



PHOTO BY LILIANA ANGUIANO / STAFF

Ian Ramirez



Julisa Chavez



Homeless — BUT CLINGING TO A STUBBORN — hopefulness

By LILIANA ANGUIANO

Happy students often say they found a home at Southwestern College.

Ian Ramirez literally calls Southwestern College his home.

Ramirez, 19, lives in his car that he sometimes parks in the darkened SC parking lots. It is temporary, he said, but for now it is his address.

His life has had a temporary feeling since he suffered his first bout of homelessness at age 13. A dysfunctional and sometimes violent family has caused him to flee for his own safety. He enjoys surfing, but often found himself couch surfing the homes of friends and acquaintances.

“I’ve been homeless for probably 12 different stretches,” he said. “A lot of the time I just viewed it as ‘I’m just going to (a friend’s place) for a few days.’”

Hunger was a constant companion in his household. When his family did feed him, the quality of the food was often lacking.

“Excessive famine,” he said. “It was really difficult as someone who cares about my health to have to eat instant ramen. So that was really hard, having to choose between nothing and one of the unhealthiest foods I can ever think of eating.” ▶

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MOTOR HOME

Ian Ramirez prepares for another day of classes and studying from his car parked on campus.