



Literacy Volunteers of America

Essex & Passaic Counties

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Title: It is time!
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It is time!

August 2001 was the last time that I heard from the nurse "Dr. Luque a patient in room number three. I remember that night because it was the day my country started the recession and all workers were protesting outside the children's hospital. They refused to work because of their low salaries, but at that time I had just gotten hired and I could not leave the hospital.

How I can forget that night? The nurse said "Dr. Luque we have ten doctors, seven medical students, twelve nurses, two ambulance drivers and you. You are the director of the hospital for this night." I was in shock, because we had about two hundred fifty sick children to care for.

My department was the ER for that night. I prepared all the schedules and sent one nurse and one student to help each floor and two stayed with me in the ER, as well as two nurses to the Intensive Care, and two to the neonatology, the most needy departments. I started praying "God please help us!" I called all the doctors from the different areas and said "We can make it; we can work together and tomorrow will be a memorable day for us."

That night we were very busy, patient after patient arrived at the ER. At 11:00 pm, I started to sign about two hundred fifty prescriptions for the entire children hospital, and I remember feeling numbness in my fingers. Nobody could sleep or rest that night; it looked like the end of the world. At 2:00 am, I received a 12-year-old child with brain trauma. He needed surgery immediately, but we did not have any surgeons at the hospital. I had to transfer him to another hospital, which was frustrating situation because the only two drivers that we had were busy with other patients.

All state hospitals that were free of charge had the same situation. Finally at 3:00 am we found a low cost hospital and an ambulance was able to transfer him. But, help came too late because during the trip, he did not make it. This was the saddest part of the night.

When the dawn arrived I thought that surprising or not, we survived, the doctors, the nurses, the students, the drivers and the most important our young patients. I felt very proud of myself that night and I said "I did it; we did it!"





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This story is repeated many times a year in most countries of Latin America, where poverty is a sign of death and destruction.

The next day was my day off. I received a call from my mom from the United States, she said "It is time to come to America, our country is in a bad situation and you and your husband will have more opportunities here." In December 2001 we arrived in United States and we started a new life. Everything had to change: new language, new food, new lifestyle, new ideas, new purpose. It was not easy, especially since United States had been attacked by terrorists three months ago, everything changed that day, it was never the same again.

Six months later my husband and I tried to pass the first medical test, but without a study guide, we failed. After that trial some doors opened but others closed for us. My dream and my goal of working as a doctor in a children's hospital is still here for this reason this year I will start a new medical career again.

During all this years I have learned to be patient, but at the same time, to be decisive, to have faith in the dark moments, to be grateful even when is hard to be thankful, and to fight to achieve your dreams. I have learned to live in the present, day by day, because that gives me peace, living in the past only causes depression and living in the future just causes anxiety.

As the years pass you realize that now is your time, time to ask for forgiveness from your family, your friends, and time to change your life. **It is time now** to get a new job, or a new career; restore your marriage, or get married; come closer to God; travel; eat healthy; do exercises; enjoy the little things; spend more time with your family.

The days are shorter now. Do not let the time pass you by.

