

Maria de Lourdes Gonzalez

“Well, my name is Maria like all of the Marias in our country that arrive to the U.S.”

Maria highlights the importance of the name Maria in her homeland in Mexico. Maria is often used as a first name followed by a middle name. She arrived to the U.S. in 2005 for the first time from Durango, Mexico. After a couple of years, her and her family came to Chicago and Maria mentioned that she really liked living in the U.S. because to her it really was the land of opportunity, as long as you knew how to navigate around. She explained how here it was more accessible to obtain material possessions. She originally mentioned that she came to the U.S. as a tourist and came to learn and visit her family and so till this day she has remained here.

Her primary reason for staying in the U.S. was because it was the easiest way to make money and really help put her kids forward so that they could have a better future. She is very proud to say that this goal of hers came true because her son became a lawyer and her daughter will be graduating this year with her law degree as well. Maria explained how she is very fortunate to have been able to work here in the U.S. because she had her profession in Mexico and previously worked at a hospital so this allowed her to receive a tourist visa and made it easy for her to come to the U.S. since she was still studying in her university, this also made it easy for her to travel as a tourist. Afterwards, she was able to receive her legal documents through the help of her husband.

At first, it was difficult for her to cope with her kids because they didn't want to live in the U.S.. They didn't feel that they had the opportunity to progress especially because they weren't documented. Her son would come to work with his father and it was a life he didn't want. He would explain to her how life in America is purely focused on work and he wanted to live his life especially because he was still young. It wasn't easy at first for Maria either. When she would apply for jobs, she would find herself behind closed doors often and no one wanted to give her the opportunity even though she was well prepared as a nurse. When she was applying for an organization in public health, she was basically going against young adults that spoke English well and many people looked down on her since she didn't know the language. However, she stood her ground and she knew that she was there because she was capable of getting the job. She ended up getting it and those that doubted her learned to admire her efforts.

Of all of the people in Maria's life, she says that her father has been the most influential. She explained how her father had only finished up to the 3rd grade, but he taught her many life lessons and helped her character development. She explained how he was such a great leader and was someone who even though didn't have much education, he'd try his best to stand out in other ways that he could.

Furthermore, Maria explained how one day she does wish to go back to Mexico, as it is her homeland and her culture, but she wishes to see what life has in store for her first. She expressed her worries for first generation children and teens because it's difficult to find the necessary resources in order to escalate the social ladder. She hopes that people can learn to

accept each other and work together to help and support one another because that is the gist of life. We are all dependent of one another.