails from the Yaqui tribe of Sonora, Mexico. A history of wars between the Yaqui and the Mexican government dispersed many Yaqui across Mexico and the United States.

"Many of the Yaqui fled Mexico in the early 1900's and hid as Mexican farmers. Many were deported, enslaved and killed by the Mexican government," says Zamora–Morales. Many Yaqui "hid in Texas and Arizona."

Zamora–Morales was born in Galveston, Texas and raised in Bay City, Texas.

"I am the youngest of six brothers and sisters and I have 19 nephews and nieces. I am the first to attend college."

His life's journey helping others was sparked at a young age.

"I was 13 years old when I decided I didn't just want to be a doctor or a preacher and help people; I wanted to be a missionary," says Zamora–Morales. "I have been to Haiti, India, and Peru as a missionary during my teenage years."

In his early twenties, Zamora–Morales's quest took a different approach, as he decided to pursue his education.

"I joined the military so I could get my college education paid for," says Zamora–Morales.

In the army, Zamora–Morales trained as an EMT, and served in Korea, Kuwait, and Iraq. After six years, and two tours of Iraq, he found a new direction for his life.

"When I returned from my second tour to Iraq as a medic I wanted to help people but I didn't want to find myself in the same life and death emergencies on a daily basis anymore," says Zamora–Morales. "I have seen much death and as a result I like to focus on the quality of life others still have."

This realization, and an experience working with teenagers with language impairments, guided him to pursue a degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences. He started at Clark College in Vancouver, WA for his prerequisites with the intent of transferring to WSU Spokane.

"I saw the program here online and I was fascinated by a professor's teaching style named Dr. Meredith. To say the least I knew I wanted to be taught by her."

And as a WSU Spokane student, he has had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Amy Meredith, in the classroom and out in the field. Zamora–Morales says the most amazing project he had the opportunity to be involved in during his college career, was under the guidance of Dr. Meredith and Dr. Ella Inglebret.

"I went to Dr. Inglebret and Dr. Meredith wanting to do something for my people. They put their resources together and directed me to some of their personal contacts. The end result has been an amazing experience where I can give back to my Native people."

He is currently tutoring at-risk youth to help them prepare for the GED exam.

"As a teenager, I was expelled from school and ordered to get my GED when I was 15 years old. I understand their needs first hand," says Zamora–Morales, adding, "I find great motivation and purpose when tutoring young Native Indian men and women."

Dr. Meredith describes the work he's doing as something she wouldn't send just any student to do, but she felt Zamora–Morales was up for the challenge.

"I think we're really lucky to have him," says Dr. Meredith. "He comes with a unique background and skillset that allows him to connect with people." She describes him as a natural leader who relates well to others.

His people skills and Spanish language abilities are a couple reasons she's excited to have Zamora–Morales travel to Guatemala with the group "Hearts in Motion" over spring break this March. Dr. Meredith estimates WSU will be sending 30 students to Guatemala on the medical mission trip to donate health services to families in need. This will be Dr. Meredith's third time making this trip, and Zamora–Morales's second.

Medical professionals volunteering for the mission will be performing cleft palate surgeries. Meredith and the student participants from the Speech and Hearing department will be responsible for educating the families of surgery patients on what to expect. Meredith says her own Spanish is lacking, so she will be leaning on Zamora–Morales in communicating with the families.



*Daniel Zamora–Morales (l) with his mentor, Dr. Amy Meredith.*

"I will be translating, but also observing speech assessments while there," says Zamora-Morales, adding, "Native Indians have one of the higher rates of cleft palates than other ethnicities and this trip gives me a way to participate in helping my people."

Zamora-Morales will be graduating with his bachelor's degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences this August and plans to apply to graduate school in the future.

"In the meantime, I hope to find a job that allows me to give back to the Yoeme (people)."

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