

## My discovery of the world

I am so different from other people. I discovered it when I came to New Jersey. Diversity is an enormous word that not everybody knows or maybe notices. All my life I knew people from just one place El Salvador I taught that the entire world had the same culture, traditions, religions, beliefs and education. I lived sixteen years in ignorance, not knowing that everyone of us is unique, original, with different thoughts, and believing that the whole world follows the same boring sequence of life.

Later in December 2008, I said to my self and parents: "it's time to get out circle and discover new things and prove my luck." I came to New Jersey just by myself with a lot of dreams ahead, feeling fear of the unknown. I left behind my school, my friend, my whole life. Ahead, only future over which I had no control. I found a giant country with millions of people contrary to me from all over the world, with other languages, cultures, and ways of the dress and behavior. The only people that I knew who were similar to me were my family that lives here, but even they were rare for me. I was in shock, thinking how wrong I was and questioned myself, "What am I going to do if I don't speak English?"

Then my school came. My legs were trembling, I did not know what to wear, how to behave, etc. The same thing happened to my friend Shanice Henriques, who is from Jamaica. She is seventeen years old and came in 2007 when she was fourteen years old. She is Christian and I am Catholic. It is so strange how us two girls from different countries one from the Caribbean and the other one from Central America felt in the same way even though she speaks the language. We both felt discrimination from people who said black and Hispanic jokes but we handle the situation, Shanice said: "I handled the problem by learning their culture respecting them, learning more English." I did it similar BECAUSE I PROVED THEM that bilingual is not bad, is reversed if you are bilingual you count like two people in one. You can work as a translator person, Bilingual nurse, and ESL teacher, you have more opportunities to get the job because in this country and any other a bilingual person is better than just a person who speaks one language.

Moreover, for me it was not so hard to make friends maybe because I am a social person. Also, English in one year now I can communicate whomever I want; I knew that if I speak the language, know the culture, make friends from many countries, and have good grades, many doors will open for me and it will be easier for me to reach my goals. In October 2009 was the celebration of the Hispanic culture in Hackensack High School in New Jersey I notice that not just Hispanic student participated in it, also participated African – American, Jamaican, Philippines people dancing, singing, reciting poems from many cultures represented the Latin people. In the afternoon we were celebrating our triumph with delicious food as the Dominican mangu, Puerto Rican arroz con gandules, Colombian empanadas with their acid sauce, Mexican tacos and their spicy chicken and the Salvadorian sweet, Salvadorian arroz con leche. Favio Pena, a Dominican student, relies

that I was the only Salvadorian there and there were man Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Colombians, Jamaicans; so they made a ceremony telling that since that day I was going to be adopted by all the countries in the school and I became the international daughter of Hackensack High School. I felt so greatful and leave me. I was a bright rainbow, smiling but at the same time crying. I felt like a gold coin that everybody likes. Now they call me “hija mia o cipota,” a daughter or a girl.

How can two people from totally distinct countries get married and get respect each other? I interviewed a couple. Claudia, the lady, is from Puerto Rico, and the gentleman is Mexican. His name is Guadalupe. They met each other at their job five years ago, because they works together in New York. I asked them what they imagined from each other the first time they met. Claudia responded, “When I met him, I did not like him because of his behavior and the way he talks. It is like he is singing, Also, his religion was not the same, so I did nor believe some things that he believed, as time passed and we share more, I learned about his ancestors, traditions and other things, such as the spicy food, the rancho music, and the folklore, I fell in love with him.” Guadalupe told me: “When I first saw Claudia, I thought that she was a pretty woman, When I got to know her better, I I thought that there was a lot of variation of thinking between us, because she is Catholic, while I am not. But I never imagines that we were going to marry.”

Finally, both of them said that before they got married, they went to Perto Rico and Mexico to know each other’s families, because they had to be sure that what they have get into was right. Claudia knows the food, Mexican landscape, when and why, they celebrate the apparition of the virgin of Guadalupe, and the preserved tradition of dance, quebradita Guadalupe went to Puerto Rico, and know he knows the arroz con gan dules, rice with beans salsa and reggaeton music, and the beautiful landscapes of Puerto Rico.

In colclusion, we are all unique. Often it is just that we don’t know and we don’t notice each other’s native back ground. It is very important to respect each others cultures, because we need to remember the golden rule of not doing to others what we do not want for ourselves. Diversity is everywhere in New Jersey. We just have to recognize it not to be racist. It will be a better world for our generation, and it will help us grow as a person with class and education. If the whole world was same it would be boring and there would not bo anything interesting to discover. We have to be proud that our state of New Jersey celebrate diversity including the celebration of Hispanic Culture and the independence of all countries. Soy yo; soy orgullosamente salvadorena ; soy 100% Latina. Here I am myself; I am proud to be Salvadorian; I am 100% Latina.