

**SANCTUARY'S DAUGHTER**  
A DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM  
A CHANNEL ROAD FILMS PRODUCTION  
Produced by Mason Funk and Leanna Creel  
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In July 2007, 17-year-old Anabella Trujillo was a fairly ordinary American teenager. Born and raised in Los Angeles by her Guatemalan mother Yolanda, she earned average grades in school, loved basketball and the color pink, and had a crush on teen idol Mario Lopez. Then one day, Yolanda got word that her 19-year struggle to obtain legal status in the U.S. had failed. She was to be deported. Unwilling to abandon her only daughter, or to force them both into hiding, Yolanda was at a crossroads. Then her church, a longtime beacon for progressive causes, made her an offer. The church would provide Yolanda and Anabella with “sanctuary”: a roof over their heads, legal and spiritual support. In exchange, Yolanda would speak out about her plight, and that of 12 million other undocumented immigrants in the U.S.—essentially daring the authorities to enter to enter the church, arrest and deport her. Yolanda accepted.

The church converted a storage room into a makeshift apartment, behind two sets of locked doors. The day Yolanda and Anabella moved in, the church called a press conference. News cameras flooded in. The pastor spoke urgently about the need for immigration reform. Yolanda said that everything she did was for her daughter. Anabella sat silently next to her mother, tears sliding down her face. For the first time in her life, in the country of her birth, she felt like a refugee.

The dramatic story was written up in TIME magazine—and captured on videotape by filmmakers Mason Funk and Leanna Creel. Since that time, a span of two years, we have continued to record Anabella’s story—a coming-of-age unlike any other—in all its complexity and courage. Key scenes include Anabella’s bewildering encounter with angry, bullhorn-bearing anti-immigration protesters; her attempts to connect and perhaps find safety with her father, whom she’s seen a half dozen times in her life; and her own, trepidacious decision to step willingly into the spotlight, to speak publicly about her radically changed life, and her mother’s fight to keep their family together.

In June 2009, there was still no resolution in sight for Yolanda’s legal case. This same month, our cameras were there when Anabella stepped forward to receive her high school diploma. In a bittersweet twist of fate, Yolanda was able to witness the proud moment—because Anabella’s charter school had rented, for its graduation ceremony, the sanctuary of the very church that Yolanda and Anabella call home.

SANCTUARY'S DAUGHTER is a compelling chronicle of two remarkable years in the life of a young woman who, in many ways, defines the American spirit, its divided identity, and its ambivalence towards its immigrant roots. Principal photography is complete, and a trailer is available for viewing. The filmmakers are seeking approximately \$40,000 in completion funds. Tax-deductible contributions are being accepted through Los Angeles Filmforum, the project’s fiscal sponsor. The filmmakers are preparing a distribution plan for SANCTUARY'S DAUGHTER, through film festivals and educational outlets. For more information, please contact the filmmakers at [info@channelroadfilms.com](mailto:info@channelroadfilms.com).