



# La Jalisciense Supermercado Y Taqueria

LESLIE VARGAS  
PRESERVING CULTURE,  
FLAVOR, AND VIBRANCY  
WITH EACH CUSTOMER  
SHE SERVES

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Photos and Story by Phil Eich,  
Storyville Social, as part of the  
Michigan Main Street Story  
Series

“The story of La Jalisciense Supermercado Y Taqueria began a long time ago with my grandparents, who were storekeepers. My dad became a storekeeper because of them, and he owned his first store in Mexico City when he was only 15 years old.

But Mexico City started getting more dangerous, and we had to start moving around. My parents would buy different markets and flip them, but the longest we ever stayed with a market was a year and a half—after moving away from Mexico City, we didn’t know where to go. That was our home. Then my parents decided to come here to Mexicantown, all my mom’s family is here, and she wanted to be close to them, and so they decided to try their luck in Detroit.

It was funny how we ended up with this market. When we moved to Mexicantown, my dad was like, ‘OK, I’m retiring from markets. I’m not going to do it anymore.’ We had been here for about a year when we decided to move back to Mexico because we missed it. We put everything on sale, and we were going to leave.

But then one day my dad came home and said, ‘I need to tell you guys something, but you need to stay calm....I bought a market.’ Secretly, we knew quitting markets wasn’t possible for him because he had been doing it since he was 15!

This market had been through a lot of hands. It was nothing like it is now.

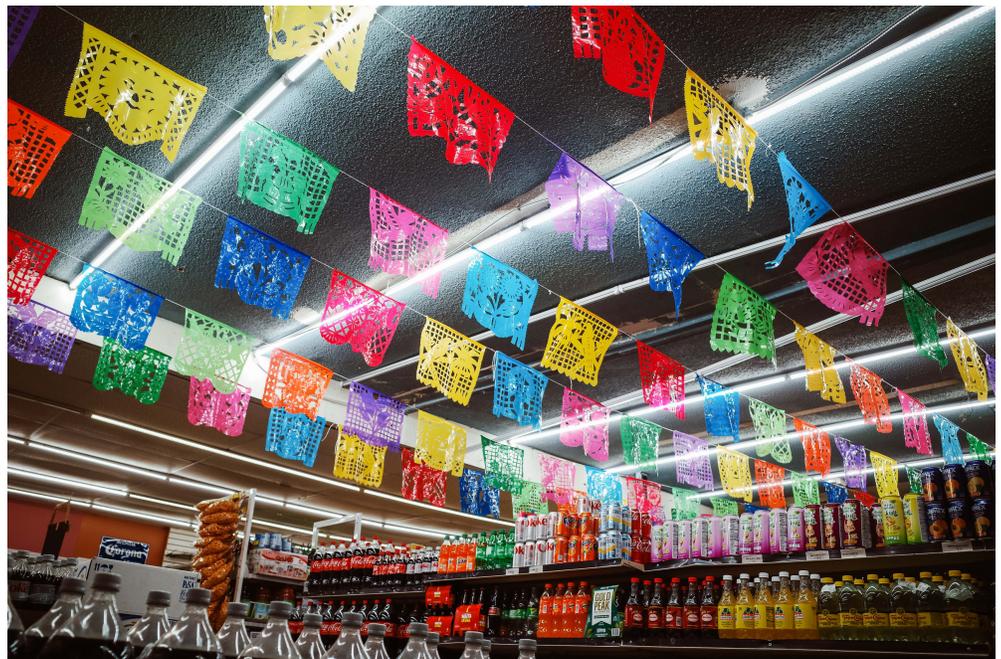
My dad has always had that magic. As soon as he buys a place, he completely transforms it. Little by little, it got better. Now, when you walk in, you see a full restaurant with a bar and a market to get groceries. Because of the restaurant, we can make everything fresh here, giving our customers the option of either taking their groceries home and cooking it themselves or taking it to our kitchen and getting it to go. It's a one-stop kind of thing.

My siblings and I grew up in my dad's markets, and we have always been involved in the family business. This is my life. People have asked me what my life would be like if we didn't own a market, and I don't know because I don't want to do anything else.

Mexicantown makes me feel at home, and that's something I've never really felt outside of Mexico. It makes me feel really proud to contribute to my family's business. It makes me appreciate the opportunity I have. We're a family of six, and my parents have given me and my siblings a lot of freedom to try things and take on new responsibilities here. I appreciate that because it has made me grow into the person I am now.

This tradition of markets goes back to my grandparents, and all of my dad's family have stores—it's something that connects our family. My grandparents are gone now, but this is a way we remember them."

– Leslie Vargas, La Jalisciense Supermercado Y Taqueria



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# Michigan Main Street Story Series



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