



Literacy Volunteers of America

Essex & Passaic Counties

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90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003 | (973) 566-6200 -- 195 Gregory Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055 | (973) 470-0039

New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Adult Learner Writing Contest 2017

Special Mention -Memoir

Biography:

Ligia Avendano Alvarez moved from her native country of Colombia in 2016. Life was tough for her there, as she had recently lost her father and also left an extremely abusive marriage. Her first stop in the United States was Florida, where she visited her brother, one of her eight siblings. Ligia reconnected at a shopping mall with an old girlfriend from her youth, and through this connection, she met the man who later became her husband. Ligia writes, "I believe life is a sea of experiences where our events become a mirror for other people or maybe a comfort to them that they are not the only ones who have gone through difficult times."

Title: Remembrance of Yesterday
Student Author: Ligia Avendano Alvarez
Tutor: Lawrence Reilly

When I write about my experiences, I get a little bit worried because I think they are mine and maybe they do not matter to others. However, I believe life is a sea of experiences where our events become a mirror for other people or maybe a comfort to them that they are not the only ones who have gone through this. I am the number 8 of 9 children, with many desires to get ahead and build a good future. During my higher education, I worked during the day and studied at night. In this way, I took my career forward. Life began to become less difficult because I earned a little more money and expanded my chances of succeeding in my work.

I thought that at 29 years of age it was time to have a family, so I married a boy who had known me since I was a child. I did not have a good marriage' because a family starts with two people and if they do not agree, they cannot go on together. I decided to continue the journey alone. My life was hard because I could not work a full day. I did work 6 hours in a row in order to be able to arrive in time to pick up my son from school and to be home to be a mother. My son and i made a good team. While keeping this schedule, I began receiving threats and verbal violence from my ex-husband who did not help me financially. He took the liberty of having the key to my house and would arrive at dawn in a high state of intoxication. I did not succeed with complaints to the relevant authorities, since he was a doctor of laws and between colleagues many faults are covered.





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Having a good job and my son with me made me happy, but seeing that my marital situation did not change, it became difficult to maintain the sweetness and joy that had characterized me. My smile disappeared and my pain was reflected in my face. I continued my studies and my son eventually entered college. I was encouraged to see how he grew up and became a man. However, by the end of 2014, my father, whom I dearly admired for his wisdom and counsel, lost a hard battle with breast cancer and died. I felt the need to change my situation. I applied for a visa and at the end of 2015 I traveled to Miami, Florida. There i have a brother who moved there several years before.

A few days after my arrival, I went with the family to a mall where I met a great friend from my adolescence. She had been in the U.S. for many years, It was a great meeting. We exchanged phone numbers and we were in constant contact. After Christmas, she invited me to dinner at her home. When I arrived, I was surprised to meet her brother who had traveled from New York to spend time with her and her family. We had a good meeting. It was nice to see another great friend. We spent the next two weeks together. It became difficult to think of separating from him. After listening to my story and I to his, we concluded that it was no coincidence that we had met again at this time in our lives. We decided that we would give ourselves a chance. We ended up getting engaged and two months later we travelled to New York and got married. I still do not understand how it happened, but that's how it had to happen. It is incredible that in a moment I can change my life in such a way. Little by little, those painful memories have been erased from my mind and I live a new life.

